

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/17/2018 05:30 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California Charter Schools Association (U282T180007)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance of the proposed project		
1. Significance	35	32
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	26
Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	93
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process		
1. Building Capacity	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Empowering Families and Individuals		
1. Families and Individuals	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	110	102

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP National Dissemination - 1: 84.282T

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: California Charter Schools Association (U282T180007)

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:

Through lessons learned while developing an academic framework, the applicant will develop an accountability framework that will provide other states and authorizers the opportunity to work within their own context to adapt the new framework to meet their specific needs. Because of this availability, the project has far reaching capacity for use in many authorizing scenarios. (Pg. e31 – e32)

A well-defined dissemination plan is presented that includes multiple opportunities for charter schools and authorizers to gain insight and knowledge relative to the proposed framework. A strong push to disseminate this information to states with new charter laws and those with a large percentage of charter schools that are low-performing will be initiated with the partnership of the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools (NAPCS). (Pg. e32)

Through previous partnerships with the NAPCS, the applicant will provide the end products of this project to other states, specifically those with new charter schools and few charter schools in hopes that it will lead to higher quality charter schools not only in California, but nationwide. (Pg. e36-e37)

The target population for this project is charter authorizers and the charter schools they oversee. Authorizers with few and/or low-performing charter schools will benefit from this framework as it will give specific details and metrics from which to judge the capacity of a charter school. This new tool has the ability to empower both authorizers and operators to achieve a higher quality operation by utilizing the information included to make changes in operational systems. (Pg. e38 – e39)

Weaknesses:

The applicant is basing the success of this new framework on previous successes with their academic performance framework. More specificity surrounding this specific piece and how widespread change will actually happen needs to be provided.

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 key component of the project is a take-away performance framework that targets the operational, financial and governance pieces of a charter school. This framework, as described, will assist authorizers in their work to ensure their charter schools are high quality in all areas of operation. (Pg. e39 – e40)

Goals and objectives are clearly outlined providing specific measurable outcomes to determine the degree of completion of outcomes throughout the project. (Pg. e40 – e45 and e23 – e25)

The applicant presents a strong case for the development of the framework and its use in assisting authorizers to approve strong charter applications and hold existing charter schools to a higher standard. Additionally, the project has great potential in effecting national authorizing practices through the sharing of the framework and the methods in which the framework was developed. This practice will assist other states who lack an accountability framework in developing a product to meet their specific needs. (Pg. e49 – e55)

The applicant has a history of disseminating research results, reports, and training materials to a wide audience. This project will utilize existing methods to ensure the ensuing framework and the details behind it are shared nationwide. Some of these methods include webinars, information posted on the website, in person and virtual meetings, conference presentations and emails to nationwide authorizers. A letter of support is provided from the National Association of Public Charter Schools. The applicant will partner with this entity to push out information on the framework and research from that work. (Pg. e32 – e35)

Weaknesses:

While the applicant addresses the possible effect this project will have on educationally disadvantaged students within California, there is not specific information as to how these results will be achieved outside of the general narrative. (Pg. e39)

The narrative indicates the applicant has previously worked with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and the National Charter School Resource Center and would continue to work in conjunction on the new project. There are no letters of support from either organization. (Pg. e35)

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):

(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:

Roles and responsibilities are well defined in the timeline. Activities are described along with named individuals that will lead the activity in the anticipated timeframe for the activity. This timeline is well organized and leave no questions as to how and when to proceed with a task. These tasks correspond to the details goals and objectives and should produce a product well within the timeframe of the grant project. (Pg. e55 – e59)

This project is a heavy lift for the personnel of the California Charter Schools Association. The majority of the costs are in the personnel and travel area, which is reasonable for the magnitude of the project. (Pg. e69 – e76)

Both the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and the Texas Charter Schools Association will be heavily involved in the development of the framework as members of the Advisory board. These two entities have provided letters of support for the project. (Pg. e60)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers 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 CCSA intentionally advertises open positions on job boards that cater to people of diverse backgrounds. Company policies ensure that employment and promotion decisions are based on merit and qualifications rather than ethnicity or background. (Pg. e61)

