

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/05/2019 05:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Washington State Charter Schools Association (U282A190002)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	14
Objectives		
1. Objectives	20	18
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	15
State Plan		
1. State Plan	20	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	14
Parent and Community Involvement		
1. Involvement	10	8
Flexibility		
1. Flexibility	5	4
Sub Total	100	92
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Equitable Financing		
1. Equitable Financing	3	3
Sub Total	3	3
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Charter School Facilities		
1. Charter School Facilities	4	2
Sub Total	4	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools/LEAs		
1. Best Practices	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Serving At-Risk Students		

1. Serving At-Risk Students	3	3
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Sub Total	3	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 6

Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

1. CharterSchool Authorizing	4	3
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Sub Total	4	3
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Total	116	105
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Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel 4 - Washington - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Washington State Charter Schools Association (U282A190002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the Project Design

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers

Reader's Score: 14

Sub

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:

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

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates a robust rationale by aligning best-practices with the research-informed work from their 2017 Strategic Plan (e405), which also aligns to the Commission's 2018 Strategic Plan (e484). The applicant has created a projection table (e58) of known potential new applicants, based off the documented demand for the School Leadership and Design Fellowship, the letters of intent to apply, and participation in the Commission's Charter 101 trainings demonstrating the demand for charter school funding.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified.

Reader's Score: 10

2. 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:

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

Strengths:

From the logic model (e473), the inputs (resources), activities (outputs), and performance measures are well aligned to the rationale of the program. In Table 4 on e45-e50, the applicant outlines the performance targets for each objective. For Objectives 1-3, the goals, objectives, and outcomes are clear, specific, and measurable, and the baseline data provided leads to greater confidence in the outcomes of the proposed project.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a justification for lack of baseline data in Objective 4, therefore it is difficult to determine that their outcomes are measurable and informed by any data or demonstrated need (e49-e50).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Objectives

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

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

Strengths:

The objectives to which the applicant commits are very detailed, developed, and student-focused. For example, the first objective is ambitious in that it focuses not on the number of high-quality schools, but the number of high-quality seats. Their second objective emphasizes services to at-risk students in improving student outcomes. The feasibility of this objective can be justified with the applicant's commitment to supporting different charter school models through their School Leadership and Design Fellowship program, which prioritizes diverse and innovative models, geographic diversity and diverse leadership pipeline program (e501). The third objective details that the applicant has established relationships with the right stakeholders to disseminate "effective" practices with those stakeholders. Finally, fourth objective includes a commitment to partner with NACSA in improving authorizing. Objectives three and four are feasible because the applicant shares evidence of previous successes and therefore the capacity to scale up their work. For each objective, the two to five activities are detailed with clear expectations on who will deliver what activity, and which activities are currently being scaled up or added to the programming (e50-53).

The applicant outlines that a five-year implementation will allow for them to first (in Year 1) research and explore expansion and replication grant options and develop expansion subgrant criteria and protocol. This timeline is therefore realistic, smart and ensures that community needs are timely and reflected in the expansion grants (e59).

Weaknesses:

The applicant references a goal of "at least 1%" improvement for performance targets 2b, 2d, 2f, yet does not explain why this improvement goal appears to be unambitious and how it would assist in meeting the broader goals of the project (e47).

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides excellent evidence that their systems and processes have led to a strong public charter school option for many families. For example, "antecedent to the legally binding charter contract becoming effective and prior to school opening, each school must complete all Pre-Opening Conditions as specified in the charter contract" (e40). In other words, authorized schools must meet certain benchmarks indicating success well before students arrive for the first

day of school. Additionally, the charter contract outlines a Performance Framework that clearly sets expectations regarding academic growth and progress, financial health and viability, and compliance with state and federal regulations (e41).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. State Plan

Reader's Score: 19

Sub

1. The State entity's plan to--

- a. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;**

Strengths:

The applicant provides extensive commitments to working directly with subgrantees to "clarify, negotiate, and confirm clear, measurable, and ambitious CSP subgrant objectives," which will inform the monitoring rubric aligned to CSP grant requirements and used by the applicant for their quarterly desk reviews (e68-e69).

The applicant comprehensively demonstrates partnerships with the Office of the Superintendent (OSPI), the State Board of Education (SBE), and the Washington State Charter School Commission (Commission) in monitoring each subgrantee's academic progress, finances, and operations (e70). For example, the CSP Fiscal Manager will use the OSPI school reimbursement systems to monitor grant expenditures and will flag for withholding any CSP Funds if the subgrantee does not meet conditions in their CSP contract and charter contract.

In addition to the support given preemptively by the applicant, the OSPI, SBE, and State Auditor's Office in Washington support charter schools in addition to traditional public schools in meeting compliance requirements (e54).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

2. The State entity's plan to:

- b. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies; and**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant will have full administrative oversight over all aspects of the CSP grant (e67). Their role will be proactive in its provision of technical assistance to sub-grantees. The applicant will also be providing ongoing support and oversight alongside the authorizer (e67). The best evidence the applicant provides for avoiding duplication is that the applicants will be required to submit only one application for both authorization and CSP eligibility, and new schools only need to engage in one grant allocation and reporting system (managed by OSPI) (e71). Finally, the applicant outlined the responsibilities and roles of each partner organization (e65-e67), which allows for confident judgement that duplication will be mitigated.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The State entity's plan to:

c. Provide technical assistance and support for:

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

Strengths:

To proactively offer technical support, the applicant demonstrates their commitment to working with the OSPI, SBE, and Commission to obtain the necessary reports and data to target technical support to schools (e69). Strong examples of technical support include incubating and training school leaders and teams for strong launch and opening of homegrown charters, engaging communities to develop school models, and professional development for board governance, data-driven instruction, inclusion and diversity, and teacher recruitment (e423-425).

