

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/15/2018 11:31 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282E180002)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	28
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	20	18
Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	15	15
Sub Total	100	96
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Access to High-Quality Educational Choice		
1. Increasing Access	2	1
Sub Total	2	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs		
1. Enrollment Programs	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
Total	104	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - CSP Developers (84.282E) - 2: 84.282E

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282E180002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational Opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary considers the quality of the plan to ensure that the charter school the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.**

Strengths:

The school was designed to improve academic achievement and graduation rates in a low-income population of the city while also attracting students from more affluent areas of the city to achieve a more diverse student population (e25-e27). School serves students from three different school districts, in a unique partnership with the primary purpose being to integrate the students of the community (e25). Current student population is 33% white, 31% African American, 22% Hispanic, 13% Multi-racial, 1% Asian (e28). School serves 61% educationally disadvantaged students, pulling the majority of those students from the City of York and integrating them with students pulled from the two school districts that have higher average income rates (e32).

School offers an International Baccalaureate (IB) program and has earned IB certification for the primary school (e38). School will add an IB-authorized Middle Years Program and Diploma Programme (e29, e38), which is not currently available in the region. School plans to use grant funds to expand the current K-8 program by one more classroom per grade level, and to grow into a K-12 program by adding grades 9-12 over the next 4 years (e28). Proposed project will increase access to this program from 675 students (e28) in 2017-18 by adding 100 students per grade level in grades 9-12, and 25 students per grade level in grades K-7.

In 2017, "historically underperforming" students outpaced the subgroup statewide in all three state assessment areas: English Language Arts, Math, and Science (e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 28

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:

Logic model lists strategies, outputs, outcomes and impacts in detail (e154-e157). For example, the goal, "Obtain/retain International Baccalaureate Authorization at all school levels" is followed by the activities ("Provide IB training, complete Middle Years authorization, and Complete Diploma Programme authorization") (e156). This is followed by the expected outcomes ("teachers knowledgeable about IB, Primary program is re-authorized, Middle Years program is authorized, and Diploma Programmed is authorized"). All of this leads to "K-12 educational program is offered as an internationally-recognized high-quality educational program, supporting York area's long range economic and community development strategy through the attractiveness of this educational option" (e156).

Weaknesses:

Overall responsibility is assigned to key personnel, but these areas of responsibility are not clearly tied to the activities and goals (e57-e63). Application would be stronger with specific milestones listed in project narrative and if those milestones were tied to the budget narrative (e64-e69).

Reader's Score: 13

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

Strengths:

School provides an inclusive, team-teaching model, with support services for students with disabilities (11%), English learners (4%), and all educationally disadvantaged learners (61%) in the school population (e13). School is located in an urban center with a 78% poverty level and collaborated with city leaders to develop this school model to address the needs of students and families in the region (e27). School offers student-centered inquiry-based learning and continuous assessment for frequent progress monitoring, providing feedback on the learning process (e43-e44).

IB instructional framework provides high levels of student engagement and responsibility for their own learning (e48).

Community service, attention to state standards, IB framework, individual learning goals, and behavior support combine to create a successful school program that is serving the needs of the target population (e39-e40).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability

Strengths:

School expresses its commitment to modeling diversity and positive inter-ethnic relations among its staff (e62). School has developed policies to guide recruitment of diverse staff, including intentional recruitment at historically black colleges such as Howard and Lincoln (e63). School acknowledges that more work is needed to increase diversity on staff to reflect the student population (e63).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

Proposed grant project will be overseen by the CEO. His experience and credentials are strong and appropriate for the role: he has served as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent in the region (e57). He has been an assistant professor and educational leadership consultant (e57). Additional key personnel include Head of Upper School and the Head of Lower School, both positions being created and filled with internal promotions to meet the needs of the growing school (e58). The Head of Upper School has served as an elementary principal and assistant superintendent (e58), and holds an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership (e84). The Head of Lower School has been a classroom teacher and dean of students and completed a Master's degree in School Administration (e86).

The Business Manager has served as Director of Operations and Business Manager for nearly 20 years (e89-e90).

School describes a strong partnership between the key personnel on staff and the board of trustees, who have a wide variety of experience and network connections that are benefitting the school (e60-e62).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

Strengths:

School plans to open a second facility to accommodate enrollment growth (e63).