The project director and principal investigators are both highly qualified to perform the jobs associated with this project. The project director has worked in different capacities with the Association since 2007 and has most recently worked with the academic accountability framework. (Pg. e62)

Key project personnel are well versed in the aspects of the projects over which they have control. Even though some members of the team have very little experience with the Association, they have years working within related fields. Some of the team members have teaching experience which will provide a school level view of how the projected framework will affect specific school functions. (Pg. 62 – e64)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

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:

Through a series of interviews and surveys, along with real time data, the principal investigator will produce information that will assist the applicant in perfecting the operational, financial and governance framework. (Pg. e64 – e68)

A chart is provided indicating which evaluation method will be used to measure each specific objective. Qualitative and quantitative data will be provided to the Association to help guide the project. (Pg. e67 – e68)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1--Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process for Educational Agencies with the Most Need (Up to 5 points, only available to applicants meeting Absolute Priority 1)**

Projects that propose to target one or more of the following: States that have enacted laws in the last five years allowing charter schools to open; authorized public chartering agencies (as defined in the NIA) with fewer than ten charter schools; and authorized public chartering agencies that authorize a significant number of charter schools experiencing significant low performance or non-compliance with academic, financial, governance, or operational (including school safety) requirements.

Strengths:

The applicant indicates the project will focus on small authorizers and authorizer that have a large number of low-performing charter schools. (Pg. e27 – e28) Information provided in the Abstract (Pg. e20) explains that 90% of authorizers in California have fewer than 5 charter schools in their portfolio leading to weak authorizing practices because of the small number of schools involved. The project intends to help small authorizers shore up their requirements for academic, governance and financial oversight, lending itself to charter schools with higher academic results and better compliance.

Weaknesses:

Other than restating the criteria, there is no further discussion of how this project will specifically meet this priority.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Empowering Families and Individuals

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--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:

By working with charter schools in the development phases, the applicant will assist the petitioner in identifying underserved populations that a new charter school can target. Additionally, the applicant will ensure that new charter petitions have included best practices that are proven to work with the disadvantaged population. (Pg. e29 – e31)

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California Charter Schools Association (U282T180007)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance of the proposed project		
1. Significance	35	30
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	26
Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	14
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	90
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process		
1. Building Capacity	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Empowering Families and Individuals		
1. Families and Individuals	5	4
Sub Total	5	4
Total	110	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP National Dissemination - 1: 84.282T

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: California Charter Schools Association (U282T180007)

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:

Overall, the proposal demonstrates a strong significance for the proposed project. The applicant provides a well-developed response with clear evidence that the proposed project will be disseminated in ways that enable others to use the information and strategies; it is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve or expand services that address the needs of the target population. For example, the applicant plans to continue to improve its AAF, transitioning it to an open source resource (e30) and taking an internal tool that is currently used to assess fiscal, operational and governance accountability in CA schools and expand it into an open source framework similar in form to the AAF, referred to as FOGAF (e30). The frameworks will include 'How-to Guides', online tools, communication materials as well as online training and open source academic accountability metrics (e30). All of the tools and resources will be open educational resources (OER) and disseminated widely throughout CA and across all 44 states with charter laws (e32). Also, the applicant clearly describes its dissemination process including tools, formats and target audiences (e32).