The applicant provides evidence of work to ensure quality authorizing efforts in the State by referencing the Commission's 2018 review of their practices as they are aligned to NACSA's "Quality Practices Project" (e38).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does provide specific examples of how the LEA authorizer ensures best-practices in authorizing and monitoring, but they do not detail if their 5-year renewal process will also adopt best-practices (e74). Additionally, the applicant mentions a strong partnership with the LEA authorizer, but does not include details on the intended contracted technical assistance they will give to LEA authorizers (e74).

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:

(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; and

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

Strengths:

The applicant articulates a timeline that includes milestones for each objective. These timelines and milestones are consistent and seem realistic for meeting outcomes. The applicant also details their plans to staff the CSP grant management through in-kind funding (current WA Charters staff), a CSP-funded Project Coordinator, and contractor services (e75). The applicant proposes a detailed work stream (e76-80), especially as it relates to each member of the CSP staff team.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant clearly articulated work streams for each activity, they did not thoroughly address the time commitment of current staff members, especially in their capacity to manage additional work resulting from the CSP grant. For example, the CSP Fiscal Manager will work with the OSPI school reimbursement systems to monitor the expenditures and approve reimbursements as requested and as subgrant contract and charter authorizer conditions are met (e70).

Considering much of this grant will be managing expenses from various state agencies, the applicant plans for their CFO to run this work, which may be burdensome for a full-time work load (e76-81), therefore it is difficult to judge whether or not the staffing plan is appropriate to meet the needs of the objectives of the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Parent and Community Involvement**1. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State.****Strengths:**

Already in WA, potential charter school operators must include in their NCSA input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of their charter school, specific role of parents/guardians and community members in developing the application, and how the school as assessed and built demand from parents/guardians and community members (e165). Likewise, the applicant provides a clear and comprehensive family and community engagement strategy in their strategic plan (e405).

Weaknesses:

With the exception of their plans to lead a statewide parent steering committee, which provides leadership opportunities for parents and community members, the applicant plans a lot of convenings and resource-sharing, but does not clearly articulate how these convenings will reach parents of WA's most underserved students (e82-83).

Additionally, the applicant addressed somewhat how they would solicit feedback from parents and communities, but did not address how they would consider this input (e82-83).

Reader's Score: 8

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

The applicant very thoroughly provides statutory evidence that charters in WA have the flexibility to innovate in scheduling, personnel, funding, and educational programs to improve student outcomes and academic achievement (e83). Considering Summit Charter in their state has led to the sharing of innovative practices in LEAs (one example of

innovation), the applicant does provide proof of the flexibility that state law allows.

Weaknesses:

Even though the charter sector is young in WA, the applicant could have provided specific examples of how they have worked to maximize the flexibility that charters have under state law (e83-e85). For example, while the applicant does prioritize the advocacy efforts to protect the charter school law, the applicant does not include in their strategic planning any details regarding how they will maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools (e436-e437).

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Equitable Financing

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Equitable Financing

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

Strengths:

State law in Washington includes clear legislative intent that state funding for charter schools be distributed equitably with the state funding for other public schools, and charter schools do receive funding in the same way as traditional public schools based on student characteristics, including transportation (e26). Additionally, since each charter functions as an LEA, they may apply for eligible non-formulaic competitive grants. Applicant provides evidence that as of the date of their application, there have been no instances of schools not receiving their state or federal funds in a prompt or timely manner (e27).

In the start-up phase, via technical assistance, the applicant works with charter schools to ensure they are able to access local/state/federal funds (e27).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Charter School Facilities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Charter School Facilities

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

- a) **Funding for facilities;**
- b) **Assistance with facilities acquisition;**
- c) **Access to public facilities;**
- d) **The ability to share in bonds or mill levies;**
- e) **The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings; or**

f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges.

Strengths:

The applicant thoroughly details that charter schools are eligible for state funding for school construction (e28). WA Charters have an established relationship with the Washington Charter School Development real-estate development firm that focuses exclusively on the development of charter school facilities. Already the WCSD has delivered seven charter school campuses and has provided management expertise to identify facilities and navigate the logistics of moving into these facilities (e28). Applicant provides letters of support from community partners to support the claim that communities are also eager to support their efforts in securing facilities (Appendix C).

The applicant proves that statutorily charter schools in WA can negotiate with public bodies (traditional public schools, colleges, etc.) for the use of a facility at fair market rent (e29).

Additionally, Charters in WA are given the right of first refusal to purchase or lease public school buildings (e30).

Weaknesses:

Applicant shares that statutorily, charter schools do not yet have the opportunity of low or no cost leasing privileges (e30). Charter schools in WA also do not have access to local levies (per state supreme court ruling).

Reader's Score: 2

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

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides convincing evidence that the State has encouraged the expansion of personalized learning (Summit Learning) into fourteen schools. Additionally, the State encourages a community alliance (the Rural Alliance) to encourage post-secondary completion and career readiness for rural students (e31). Charter schools are a part of this Alliance.