Majority of the proposed expenses are in the "Supplies" category for all five years of the grant term (e6). Management plan includes responsible personnel (CEO, Heads of School, Business Manager) and goals, timelines and milestones for each major activity. For example, a major responsibility is "Recruit and hire new instructional staff (1 certified teacher/1 instructional assistant) for the 4th classroom" (e64). Timeline is "winter-spring" for recruiting and "spring-summer" for hiring. Milestones are listed as "advertising placed, applications received, hiring completed." Plan is comprehensive and

measurable. Goals and activities are listed in the areas of expanding the lower school, creating and developing the upper school, attaining IB accreditation, improving student academic achievement, and managing assessments for improvement and accountability (e64-e69).

Budget proposal includes specific details and rationale for all expenditures (e159-e182), including classroom furniture, cafeteria seating, instructional materials, and teacher training. Plan includes timelines for purchases by grant year and dollar amounts by category. Plan is coherent, aligned with school goals, and easy to understand.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the charter school to be replicated or expanded is a high-quality charter school, including:

(1) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages. These subgroups of students include: Economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and students who are ELs.

(2) The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments and annual student attendance and retention rates, and where applicable and available, student academic growth, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates) for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have exceeded the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.

(3) The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; and have had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

School program addresses both standards-centered accountability for the state and the curricular demands of the IB program (e39-e41), providing a high quality educational option for all enrolled students. School has wait lists for enrollment, with 241 students on the wait list in the current school year (e71). School has achieved 95% student attendance rate since opening (e71). School is enrolling a diverse student body who are out-performing state averages (e71). In 2017, students in the category of "historically underperforming" surpassed state averages in all three assessed subject areas (e73). All students in Grade 3 were 76.8% proficient, which Historically Underperforming earned 72.5% on the ELA assessment. All students in Grade 4 were 65.3% proficient, which Historically Underperforming earned 53.3% in ELA. Results across grade levels and in Math and Science show a similar pattern, with underperforming students averaging within 20% of all students (e99-e100).

School also provided comparative data for students with disabilities (e101-111). Grade 3 students with disabilities achieved 45.5% proficient on ELA assessments, compared with 76.8% proficiency for all students. Grade 3 students with disabilities achieved 45.5% proficient on Math assessments, compared with 66.2% proficiency for all students.

Audit report from September 2017 states that "no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported" were found (e147). School has reported no statutory or regulatory noncompliance and demonstrates a strong financial position (e73).

Weaknesses:

The detailed assessment reports are helpful but data from prior years would be helpful to demonstrate trends. SWD are performing at a lower rate than all students by a significant percentage (30% lower in grade 3 example above).

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:

School plan provides for steady and well-managed growth (e74). School has strong community support, with start-up contributions and continued support from several local foundations (e55-e56). School received \$360,000 in donations for a Public Arts Playground (e56). School has received charter renewal approval and has no significant issues on record.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice**

This priority is for projects that are designed to increase access to educational choice and improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students in communities served by rural local educational agencies**
- (ii) Children with disabilities**
- (iii) English learners**
- (iv) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.**

Note: Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

School enrolls 11% students with disabilities (SWD) and 4% English Language Learners (ELLs) (e33). Proposal plans to increase overall student enrollment, thereby providing access to more students with disabilities and English Language Learners through open enrollment and possible lottery (e29). School states that 75% of ELLs enrolled have increase English performance as defined by state standards (e36).

Weaknesses:

Percentage of both groups appears low to qualify for this criterion. School plan assumes that increasing the overall enrollment number will directly increase the number of SWD and ELLs (e29). School does not provide the total number of SWD and ELLs in the three school districts or the state, so comparisons are not possible.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2—Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High Schools

The extent to which the proposed project is designed to increase student access to, participation in, and completion of dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools.