The applicant clearly describes capacity building efforts by "providing intensive supports and trainings" to "low capacity authorizers or those with chronically weak portfolios and serve relatively few charters" (e38). Outreach and services and technical support on using the frameworks will be given to both authorizers and charters in an effort to ensure proper systems are in place to support students (e38). This support will also include dissemination and training on CCSA's petition review standards to improve the caliber of submitted petitions for charter schools, so authorizers are making more effective choices when reviewing petitions to start new schools (e38).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not meet the standard for outstanding without weaknesses because the proposal lacks sufficient details or supporting evidence demonstrating the potential impact of the project in the areas of generalizing the project and likelihood of systemic change. Primarily, the weaknesses occur because the applicant makes general statements but does not follow the statement with data, citations or other documentations that provide clear evidence to support the authenticity of the statement. For example, it states "with the implementation of our framework to call for closures of low performing charters...we have improved our engagement with authorizers and their use of our framework and support charter school academic quality" (e22), but the statement is not followed by data or evidence demonstrating this assertion.

The applicant states there are four critical problems that will be addressed through the project and describes the problems and CCSA's intended project supports to address the problems (e24-28). However, the proposal lacks sufficient

quantifiable evidence that these are indeed problems. For instance, problem one states, “low capacity authorizers are not appropriately holding charter schools accountable concerning fiscal, operational and governance matters” (e24). There are several general statements of support such as the ‘number of small authorizers who are not fulfilling their oversight responsibility’. The proposal lacks critical evidence such as the number of authorizers who fit this description or the number of schools impacted in order to document the significance of the problem and their proposed solution.

Reader's Score: 30

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’s proposal provides a strong quality of program design as evidenced by a clearly defined rationale as well as well articulated goals, objectives and outcomes that are clearly specified and measurable. The logic model (e30) and beliefs (e39-40) sufficiently describe the theory of action and are aligned to the project requirements. The logic model includes inputs and resources, project outputs, as well as short and long-term project outcomes as per Federal Register requirements (26044). The project proposal includes Project Specific Performance Measures that meet Federal Register requirements (26047) including performance measures, baseline data, performance targets and data collection/ reporting for each indicator that are clearly specified and measurable. In particular, the applicant provides a comprehensive table with baseline data aligned to objectives (e43-45) and performance targets for each data point to be collected (e46-48) and documents how each target is ambitious and achievable.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not meet the standard outstanding without weakness because it lacks sufficient data to clearly demonstrate the extent to which the project represents an exceptional approach to the priority. For instance, the applicant states it is the leading non-authorizing agency in the state that provides petition reviews but lacks data to demonstrate the accuracy of this statement (e49). It lacks evidence of past successes with schools that received petition reviews to demonstrate previous impact. There is not a clear connection demonstrating the extent to which CCSA’s petition review work will grow enough to meet the standard of exceptional approach to the priority.

The applicant states that FOGAF work will focus on charters operating without proper oversight under current regulatory guidelines (e51) but the proposal lacks evidence documenting how many charters will be served in this category and how that effort meets the standard of exceptional approach to the priority. The applicant plans to provide access to the self-assessment and training (e52) but it is unclear how many schools will be targeted to receive these services. Finally, the applicant provides a wealth of information on current CCSA services to underperforming schools (e54-55) but provides a vague description of how this proposed project will be an exceptional approach to priorities.

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 proposal provides an excellent management plan, clearly demonstrates partner commitments and validates that costs are generally reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of the project. Specifically, the applicant provides an excellent timeline (e57-59) that meets Federal Register (26046) requirements including milestones, relevant dates and responsibilities and is clearly aligned to project objectives. The timeline is also separated in annual vs non-annual tasks for additional clarity. Specific names of key project personnel are identified as responsible to lead each activity.

In general, as evidenced by the budget narrative (e67-76), costs are reasonable, and the applicant delineates how project costs are directly connected to specific activities and in alignment with each objective. The budget narrative also links the budget to outcomes. Contractual costs for the external evaluator and Texas Charter School Association (TCSA) are reasonable and relevant to identified project scope.

The project has clearly demonstrated the commitment of each identified partner, and partner roles are aligned to project outcomes/objectives. Letters of support from both TCSA and the Alliance are included, and each letter demonstrates that organization's specific commitments to the project.