Additionally, the applicant shares they are using their strategic partnership with the OSPI, the SBE, and authorizers to address the sector's most urgent needs (e22).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were identified.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Serving At-Risk Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Serving At-Risk Students

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

Strengths:

The applicant shares appropriate data that proves charter schools in Washington serve a higher percentage of at-risk students: 2% more in Special Education, 16 points higher in FRPL, and 15 points higher students of color (e33). Applicant also includes data from a CRPE report that determines Washington's charter schools are providing more inclusive education to students with special needs than traditional public schools, on average, across the state.

The Commission's New Charter School Application (NCSA) includes specific criteria by which new schools must address how they will identify and meet the learning needs of at-risk students (e200). The NCSA is evaluated on the extent to which the applicant provides research-based and best practices to serve at-risk students (e35). The applicant provides support to operating schools on these measures, specifically by preventing student dropout through innovative school design and personalized learning and by intervening to ensure that students stay in school and continue into opportunities for post-secondary attainment (e35). Additionally, all authorized charter schools have access to the WA Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students, an early warning system for dropout prevention (e35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

1. Competitive Preference Priority 6: Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

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

Strengths:

The applicant exhaustively articulates the role of the Washington State Charter School Commission, an independent statewide agency and the only statewide authorizer. The Commission is charged with authorizing high-quality charter schools, particularly for at-risk students. They must ensure the highest standards of accountability and oversight for authorized schools, manage charter contracts and application process, monitor performance and take actions in renewal/nonrenewal/revocation(e24).

Applicant provides evidence of their best-practices in authorizing through two national leading organizations of the charter school sector: NAPCS ranked their law third strongest in the nation in 2018 and 2019, and NACSA has given WA's charter school policy a maximum score of 30/30 among states with few authorizers (e22).

Even though WA's charter sector was launched in 2012, it already has 12 schools. Since the first application cycle was opened, the number of applications submitted and approved decreased significantly, which indicates the commitment to quality by both authorizers (e39).

Additionally, state law requires WA's authorizers to align policies and practices with NACSA in organizational capacity and infrastructure, soliciting and evaluating charter applications, performance contracting, ongoing charter school oversight and evaluation, and charter renewal decision making. Their fourth objective focuses on a partnership with NACSA to

develop, review, and iterate a strong authorization renewal process (e36-37).

Finally, according to state statute, the SBE requires an annual report of the portfolio of every authorizer and persistently unsatisfactory performance of an authorizer's portfolio may trigger a special review of the authorizer by the SBE. While there has not yet been evidence of these actions having been taken or having needed to be taken, the applicant does provide evidence of the SBE adopting national best practices in the authorizing process thus far (e37).

Weaknesses:

In Washington, LEAs can serve as authorizers with the Commission serving as an external, neutral expert for application appeals. While much of the applicant's support and work has been in partnership with the statewide authorizer, applicant provides very little information regarding their work with Spokane Public Schools (e41-42). This lack of information is mitigated by the SBE-required annual report of the portfolio of every authorizer, which is one way to monitor and make public any persistently unsatisfactory performance of an authorizer's portfolio (e37). It is also mitigated by the statutory requirement that Spokane's application does meet the same high standards aligned to quality charter practices developed by NACSA (e61).

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Washington State Charter Schools Association (U282A190002)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	12
Objectives		
1. Objectives	20	16
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	14
State Plan		
1. State Plan	20	18
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	12
Parent and Community Involvement		
1. Involvement	10	6
Flexibility		
1. Flexibility	5	3
Sub Total	100	81
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Equitable Financing		
1. Equitable Financing	3	2
Sub Total	3	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Charter School Facilities		
1. Charter School Facilities	4	2
Sub Total	4	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools/LEAs		
1. Best Practices	2	1
Sub Total	2	1
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Serving At-Risk Students		

1. Serving At-Risk Students	3	3
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Sub Total	3	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 6

Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

1. CharterSchool Authorizing	4	4
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Sub Total	4	4
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Total	116	93
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Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel 4 - Washington - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Washington State Charter Schools Association (U282A190002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the Project Design

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers

Reader's Score: 12

Sub

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:

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides appropriate key project design information in the logic model on page e483, which includes a list of inputs, activities, outputs and short and long-term outcomes. The logic model also provides a variety of performance measures that are clearly aligned to the four project objectives discussed in the table on pages e45-e50. The logic model narrative briefly discusses the challenge and need for high-quality charter schools in the state, which is the persistence of the opportunity and achievement gaps that impact students of color, students that are economically disadvantaged, and students that have disabilities (p. e478-479). The baseline data under Objective 2 in the table on e46-e48 provides some current academic achievement for charter school students, which helps to explain the need for high-quality charters and explains the selected performance measures.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not give specific data or anecdotal evidence to show why this project is needed. The applicant mentions one need on page e479 to be that "opportunity and achievement gaps persist." However, there are no statistics or data to show how large the opportunity and achievement gaps are between the subgroups of students mentioned. The applicant also mentions that there will be an "emphatic focus on the success of systemically underserved students (p. e478)", but again there is no data or other support to that statement. Overall, this section lacks a clear explanation of the rationale behind the overall project.

Reader's Score: 8

2. 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:

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a strong logic model on page e483, which clearly lists the inputs, activities, outputs and short-term and long-term results that would occur if the project was implemented. The majority of the performance measures for Objectives 1 and 2 (p. e480-481) are clearly defined, measurable, and align with the proposed activities and outputs presented in the logic model. Table 4 begins on page e45 and has a comprehensive list of activities, performance measures and baseline data, specifically for the first two objectives, which helps articulate the relationship between the key components of the project and the outcomes.