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

This criterion is not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/15/2018 11:31 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/20/2018 07:24 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282E180002)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	10
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	20	18
Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	15	13
Sub Total	100	95
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Access to High-Quality Educational Choice		
1. Increasing Access	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs		
1. Enrollment Programs	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
Total	104	97

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - CSP Developers (84.282E) - 2: 84.282E

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282E180002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational Opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary considers the quality of the plan to ensure that the charter school the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.**

Strengths:

The applicant notes that currently 61% of the students enrolled are considered economically disadvantaged, as well as 11% of the student population identified as students with special needs and 4% as English learners (p. e33). The school's IB curriculum and instruction model is designed to appeal to all students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, need, ability level, or economic status (p. e33). The applicant details that the student-centered, inquiry-based instructional methods and associated assessment methods allow for differentiation of each learning activity to accommodate the special needs of each student in each educationally disadvantaged subgroup (p. e33). The applicant provides a number of supports for educationally disadvantaged learners including an inclusive team teaching model for special education and English learner students (p. e35), additional supports including a school psychologist, guidance counselor, reading specialist, speech therapist (p. e35) as well as individualized and small-group academic interventions, a school-wide positive behavior support intervention plan, child study meetings to monitor progress of targeted students, Child Find supports to identify potential special education students, and supports for English learners including push-in services by certified ELL staff during reading and math classes, and the contracting with outside providers as necessary for the placement of students with special needs (p. e34-35). The applicant lists specific strategies for recruiting and enrolling students including noting the importance of the perception that the school provides an equitable opportunity for all families and students to enroll in the school (p. e49). As noted by the applicant, 2017 data reveals that historically underrepresented students (students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students) scored at higher proficiency levels than other students in the state for English Language Arts, Math and Science (p. e36) and that 75% of English learners annually increased their English language reading performance according to state guidelines with at least 25% increasing two or more reading levels and 50% or more increasing at least one grade level (p. e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted in the applicant's response.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

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:

The applicant describes dimensions of change, strategies and activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts as part of a logic model presented on pages e 154-157, with broad goals (complete creation of K-12 adding grades 9-12, reduce annual waiting list by expanding lower school grade levels, obtain IB authorization at all school levels, and maintain focus of whole school system on high-quality student learning and academic achievement) and accompanying activities to accomplish the dimensions of change. The activities are specifically described with precise language as to the nature of the activity and the year in which the activity is conducted. The outputs (short term results of the strategy) and long term outcomes are clearly described, with some outcomes such as student enrollment targets (p. e154) and a school performance profile target of 70 (p. e157) quantified and measurable. The activities, outputs, and outcomes described are clearly linked to the project design narrative described on pages e37-56.

Weaknesses:

Although the management plan described on pages e63-71 contain measurable targets for the overall goals, some elements of the project lack measurable targets, including activities linked to the IB curriculum including the planned scope and sequence, lesson planning and instruction for each course (p. e155); teacher competencies regarding IB expectations and effective instruction (p. e156); and student achievement targets including level of advanced or proficient on state assessments.

Reader's Score: 14

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 project as described on pages e37-56 is detailed in its description of activities designed to address the needs of the target population, with the overall goals of expanding the school to grades 9-12 and expanding the lower school by 25 students in each grade level beginning at kindergarten and through grades 5 while following the IB program and retaining authorization in existing grade levels and gaining authorization in the expanded grade levels (p. e37). To accomplish this, the applicant describes an educational program that allows for study across a broad range of content domains, emphasis on language acquisition and development, multidisciplinary learning and collaborative research opportunities, study in the IB Theory of Knowledge, and a community service component (p. e38). The applicant describes a curriculum program that addresses both the regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the curriculum guidelines of IB (p. e39), a guiding framework of IB standards that also reflects the standards-based accountability of the state's approved ESSA plan for meeting adequate early progress on state assessments including state-administered ELA and Math assessments in grades 3-8, Science assessments in grades 4 and 8, and EOC assessments in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology, of which proficiency in these EOC exams will be part of the graduation requirements in 2019-20 (p. e41). The applicant also describes the assessment and achievement program in detail, noting that on-going formative and summative assessments are used to measure progress towards state standards, and by including other components of the assessment program including student planning for their own learning and assessment, strategies for assessment including problem solving through critical thinking, creativity, intuitive thinking, reasoning in comparative and interdisciplinary study, participation in community service, a program to achieve language competency in one additional language, and the provision of individual learning goals with a system of supports for students who do not meet those goals (p. e43). The applicant also notes instructional strategies designed to actively engage students in their own learning (p. e47), a system of positive behavioral supports to foster and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment (p. e51), a comprehensive approach to parent and community involvement including various informative communication and outreach strategies, a parent advisory council, partnerships with surrounding communities, school districts, social service agencies, community organizations, and local businesses (p. e53-56), and transportation for students

Sub Question

residing in one of the three districts serving York as required under state law (p. e56).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted in the applicant's response.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:**