Weaknesses:

The application does not meet outstanding without weaknesses standard because the internal staffing request for funding in the budget narrative lacks sufficient evidence to demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of some project staff (e148-149). Specifically, the applicant requests over \$300,000 covering "other personnel" costs for 20%-50% of the total salary of 11 CCSA staff members. This request is in addition to approximately \$100,000 in salary costs for individuals identified as "key personnel" from CCSA. However, responsibilities, qualifications and/or relevant training were not included in the project narrative in a manner that clearly demonstrate how the eleven "other personnel" are reasonable and essential to the implementation and success of the project.

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 proposal provides an outstanding demonstration of the quality of personnel. First, the applicant clearly encourages applications for employment from traditionally underrepresented persons. CCSA posts all job openings on multiple diversity-based job boards including Diversity in Ed, Diversity Jobs and the job board for historically black colleges and universities. The applicant also cites it has equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies and documents that the CCSA staff currently reflects the state-wide ethnicities and that the current CCSA leadership team is 55% female and 28% persons of color.

The proposal specifies the project director (e62) and provides the project director's resume (e79-82) as evidence of relevant experience, qualifications and training. The project director is a member of the CCSA executive leadership team, has extensive experience and training, including 10 years working at CCSA supporting charter initiatives in a variety of capacities. The proposal also clearly identifies six key project personnel (e62-64) and provides resumes (e83-95) for each person documenting their relevant experience, qualifications and training. This team includes individuals with experience in charter school performance and accountability, school quality, school development, professional development, authorizer engagement and legal counsel. The roles and responsibilities of each person are clearly identified within the project timeline (e57-59) to demonstrate the need for this person's engagement in the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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 quality of the description of the evaluation plan is outstanding. To begin, the proposal identifies the external evaluator who is a Columbia University professor in the Teachers' College. The external evaluator's resume (e102-132) is provided and demonstrates significant evaluation experience, past experience working with CCSA on a prior federal grant and considerable experience in policy analysis in education and, in particular, charter school programs and policy evaluation (e68). The budget narrative (e152) requests 9% of the project budget directed toward external evaluation which is well within the reasonable and customary rate of 7-10% of total costs.

The evaluation plan identifies that the evaluator will use mixed methods with both formative and summative assessments that will be focused on both fostering project improvement through the grant and understanding the extent to which program goals and outcomes are met on time and within budget (e64-68). The applicant cites key evaluation questions including: what activities were executed as planned; what caused delays and how will team address delays; and what lessons learned would be valuable for dissemination to external partners. The summative evaluation will include reporting on overall effectiveness and impact that fosters authorizer oversight in key grant areas. In addition, the evaluation will include an assessment of the impact of CCSA engagement in other states to determine the impact of the work on both policy change and extent to which other states adopt the framework. The evaluation plan provides clearly defined evaluation methods and tools aligned by objective. Finally, in collaboration with the evaluator, the applicant plans to use

this information in both white papers and how-to guides that will be disseminated across the state and nationally.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1--Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process for Educational Agencies with the Most Need (Up to 5 points, only available to applicants meeting Absolute Priority 1)

Projects that propose to target one or more of the following: States that have enacted laws in the last five years allowing charter schools to open; authorized public chartering agencies (as defined in the NIA) with fewer than ten charter schools; and authorized public chartering agencies that authorize a significant number of charter schools experiencing significant low performance or non-compliance with academic, financial, governance, or operational (including school safety) requirements.

Strengths:

California Charter Schools Association (CCSA) provides strong evidence that it meets Competitive Preference Priority 1 (CPP1) by clearly demonstrating it will target services to authorized public chartering agencies with fewer than ten charter schools (e28). Furthermore, the applicant cites that 95% of the state's 1194 authorizers (e33) have fewer than 10 schools and these are primarily local school districts (e28).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Empowering Families and Individuals

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--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 provides strong evidence that it meets Competitive Preference Priority 2 (CPP2) by increasing access to educational choice particularly for students with disabilities, English learners, Indians and rural students (e29). The applicant states "through authorizer education and support, CCSA will ensure more high-quality charter schools with strong petitions are developed and schools' performance with underserved student groups is effectively assessed, such that quality charters are approved and renewed, expanding access for underserved students to more high-quality options"

(e31). In particular, CCSA will continue to modify its Academic Achievement Framework (AAF) to include more measures to assess these student groups and provide education to authorizers so they can better evaluate how their schools are serving these students.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not meet the standard of outstanding without weakness because while the proposal states CCSA will fund “two growth accelerator projects” (e31) it lacks detail on the two accelerator programs which is essential to a clear understanding of how the programs will address this priority.