Weaknesses:

Objective 4, to support and strengthen the authorizing process in the state, is not as well developed as the other three objectives. The activities are not very specific, there is no baseline data and the performance targets are vague and untested because there is no baseline data (p. e49-50).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Objectives

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

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

Strengths:

There is a table provided on pages e45 through e50 that clearly lists each of the applicant's four objectives, activities under each objective and multiple performance measures under each objective. The increase in the number of charter schools from 13 currently to 30 by 2021-22 seems reasonable with a growth rate of six new schools per year (p. e45). Based on the fact that 13 charter schools are currently open, the expectation of having 30 total charters schools opened by 2021-22 seems reasonable and ambitious (p. e45). Performance measure 2a is to increase by ten percent annually the percent of charter schools meeting or exceeding academic performance indicators (p. e46), which seems ambitious, but feasible.

The applicant provides needs-based technical assistance and various workshops, networking opportunities and ongoing operational assistance to current and future charter schools. This project will continue to build upon their current work and activities of WA Charters to meet the written objectives, specifically one and two (p. e51) in this project. Objective three will continue the applicant's collaboration with other organizations, including the research organization CRPE and the Rural Alliance to continue to share best practices and public research on the state of charter schools in Washington (p. e52).

Weaknesses:

The performance measures to decrease discipline referrals by one percent for special education and students eligible for free and reduced lunch seems like a small annual decrease (p. e47). Performance measures 2d and 2f (p. e47) do not seem particularly ambitious. The goals are to increase the percentage of fourth and eighth grade students who are achieving at or above state proficiency in reading and math by only one percent annually. Currently, eighth grade charter students are behind the state average and this incremental change would put them on par with the state data, assuming state achievement data is stagnant. A more ambitious goal would be to aim to be above the state average.

There is not enough information around performance measure 2h, to increase the percent of teachers of color in charter schools (p. e48). Various activities were listed aimed at recruiting teachers on page e51, but it is unclear how those activities will directly affect retention for teachers of color.

Reader's Score: 16

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly documents activities that would increase the likelihood of eligible subgrant applicants meeting program objectives. Washington already aligns their charter school application process with national authorizer best practice (p. e57), and there is some evidence in the attached CREDO report that charter schools are having a positive impact on student achievement (p. e232). The subgrant application will be embedded in the state charter school application (p. e62) and must be completed at the same time as the full application for a charter. This will smartly streamline the overall application and approval process, because the vetted external evaluators will be rating and commenting on both the charter application and the CSP subgrant application (p. e62). If a school is approved to open, then the CSP Project Coordinator will read and evaluate the applications, including the subgrant application and prioritize subgrants based on the original evaluation team's ratings (p. e62-63). In addition, if an approved application's subgrant application was not originally rated high, they will have an opportunity to resubmit the application with edits (p. e63) if there are available funds.

The applicant already has a strong project plan in place to ensure that high-quality applicants receive technical assistance and support throughout the entire process. Page e61 lists the thorough annual application process, which includes webinars, a day of application training, evaluations, external reviews, applicant interviews, public forums and a decision of whether or not to approve. Once a subgrantee application is approved, it is mandated that the applicant participate in technical assistance and professional development as a condition of the award (p. e611).

The Aspiring Leaders incubation program (p. e65) offered by the applicant demonstrates a high success rate because all graduates of the program who have applied for authorization have been successfully approved to open a charter school.

Weaknesses:

A formal timeline for the subgrant process will not be developed until the grant is approved (p. e62), so it is unclear if the application timeline for subgrantees will be sufficient.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. State Plan

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

1. The State entity's plan to--

- a. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;**

Strengths:

The applicant clearly outlines the three objectives for monitoring subgrants on page e67, which include proactive monitoring, technical assistance, and ongoing support and oversight. These objectives are further discussed in more detail throughout this section (p. e68-e71), outlining numerous activities and key partnerships that will help the applicant monitor subgrants and hold them accountable.

The applicant's key goal is to mitigate risk with the subgrantees by being proactive and having initial meetings to review their goals and objectives to ensure they are clear, measurable, and ambitious (p. e68) prior to receiving their award. Applicants must also develop a five-year budget and fundraising plan (p. e70) to show their sustainability after the grant period is over. There is also a plan to hire a Charter School Fiscal Specialist to ensure appropriate fiscal oversight by the partnership organizations (p. e71).

Using the same online systems to monitor the subgrantees reporting and finances eliminates the need to train subgrantees on another system (p. e68). Overall, the monitoring activities, such as quarterly desk reviews (p. e69) are aimed at identifying problems or missteps early in the grant period and providing technical assistance to try and remedy these problems quickly. There are also repercussions of not receiving funding promptly if problems are not resolved (p. e70).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

2. The State entity's plan to:

- b. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies; and**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a strong plan to work with partner organizations, including the state and authorizers to reduce duplicative efforts. Duplication is avoided from the first stage within the application. The subgrant application is part of the charter school application (p. e71), so that process is streamlined. The external reviewers will review and rate both applications at the same time (p. e72). The Washington Charter Commission also has a pool of 20 charter school evaluators that can be called upon to read these applications, so minimal additional training on the subgrant application is required (p. e72). There will also be coordination around the Year 1 onsite monitoring visit conducted by the Washington State Charter Schools Association to make sure it will occur with the authorizer site visit, to further reduce school time planning and preparation (p. e70). The subgrant orientation and training will also be held in conjunction with the authorizers' half-day orientations (p. e73).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Sub

3. The State entity's plan to:

- c. Provide technical assistance and support for:**
 - i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
 - ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State.**

Strengths:

The applicant clearly documents its history of providing high-quality technical assistance throughout the grant; this project will build on this strong history and provide a variety of technical assistance trainings annually for subgrant applicants on all aspects of the application and monitoring of the grant (p. e627). The applicant offers a sound approach to mandate trainings on finances, program requirements, and deliverables before subgrantees receive an award. There are also quarterly desk reviews and continuous communication with subgrantees to ensure that grantees are held to a high standard and comply (p. e627) with all rules and regulations. Technical assistance and monitoring will be proactive by the applicant to correct any possible missteps along the way before it could become a problem and jeopardize funding for the subgrantee, which is a critical step to try and ensure success of the subgrantees.