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability**

Strengths:

The applicant notes a commitment to modeling diversity and positive relations in regards to the ethnic diversity of its staff. It describes addressing the issue of increasing the recruitment of staff from under-represented groups by posting employment notices with state and regional colleges and universities as well as traditionally black colleges such as Howard and Lincoln (p. e63). The school describes recognizing that the current staff makeup does not reflect the racial diversity of its student body and expresses a commitment to seek ways to be more effective in recruiting a diverse workforce (p. e62-63).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted in the applicant's response.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes in detail the qualifications, training, and experience of the personnel involved in the project, including the current CEO, the current instructional development supervisor and proposed head of the expanded secondary school, the current dean of students and head of the proposed expanded lower school, and the current business manager. The descriptions provided in the narratives on page e57-59 as well in the resumes included on pages e78-90 provide significant detail and evidence that the key project personnel have the qualifications, training, and experience to successfully manage the project activities. In addition, the applicant describes on pages e59-61 the role of the board of trustees in the project, a description of the relevant organizational management and leadership experience of the board, the role of the board in launching the school, developing an innovative design, strong governance support, leadership in curriculum development, and effective fiscal management.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted in the applicant's response.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

The applicant details a management plan on pages e63-71 that lists four major goals including complete creation of K-12 adding grades 9-12, reduce annual waiting list by expanding lower school grade levels, obtain IB authorization at all school levels, and maintain focus of whole school system on high-quality student learning and academic achievement, which are also detailed in the logic plan presented on pages e154-157. Each of the four goals include measurable targets for performance, key personnel responsible for the goal activities, a specific timeline that describes activities both within years and across years, and milestones that note accomplishments related to the specific activities. The budget narrative on pages e159-182 provides a very specific description on how grant funds will be utilized throughout the length of the project, with budgeted amounts linked to the management plan activities.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted in the applicant's response.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

- 1. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the charter school to be replicated or expanded is a high-quality charter school, including:**

(1) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages. These subgroups of students include: Economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and students who are ELs.

(2) The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments and annual student attendance and retention rates, and where applicable and available, student academic growth, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates) for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have exceeded the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.

(3) The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; and have had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

The applicant notes that the school has reenrollment rates and attendance rates that exceed 95% and a waiting list of 241 students in the current school year (p. e71). In regards to student performance, the school reports that in 2017 that the

achievement of students within the three cohorts of students attending the school (Central York, York Suburban, and York City) reached the advanced/proficient level of achievement in higher percentages than students in the chartering district for all students in ELA and Math in every cohort except Math students in the Central York cohort, and that the aggregate school performance measure has been within the 67-76 range for several years, near the state-established target of 70 (p. e71-72). The school's charter was renewed by all three chartering boards after its initial five years of operation (p. e72). In regards to the historically underperforming student subset (special education students, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged students), the school surpassed students in statewide averages for this group in reading, math, and science performance (p. e73). The school also exceeded statewide averages for performance for the "all" students group in Science and matched statewide performance in ELA. The school reports no issues in regards to statutory or regulatory non-compliance (p. e73).

Weaknesses:

The school scored below the statewide average for all students in math for the 2017 results (p. e73). It is difficult to determine multi-year performance trends for the school as student performance data is only presented for one year, although previous years are sometimes mentioned in the narrative.

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:

The applicant discusses strategies for continuing the project after the grant period has ended, including a commitment to increasing student enrollment and a commitment to continue the grant activities beyond the end of the project date by a focus on the development of professional staff, a collaborative, learning-focused organizational culture, a commitment to sustained high academic performance, and ensuring a robust waitlist (p. e74). The applicant intends to overcome anticipated shortfalls of revenue through additional federal assistance if necessary. None of the expenditures are tied to personnel costs as noted in the budget narrative (p. e159-182), increasing the likelihood of sustainability.

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes potential expenditures and debt services costs beyond annual revenue during the grant period. Federal funding will be elicited to help cover the revenue shortfall, but the applicant does not provide a plan to obtain federal funding beyond the funds provided in the grant (p. e74).