Reader's Score: 4

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: California Charter Schools Association (U282T180007)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Significance of the proposed project		
1. Significance	35	34
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	30
Quality of Management Plan/adequacy of resources		
1. Management Plan/Resources	15	15
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	99
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process		
1. Building Capacity	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Empowering Families and Individuals		
1. Families and Individuals	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	110	109

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP National Dissemination - 1: 84.282T

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: California Charter Schools Association (U282T180007)

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 project has a strong potential for generalizing from the products and results of the proposed project. This is, in part, evidenced by the applicant's sophisticated understanding of the variety of contexts within in each state. As such they will "create open source versions of... accountability frameworks and metrics" and provide their equations and codes for analysis (e32) so that other entities can adapt the metrics to their specific needs. The value of sharing the metrics and methodology behind the frameworks gives other authorizers the information they need to made adaptations to their own contexts and increases generalizability of the work.

Additionally, the applicant proposes to develop how to guides for both of the frameworks, "giving a deep dive into the development, implementation and maintenance stages" of the work (e32).

Thus, the extent to which the applicant proposes to intentionally disseminate the information and learnings in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies is exemplar.

Based on CCSA track record with the rollout of the academic framework, there is a strong likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement in California and potentially other states. Current California data boasts "a one third reduction in the percentage of charters performing the bottom tenth percentile and held nearly constant, the large percentage in the top tenth" (e36), leading to a strong potential to continue that growth.

An example of the likelihood of the project resulting in system change is that in 2016 the CA state Board of Education adopted the methodology from CCSA's "Distance from Level 3" key measure as the "primary academic lens by which the state measures school's performance" (e37).

The SBE adoption of the "Distance from level 3" methodology, and the applicants past success with the build out of the academic framework, are indicative of the extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide tools, improve practice" an expand services that address the needs of "low capacity authorizers" (e38).

Weaknesses:

It is unclear why presentations at NACSA, about the frameworks are not on the list of conference presentations (e33-35). NACSA is the national assistance center for authorizers and would appear to be exactly the audience to learn about these accountability frameworks.

Reader's Score: 34

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 has ably defined the need and demonstrated a rationale for the proposed project (e20-22) which are also aligned to the performance measures (e40). This is in part demonstrated with 95 percent of the California authorizers overseeing fewer than 10 charters, and 90 percent of this group overseeing less than 5 charters (e20). Observations have indicated that of this last group charter quality and oversight are often weak (e20).

Additionally, the logic model is clear concise and well-articulated with resources, project goals, strategies and incentives, outputs and deliverables, project outcomes and long-term outcomes (e310).

(The applicant has comprehensively articulated specific performance measures for each project objective. These performance measures demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge of targeted, timebound, specific and measurable measures with a baseline (40-45). As such, the applicant has ably demonstrated that the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable and achievable.

What is exceptional about the project is that the state charter school support (CSO) organization (a non-charter authorizing agency) is leading the way to improved authorizing and oversight practices in California (e49). The fact that the CCSA has successfully been leading the charge in conducting charter application reviews, establishing governance standards and practices, promoting monitoring compliance, evaluating the performance of charters and authorizers, facilitating replication and expansion, improving the performance of charters, and actively pursuing the closure of underperforming charters, is a statement to its effectiveness (e50-54).