The applicant discusses the intent to contract with a high-quality charter authorizer consultant and to provide technical assistance to authorizers (p. e74).

Weaknesses:

Though the applicant discusses the intent to contract with a high-quality charter authorizer consultant and to provide technical assistance to authorizers (p. e74), there are no specifics around the deliverables or activities if the applicant was awarded a grant and subsequently contracted with an outside consultant.

Reader's Score: 8

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:**

(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; and

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided a detailed management plan that lists milestones for each activity that ties back to the four objectives of the project, responsible staff member for each milestone, a general timeline and the performance measure impacted (p. e76-e80). There is clear collaboration between the applicant, the SBE and authorizers throughout the project's milestones, to cut down on duplicative work efforts. Overall the timeline seems logical, specifically for the activities related to objectives one and two (p. e76-e79).

The applicant is utilizing many current staff to manage the grant program, and their salaries will not be paid for through the grant funds (p. e80-82), which shows the applicant has thoughtfully planned the budget. In addition, the applicant plans to staff up the plan as more subgrants are awarded over time. This allows for more of the funding to directly impact schools and fund activities to meet the objectives. A full-time Project Coordinator will be hired to manage the day-to-day operations of the program, ensuring that someone is monitoring all of the various activities to meet the program objectives

(p. e81).

Ninety percent of the budget will fund the subgrant awards, with seven percent going to the various technical assistance activities, and three percent to administrative costs (p. e845). The budget narrative is extremely detailed and lists each activity, the cost associated with it and a small explanation of how those funds will be spent for that activity annually (p. e845-e854).

Weaknesses:

Activity 4.5's goal is to finalize the renewal process for the charter schools that are entering their fifth year of operation (p. e80). On page e73, the applicant states that eight charters are in their third year, putting the five-year renewal date at the end of school year 2020-21. The milestones under 4.5 would finalize the renewal process in the spring of 2021 and it would not be implemented until June (p. e80). This timeline does not make sense if schools are up for renewal at the same time that the process would just be finalized. There would be no time to notify families of the decision or have a plan in place in case a school closed.

It is understandable that the supervisory staff positions for this grant are less than 1 FTE. However, based on the robust activities around technical assistance to subgrantees throughout the application process and grant period, and dissemination of best practices, it would seem that .20 FTE throughout the length of the grant is inadequate time allocated for the CSP Technical Assistance Manager to accomplish the goals of the grant (p. e81).

The budget expense for Activity 2.1 is \$192,000 (p. e852) throughout the length of the grant. The note states that \$50,000 will go towards a bi-annual contract with CRPE and additional contractors for support in collecting and writing briefs, but it is unclear how the remaining funds will be spent, which appear to be over \$100,000.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Parent and Community Involvement

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

Strengths:

The applicant developed a wide-reaching family and community engagement strategy as part of its 2017-2020 Strategic Plan (p. e417-e421) to solicit and consider input from parents and the community. There are three clear key strategies for parent and community engagement listed in the application (p. e82-83), which include building broad community partnerships to build awareness, such as through Charter 101 training, leading a statewide Professional Learning Community, and creating a parent steering committee.

The steering committee will provide families resources and tools to grow their awareness of charter schools, and an annual survey is also conducted of this committee (p. e83). The applicant discusses the community forums that are a required part of the charter application process to provide additional feedback about community demand and the types of charter schools communities would want in their neighborhoods (p. e83).

Weaknesses:

The details of the parent steering committee are limited, and it is not clear who serves on the committee, the number of members, or when and if they meet. Due to the lack of details on the parent steering committee, it is unclear how valid the information collected from the annual survey would be (p. e83). There wasn't a strong explanation of how the applicant will use the information obtained from surveys or the steering committee to influence the goals or activities of this project.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Flexibility

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly explained how Washington's state charter law gives charter schools a high degree of flexibility. Charter schools are considered their own local education agencies (LEAs), and therefore have a level of autonomy in regard to applying for federal funding and meeting federal compliance regulations (p. e27, e84). The Washington charter law does state, "charter schools are not subject to, and are exempt from, all other state statutes and rules applicable to school districts and school boards of directors" (p. e83), which would allow a high degree of flexibility in regard to schedules, personnel and expenditures.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not discuss how they will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools. The applicant monitors legislation and bills but is not directly involved in working to improve flexibility (p. e84). The charter law does say, "except as provided otherwise by this chapter or a charter contract, charter schools are exempt from all school district policies (p. e83)". A charter contract could include regulations that a charter school must adhere to, which would lessen the amount of flexibility a school would have in their operations.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Equitable Financing

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Equitable Financing**

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides some evidence of equitable financing for charter schools. The law states that funding "for charter schools be distributed equitably with state funding for other public schools (p. e26)", and the funding is based on the same state formulas for traditional public schools. Charters also receive the same type of categorical funding for special education, bilingual, and or disadvantaged students (p. e26). Charter schools are their own LEAs and therefore can apply for any additional competitive grants (p. e27). The applicant offers various supports through trainings and technical assistance to ensure charter schools understand how to access these additional competitive grants (p. e27).