Reader's Score: 13

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice**

This priority is for projects that are designed to increase access to educational choice and improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students in communities served by rural local educational agencies**
- (ii) Children with disabilities**
- (iii) English learners**
- (iv) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.**

Note: Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The applicant notes that the current population of special education students (11% of total enrollment) and English learners (4% of enrollment) will have full access to the school's state-aligned IB curriculum as part of the 9-12 expansion (p. e30), a practice for which the school was commended in a June, 2014 Pennsylvania Department of Education monitoring report (p. e34) with the inclusion of these students in the primary years program. The applicant notes that the school intends to improve academic achievement and graduation rates of both of these student groups (p. e30). The school uses an inclusive, team-teaching model to deliver instruction to students in these groups and coordinates services with other state agencies to provide services for these students including emotional support, hearing impaired and neurologically impaired programs as well as consultation and professional development services (p. e 35). The applicant notes that in 2017 historically underrepresented students (students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students) outperformed other students in the state scoring proficient or advanced in this same group in English Language Arts, Math and Science (p. e36) and that 75% of English learners annually have increased their English language reading performance according to state guidelines with at least 25% increasing two or more reading levels and 50% or more increasing at least one grade level (p. e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted in the applicant's response.

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 does not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/20/2018 07:24 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/16/2018 02:30 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282E180002)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	30	29
Quality of Project Personnel		
1. Project Personnel	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	10	9
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Eligible Applicant	20	18
Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	15	13
Sub Total	100	94
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Access to High-Quality Educational Choice		
1. Increasing Access	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs		
1. Enrollment Programs	2	0
Sub Total	2	0
Total	104	96

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - CSP Developers (84.282E) - 2: 84.282E

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: York Academy Regional Charter School (U282E180002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational Opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary considers the quality of the plan to ensure that the charter school the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students and serve those students at rates comparable to surrounding public schools.**

Strengths:

York is committed to attracting an economically and ethnically diverse student population into its multi-district serving regional charter school, thereby addressing the isolation of ethnicities and economic statuses existing within the current urban/suburban school boundaries (e18). In 2017-18, around 60% of students at York were eligible for free or reduced price lunch (e25). York is the only charter in the state that combines students from three different school districts with dramatically different student demographics (e25). More detail on their unique three-district strategy is provided on e32-33.

York's current student population is 33% White, 31% African American, 22% Hispanic, 13% Multi-Racial, 1% Asian, 61% low-income, 11% special education, and 4% ELL (e28).

Demographics of the three chartering school districts is provided and reflect a range of student profiles in that one district is 78% low-income, while the other two are around 31% low income (e26).

Schools in the School District of the City of York (78% low income) have failed regularly to make adequate yearly progress, and several schools have been in corrective action and labeled "focus schools" for more than a decade. York Academy works to remedy these historical failures and provide a new, high quality option for students in that district (e27).

Promotion of student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity and socioeconomic diversity, is a conscious and explicit value and goal of York Academy. The school actively recruits students from across district boundaries and their International Baccalaureate (IB) program promotes and fosters strengths of diversity and improves student achievement even for most disadvantaged populations (e18).

The IB framework and school-wide positive behavior supports structure a learning environment based on several principle strategies used to assure that all students are provided opportunities and reasonable accommodations to support achievement of academic goals. The school's strategies and supports to ensure students with disabilities and English learners have full access are detailed on pages e34-35. The school employs special education and ESL staff who partner with classroom teachers for instructional design, team-teaching, and in-class support for targeted students (e35).

Additional supports for educationally disadvantaged students are provided on an individual, as-needed basis by the school psychologist, guidance counselor, reading specialist, speech therapist, and school nurse (e35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in the application.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

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

Reader's Score: 29

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:

The overarching goal of the project is to expand educational programming and enrollment at York Academy. The applicant names five specific primary goals and targets that guide the narrative (e18). One of the goals is explicitly to increase the percentage of students achieving "proficient" or "advanced" on state assessments, with targets for historically underperforming students.

York proposes expanding educational choice through two prongs: 1) adding grades 9-12 in a new 8-12 Upper School over a four-year period, and 2) expanding the Lower School by increasing K-7 enrollments, adding 25 student classes at one grade level annually (e28).

Project goals described in the narrative are very clearly aligned with and reflected in the budget narrative and request beginning on e159.

Weaknesses:

Although management plan activities (beginning on e60) contain some measurable targets, many elements of project lack measurable targets. See comments in criteria #4 for more details.

Reader's Score: 14

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 student centered, inquiry based, multi-faceted instructional method and associated assessment methods lend themselves well to differentiation of each learning activity to accommodate special needs of each student and at-risk sub groups (e33).