The applicant currently has strong dissemination strategies and will continue to expand upon those. This is evidenced by the chart on pages 33-35 which delineates the dissemination of information, work products and materials by audience. The applicant broadly disseminates information on its project both within California and with numerous other states and organizations. It's open source versions of products and willingness to share its learnings with other states is readily apparent.

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 30

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 has provided a comprehensive plan which includes activities by objective, clearly defined staff responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks. As such, there is a strong likelihood that the applicant will achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget (e57-59).

The applicant has also provided a detailed budget and narrative that clearly describes the costs associated with the proposed project, and is disaggregated by budget category (e147-154). Additionally, the applicant breaks down costs by the project objectives. The costs are reasonable for a project of this scope and size and in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

The applicant has identified two strong two partners, the outside evaluator and the Texas Charter School Association (TCSA). Both partners have provided a letter of support for the project and indicating their relevance and demonstrated commitment to the CCSA's proposed project (e134-135).

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

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 applicant has provided a comprehensive plan which includes activities by objective, clearly defined staff responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks. As such, there is a strong likelihood that the applicant will achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget (e57-59).

The applicant has also provided a detailed budget and narrative that clearly describes the costs associated with the proposed project, and is disaggregated by budget category (e147-154). Additionally, the applicant breaks down costs by the project objectives. The costs are reasonable for a project of this scope and size and in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

The applicant has identified two strong two partners, the outside evaluator and the Texas Charter School Association (TCSA). Both partners have provided a letter of support for the project and indicating their relevance and demonstrated commitment to the CCSA's proposed project (e134-135).

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

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 Applicant has provided several strategies that demonstrate the extent to which it 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. These strategies are evidenced as follows (e61): CCSA posts open positions on job boards such as Diversity in Ed, Historically Black Colleges and University career Center job boards and Diversity Jobs, which increase opportunities to find diverse applicants; CCSA makes employment decisions based on merit, qualifications and performance; CCSA makes reasonable and appropriate accommodations for individuals with a disability; CCSA currently has a staff reflect of the demographics in the state.

As evidenced in the narrative (e62) and resume, the qualifications of the project director are varied and exemplar. Of relevance to this project, the proposed director led the team in the creation of California's "first of its kind accountability framework" in 2009-2010 (e62). She has been with the CCSA for 11 years, 5 as its Senior Vice-president of School Performance.

Based on the narrative and resumes, the key project personnel each individually and collectively bring a wealth of non-profit, diverse populations, training and technical assistance, national and state experience, and charter sector and traditional school experience and expertise (e62-64).

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process

1. Competitive Preference Priority 1--Building Capacity in the Authorizing Process for Educational Agencies with the Most Need (Up to 5 points, only available to applicants meeting Absolute Priority 1)

Projects that propose to target one or more of the following: States that have enacted laws in the last five years allowing charter schools to open; authorized public chartering agencies (as defined in the NIA) with fewer than ten charter schools; and authorized public chartering agencies that authorize a significant number of charter schools experiencing significant low performance or non-compliance with academic, financial, governance, or operational (including school safety) requirements.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to target the following: authorized public chartering agencies (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) with fewer than ten charter schools; and authorized public chartering agencies that authorize a significant number of charter schools experiencing significant low performance or non-compliance with academic, financial, governance, or operational (e28).

The CCAS has proposed goals and objectives in its project design that strongly support CCP 1 targets. This is in part evidenced by Objective 1 which is to “develop a fiscal, operational and governance framework, train low capacity authorizers and developers on the use of it and monitor performance of low capacity authorizers” (e23).

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Empowering Families and Individuals

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2--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 meets this CCP by proposing to address increasing access to educational choice for 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

In addition to providing objectives and performance measures specific to each of these student populations (e41), the applicant proposes that the project and components related to this CPP will “be national in scope” (e39).

Of positive note, the CCSA currently evaluates charter school performance for English Learners, students with disabilities, Indian and rural students (e29).

Weaknesses:

There were no weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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