Weaknesses:

While the application does state that there has been no instance of a school not receiving their funding in a timely manner (p. e27), no statute in law is cited, and no evidence is given to show how the state monitors this to ensure they receive their funding promptly. There are no funding amounts given in this application to show how much money a traditional public school and a charter school receives, which makes it difficult to know if it is in fact equitable.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Charter School Facilities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Charter School Facilities

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides some examples as to how charter schools can benefit from facilities assistance. Charter schools do have the right of first refusal by law to purchase or lease public school buildings (p. e30). The Washington Charter School Development is a nonprofit real estate development firm that has helped seven charter schools acquire campuses through grants, low cost sub-debt and leases (p. e28) and offers their expertise and training to all charter schools. Charter schools have access to public facilities and may negotiate and contract with these entities for space (p. e29).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly demonstrate if charter schools in Washington are receiving actual funds to pay for facilities. The law states that charter schools "are eligible for state funding for school construction," but there is no requirement or evidence that shows they must receive funding (p. e28) or how much they can receive. Charter schools do not have access to local levies (p. e29) and there is not a mechanism in place to give charter schools funds similar to what they could receive from local levies. Overall, it is difficult to tell from this response whether or not charter schools are able to take advantage of facilities assistance.

Reader's Score: 2

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

1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies

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

Strengths:

The applicant has provided adequate examples of how charter school best practices are disseminated throughout the state. Best practices from charter schools are disseminated throughout the state by an annual conference, which has focused on district-charter collaboration (p. e31). In addition, there is a coalition of rural public and charter schools to improve career readiness for rural students (p. e31). The Director of School Services from the Washington State Charter Schools Association has trained the state special education committee on the Universal Design for Learning (p. e30) and is directly involved in dissemination of best practices.

Weaknesses:

While this section does discuss how information is disseminated throughout the school community, it does not specifically discuss how the state is encouraging struggling schools and LEAs throughout the state to put these best practices into action.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Serving At-Risk Students**1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Serving At-Risk Students**

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

Strengths:

The applicant clearly addresses how various activities by the authorizers and the applicant help to ensure charter schools serve at-risk students. Washington's charter law mandates that authorizers give preference to applications designed to serve at-risk populations (p. e32). The applicant provides data that charter schools overall serve more students of color, economically disadvantaged students, and special education students (p. e33). The applicant runs a charter school incubation program to help charter applicants develop charter schools focused on meeting the needs of at-risk students (p. e35). The applicant also offers comprehensive technical assistance, school design support and leadership development programs to charter schools throughout the year (p. e34-35). WA Charters also provides a subscription free to all schools to help notice early warning signs of students at risk of dropping out and trains on best practices (p. e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing**1. Competitive Preference Priority 6: Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing**

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a comprehensive response as to how best practices for charter authorizing are being implemented. Washington partnered with NACSA throughout the charter school law inception process to help implement best practices for charter school authorizing from the beginning (p. e37). The applicant actively partners with the state and the authorizers to ensure that everyone is implementing best practices for oversight and accountability through technical assistance throughout the life of a charter school (p. e41-42). Authorizers and the applicant have quarterly meetings to collaborate on authorizing and monitoring, in addition to discussing next steps to continue to improve the state charter school legislation (p. e42).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 4

Status: Submitted**Last Updated:** 04/05/2019 05:24 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 04/05/2019 05:24 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Washington State Charter Schools Association (U282A190002)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Project Design	15	13
Objectives		
1. Objectives	20	17
Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants		
1. Subgrant Applicants	15	15
State Plan		
1. State Plan	20	19
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	13
Parent and Community Involvement		
1. Involvement	10	6
Flexibility		
1. Flexibility	5	3
Sub Total	100	86
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Equitable Financing		
1. Equitable Financing	3	2
Sub Total	3	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Charter School Facilities		
1. Charter School Facilities	4	2
Sub Total	4	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools/LEAs		
1. Best Practices	2	1
Sub Total	2	1
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Serving At-Risk Students		

1. Serving At-Risk Students	3	3
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Sub Total	3	3
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Competitive Preference Priority 6

Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

1. CharterSchool Authorizing	4	3
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Sub Total	4	3
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Total	116	97
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Technical Review Form

Panel #4 - Panel 4 - Washington - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Washington State Charter Schools Association (U282A190002)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Quality of the Project Design

The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers

Reader's Score: 13

Sub

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:

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

Strengths:

The applicant's proposed rationale and accompanying logic model are well developed. The applicant provided a clear and concise logic model that was directly aligned to identified needs within the State of Washington. For example, the applicant provided documentation from both WA Charter's 2017 Strategic plan (appendix F:9) and the Commission's 2018 Strategic Plan (appendix F:11) that both entities received very similar input from the field regarding the best strategies to move the state' charter movement forward (e43). These priorities were then used as the project's key objectives: 1. increasing the number of high-quality charters, 2. improve outcomes, especially for the most at-risk students, 3. disseminate innovative, effective educational practices that improve student outcomes, 4. support and strengthen authorization and renewal process (e45-49). The logic model (e478-483) contains all of the federally required components. The activities/strategies are clearly articulated and in direct alignment with the project, the rationale, and program objectives. For example, Objective 3 is focused on dissemination of innovative, effective educational practices that improve student outcomes and has two aligned activities. Activity 3.1 will build broad community partnership and awareness; and, Activity 3.2 targets research and reporting on charter impact on student outcomes (e48). Both of these activities are designed to support the applicant in achieving its objective. The outputs and relevant outcomes can be achieved through completion of the key project components. Using Objective 3 again as an example, the applicant proposes to measure its progress by collecting data on clearly identified Performance Measures (PM) 3.a increasing participation in parent steering committee, 3.b. coordinate annual charter conference, and 3c. producing research articles and reports on charter school progress and disseminating that information. This attention to detail and clear measures is apparent throughout the logic model (e478-483).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant's proposed rationale and accompanying logic model are well developed, the response is not without weaknesses. The applicant's response does not fully meet the requirement for 'rationale' as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications. In particular, the definition for rationale requires that the logic model be informed by

Sub

research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes. The applicant's rationale is based upon the strategic plans of the WA Charters and the Commission, which is important, but lacks citations from relevant research or evaluation findings that support that these needs are aligned to best practices.

Reader's Score: 8

2. 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:

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

Strengths:

The applicant's response to this criterion is fully developed. The applicant provides clearly defined goals, objectives and outcomes for the project. The goals, objectives and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable. The applicant states that the overarching goal of the proposal is "continued collaboration of all state entities to strengthen a cohesive statewide system to support the opening, expanding and eventual replication of new, high-quality charter schools to improve outcomes for all students, especially students who are at risk" (e45). Each of the four project objectives are clearly aligned to support WA Charters and their partners in attaining this goal: 1. increasing the number of high-quality charters; 2. improve outcomes, especially for the most at-risk students; 3. disseminate innovative, effective educational practices that improve student outcomes; and, 4. support and strengthen authorization and renewal process (e45-49). All outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound (SMART). All outcomes include both baseline data, as applicable, and clearly specific and measurable performance targets (e45-49). The applicant also includes all GPRA performance measures as required by the grant. For example, the performance measure for Objective 1 (GPRA) is to increase the number of charter schools in the state. The applicant provides baseline data from this year (13 schools) and annual performance targets so that it can meet the outcome of 30 schools by the 2021-22 school year (e45).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Objectives

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides a well-developed response regarding the ambitiousness of its objectives. The applicant clearly articulates four project objectives which are aligned to support WA Charters and their partners in attaining the overarching project goal: Objective 1. increasing the number of high-quality charters; Objective 2. improve outcomes, especially for the most at-risk students; Objective 3. disseminate innovative, effective educational practices that improve student outcomes; and, Objective 4. support and strengthen authorization and renewal process (e45-49). The logic model demonstrates that the relevant outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound (e478-483). All outcomes include both baseline data, as applicable, and clearly specific and measurable performance targets (e45-49).

The application is ambitious, as defined by meeting the federal definition of ambitious: “promoting continued, meaningful improvement for program participants or for other individuals or entities affected by the grant, or representing a significant advancement in the field of education research, practices, or methodologies.” This is evidenced by the creation of a subgrant process that will more than double the number of schools and student enrollment by the end of the project. The applicant intends to increase the number of schools from 13 to 30 and grow the number of students from 3,361 (as of October 20, 2018) to 9,500 by 2023-24 school year (e45).

The applicant's proposal is sound in that it clearly addresses increasing student academic achievement through activities (e50-51) and aligned performance measures (e45). Objective 2 (improve outcomes, especially for the most at-risk students) activities specifically build capacity to expand best practices and provide embedded professional development. Additionally, the applicant describes plans to continually increase the diversity of the teaching force (e50-51). The application is feasible because WA Charters is collaborating with OSPI, SBE, the Commission and SPS to complete the project (e17) and identifies specific roles and responsibilities for each partner throughout the grant (e65-67).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant's response to the ambitiousness of the project objectives is well developed, it is not without weaknesses. The identified performance targets for Objective 2b, 2d, 2f data points is 1% per year (e47). This does not appear very ambitious and is unlikely to make significant impact on student outcomes. Activity 2.3 is targeted to increase recruitment and retention of diversity in teachers but the specific activity described within the application focuses only on increasing recruitment. It is unclear how the applicant plans to approach retention.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Subgrant Applicants

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

Strengths:

The applicant's response is fully developed and clearly demonstrates a high likelihood that subgrantees will meet project objectives and improve educational results for students. The applicant demonstrates this likelihood throughout the application as it clearly describes the a) processes and systems to support the development and implementation of high-quality charter schools, b) significant alignment between WA charter law, processes and direct linkage to national authorizer best practices from NACSA, c) a rigorous application solicitation process used by both state authorizers that embeds CSP subgrant requirements within the New Charter School Application (NCSA), which also meets or exceeds federal CSP requirements, d) a strong incubator program that supports innovative school model design and builds strong charter school leaders, and e) strong SBE and authorizer processes for the oversight of charter schools that have been designed in collaboration with NACSA to ensure the use of best practices for authorizing (e57). For example, the applicant offers Charter 101 trainings and has an incubator program (School Leadership Design Fellowship, Appendix F: 12, e501-502) to ensure founders and key stakeholders clearly understand how to design and start up new schools with innovative educational models (e35-36). The state currently has two authorizers, the Commission and SPS. While specific application components may vary to some extent, both authorizers use the same authorization process and that process includes the CSP subgrant application within the process (e61). The applicant provides evidence of rigor by providing copies of the New School Charter Application (Appendix F:3), a sample contract (Appendix F:6), New Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric (Appendix F:14), and the CSP Subgrant Application (Appendix F:15). Each of these documents clearly meet or exceed federal requirements and were designed in collaboration with NACSA (e57). The applicant also documents that over the last five years, only 14 of the 34 applications submitted were authorized. This further demonstrates a rigorous process. By completing this process with fidelity, newly authorized charter schools should have the processes in place to not only meet project objectives, but more importantly to improve educational results for students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - State Plan**1. State Plan**