The core values and IB framework of York align with the focus on a diverse student population as students are encouraged to be active, compassionate, global citizens who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right (e37).

The school's K-12 design and IB framework incorporate several features: 1) study across a broad and balanced range of knowledge domains using educational content from around the world, 2) special emphasis on language acquisition and development, 3) opportunities for engaging in multi-disciplinary learning, 4) a focus on developing skills of learning, 5) culminating study of the Theory of Knowledge in the Diploma Program, 6) opportunities for individual and collaborative planning and research, and 7) a community service component that requires action and reflection (e36). The application provides extensive detail on the program design and addresses curriculum,

Sub Question

assessment, instructional practices, student recruitment and enrollment, discipline, positive school climate and student support, parent and community involvement, and transportation on pages e38-e56.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in the application.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:**

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

- 1. (1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability**

Strengths:

York is committed to modeling diversity and positive inter-ethnic relations among staff, just as it does among students. It acknowledges that it has work to do to create a staff profile that is reflective of the racial/ethnic mix of students served (e62-63). The school states that it continues to address this issue. Recruitment of staff from underrepresented groups is conducted under guidance of Board policies, and the school posts notices for available positions at historically Black institutions. It will continue to seek ways to be more effective in hiring a workforce reflective of the student population (e63).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in the application.

Reader's Score: 1

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

Strengths:

Four key project personnel are identified that will play a leadership role within project implementation; their biographies are provided in the narrative (e57-59) and their resumes are included in Appendix B. No CSP funds will be used to support their time and effort. The Board will also play a key oversight role with the project and all elements of school development. Together, the Board brings strong training and experience in educational leadership, nonprofit management, Board governance and administration, and fiscal management (e59, Appendix B).

The partnership between the key project staff and the Board demonstrates that they have strong capacity for operation and development of the school's growth plan. Their combined training and experience is impressive and relevant to the project design (e60-e62).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in the application.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

The applicant recognizes that expansion of enrollment capacity and addition of a high school will require the opening of a second facility and incurring of operational costs beyond what will be covered by public funds during start-up years (e63). Therefore, the applicant requires federal support to meet four specific expansion project objectives detailed on pages e63-67. For each objective, the applicant provides a table that includes activities, timelines, and project milestones to be implemented on an annual basis for each new grade addition and also designates the staff members responsible for executing each objective.

York's budget narrative (e159-e182) is extensively detailed and indicates a strong understanding of project needs and specific fund expenditures to bring the expansion project to a reality. Specifically, York seeks assistance in provisioning new classrooms and labs, providing new students and teachers with key technology support, and providing essential professional development to new staff to enable them to support the IB programming (e159). They frame these needs year-by-year and category-by-category and include assumptions for all calculations. There is strong alignment between the narrative, program goals, and budget requests.

Weaknesses:

The tables provided on e63-67 include vague milestones that lack quantitative indicators to assess progress. For example, the activity to "recruit and enroll new students to bring school to planned capacity" is attached to the milestone of "recruitment activities completed/documented; applications received; students selected; admissions offered; enrollment completed" (e64-65). This activity alone glosses over a tremendous amount of work that needs to be completed, and it is concerning that no quantitative indicators are presented to assess progress (such as the % of students the school wishes to have enrolled by the spring before school launch).

While goal #4 – to improve student achievement to meet state performance standards – does include quantitative targets overall for subject area proficiency (e67), it does not include periodic benchmarks or milestones so it's unclear how the school expects to raise performance over time.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

- 1. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the charter school to be replicated or expanded is a high-quality charter school, including:**
 - (1) The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages. These subgroups of students include: Economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and students who are ELs.**
 - (2) The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide**

assessments and annual student attendance and retention rates, and where applicable and available, student academic growth, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates) for educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have exceeded the average academic achievement results for such students in the State.

(3) The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have been closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; and have had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

York Academy's reach goes beyond school walls. Its multi-district, urban-suburban structure is designed to breach racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic boundaries and reduce urban isolation, simultaneously contributing to city and regional economic development (e26).

York is currently authorized by IB at the Primary Years Programme level, is a candidate for the Middle Years Programme, and will apply for authorization as a Diploma Programme once the 9-12 levels are added. The school anticipates accreditation by June 2022 (e38).

York has had a growing waiting list for the last five years (e28) and has retained enrollment of students at rates higher than 95% for several years in a row (e71).

In 2017, York's "historically underperforming" subgroup, consisting of students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students, outpaced the subgroup statewide in all three state assessment areas. In all assessed areas, York students in subgroups of Black, Hispanic, and Multi-racial also matched or exceeded statewide student performance, with one exception noted below (e36). York students in the "historically underperforming" group surpassed statewide "historically underperforming" student results in all three tested subject areas in 2017 (e73).

Annually, more than 75% of English learners have increased their reading performance as defined and assessed in accord with state guidelines (e36).

York's students from its chartering urban district (York City) have consistently surpassed performance of district peers on PSSA state assessments, while students from the two suburban charter districts have paralleled performance of their district peers. In recently PSSA ELA and Math assessments, York students outperformed their cohorts from their chartering districts in nearly every comparison (e72).

On the state's aggregate school performance scoring measure, York's 2017 71.0 surpassed the scores earned by any of the schools in two of their chartering districts, falling short of only York Suburban schools (e72). Additional student assessment results for all students and for each subgroup are provided in Appendix E (e99-e111).

York has operated with no statutory or regulatory noncompliance and financial management has been strong, providing high-quality services on revenues per student significantly less than the chartering districts and state average (e73). York's financial audits are consistently clean, and most recent Financial Statement is included in Appendix F (e73).

Weaknesses:

York's Black students in Math were the only subgroup that did not match or exceed statewide student performance in that subject (e36).

In the category of "all students", York fell short of statewide performance in Math in 2017. However, they are revising their Math curriculum to improve alignment with state standards and take heart in relative success of students in "historically underperforming" subgroup (e73).

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:

York's planful and steady growth, continuing development of staff and collaborative organizational culture, committed to continued improvement in pursuit of high academic performance, and waiting list for entry indicate that their future capacity and sustainability is strong (e74).

CSP funds will help address absence of state or local funding for facilities expansion and resulting gap between bigger expenditures in the short term and initially lagging, but ultimately increasing, expansion of revenues in the long term (e18).

The York County Community Foundation and the local Women's Giving Circle have made start-up contributions and continue to support the school through grants and other contributions. Other community partners also provide funds or in-kind support to the school, like in-school library support, arts instruction, and donations to a community campaign for a playground build (e56).

Key staff and Board members bring significant experience and training in stewardship of public funds and strong fiscal management (e61). York operates with a well-developed set of financial controls and procedures for management of financial resources implemented within parameters of Board policies and the Board-adopted annual budget (e70-71).

The school's budget projections (Appendix F) show how federal grant funding will help address impact on school finances of opening a new school. There will be a fiscal squeeze in the short term for which they request CSP funds that will set stage for strong, fiscally responsible continuation of school operations and growth (e74).

Weaknesses:

The application would have been strengthened with some evidence of fundraising efforts previously or currently undertaken by the school. This would demonstrate additional capacity for continuation not solely reliant on CSP funds or public revenues.

Reader's Score: 13

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Access to High-Quality Educational Choice

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice**

This priority is for projects that are designed to increase access to educational choice and improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) **Students in communities served by rural local educational agencies**
- (ii) **Children with disabilities**
- (iii) **English learners**
- (iv) **Students who are members of federally recognized Indian Tribes.**

Note: Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

Strengths:

The student population of York Academy is multi-ethnic, with majority from low-income households (e18). York draws 60% + of its students from a poor, urban, multi-ethnic school district and the expansion inherently expands educational options and opportunities to traditionally underserved and historically underperforming students (e18).

York’s current student population is 33% White, 31% African American, 22% Hispanic, 13% Multi-Racial, 1% Asian, 61% low-income, 11% special education, and 4% ELL (e28). The project will increase access for children with disabilities and English learners in two primary ways: 1) increasing enrollment capacity and therefore access, and 2) adding grades 9-12 will make the IB program, which does not currently exist in the region, accessible to these grade levels (e29). Both the students with disabilities and English learner subgroups are supported by York in making progress towards meeting state standards through full access to the rigorous, state standards-aligned IB curriculum (e30).

After monitoring York’s special education services in 2014, the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, commended the school. The statement is included on page e34.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in the application.

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:

No strengths identified.

Weaknesses:

This CPP was not addressed in the application.

Reader's Score: 0

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