Reader's Score: 19

Sub**1. The State entity's plan to--**

- a. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;**

Strengths:

The applicant fully describes plans for effective and efficient subgrant monitoring. The applicant identifies three monitoring objectives: a) proactive, b) provide necessary and high-quality technical assistance, and c) provide ongoing support and oversight to ensure strong implementation and fiscal compliance (e56). Once authorization occurs, WA Charters meets with subgrantees to "clarify, negotiate and confirm that all grantees have clear, measurable and ambitious CSP subgrant objectives PRIOR to any award" (e68). This minimizes post-award challenges in reporting and measurement of grant outcomes. The applicant will design a monitoring rubric post award (e68). Applicant provides detailed copy of the Applicant Subgrant Monitoring Process (Appendix F:16) that includes all federal requirements including quarterly desk reviews and annual site visits (e69). State law (Appendix F:1) and Authorizer Monitoring (Appendix F:8) documents demonstrate the processes that are in place to ensure authorizers review charters, implement their own interventions and specify renewal, revocation and closure policies to address significant non-compliance issues, should they arise (e69).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

2. The State entity's plan to:

- b. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies; and**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a well-developed and clearly defined partnership with OSPI and the Commission to mitigate duplication of systems for implementing and monitoring subgrants (e65-67). The Applicant will also use the same systems (EDS, iGrants) for the CSP subgrant as for all other state and federal program allocations and reporting (e68). Only schools that have already been approved for a charter are eligible to apply for CSP funds (e68) and the subgrant process is embedded within both authorizers' New Charter School Applications (e61). WA Charters has plans in place to coordinate with authorizers to obtain authorizer-produced, necessary reports and data so as to mitigate duplication of effort for schools (e69). Communication systems are in place between WA Charters and

Sub

authorizers to notify authorizers of all CSP site visits and desk review reports. There are also planned quarterly reporting and check ins with authorizers regarding charter contracts, progress on Performance Framework, non-compliance issues and ongoing technical assistance (e70). This communication plan will further minimize duplication of efforts for all parties. The commission and OSPI are working to hire a jointly funded Charter School Fiscal Specialist that will ensure charters receive appropriate fiscal oversight by both OSPI and the Commission. This person will also coordinate with WA Charters to support fiscal oversight of CSP grantees (e71).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The State entity's plan to:

- c. Provide technical assistance and support for:**
 - i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
 - ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State.**

Strengths:

The applicant's plans for providing technical assistance and support to subgrantees and authorizers is well developed. The response documents how WA Charters will provide subgrantees mandatory federal systems, expenditures, reporting training (e68); and technical assistance is needs-based (e68) to ensure subgrantees are in compliance with charter contract and meeting grant requirements. Quarterly desk reviews will identify potential challenges such as lack of progress or non-compliance. Non-compliant or non-progressing subgrantees will receive personalized technical assistance and support based upon their specific needs. For example, they may be required to have monthly check ins (virtual or in person), needs-based technical assistance, additional mandatory training and/or reporting requirements (e69). Table 7 documents a variety of technical assistance and supports for subgrantees that will be provided by the applicant and project partners (e85-87).

The applicant's Objective 4 is specifically designed to support and strengthen authorization and renewal process (e45-49). Through the activities and strategies defined for this objective the applicant will provide technical assistance and support for quality authorizing.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant's response is well developed, it is not without weakness. The applicant states that by summer 2020, WA Charters will contract with high-quality charter authorizer consultant(s) to "research, develop, assist with implementation of an iterate an authorizer renewal process and protocols under authorizer coordination" that will result in a full renewal process that is aligned with state law and federal guidelines (e74). However, the application is not clear on how this will occur and what the process will entail.

Reader's Score: 9

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:

(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; and

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

Strengths:

The applicant's response to the quality of the management plan is fully developed. A five person CSP project team (Director, Coordinator, Fiscal Manager, TA Manager, Family and Community Engagement Manager), will lead the project. The applicant describes that it will use a blended model of grant funded and in-kind resources to cover costs associated with these positions (e75). The applicant provides an overview of partner responsibilities (Table 7, e57) comprehensive timeline referred to as the Management Plan (Table 8, e76-80). The timeline includes not only the requirements of clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones, but it is also directly linked to project activities and specific performance measures that will be impacted by the work. This document also clearly specifies key responsibilities of the director and coordinator to demonstrate that the commitment of these individuals is appropriate and adequate to meet project objectives. The Project Director is .2 FTE and a resume is provided (e84) as evidence of his qualifications to provide this work. Resumes are provided for key project team members (e85-99) and a job description is provided for project coordinator position to be hired upon award (e630-631). The applicant strategically is allocating Project Coordinator, fiscal manager and TA manager time based on responsibilities for the project. For example, in year 1 these positions are funded at less time due to responsibilities. The Coordinator shifts from .8FTE - 1.0 FTE, the fiscal manager responsibilities increase as more subgrants are awarded so the time allocated grows from .25FTE (Y1) to .40 FTE (Y3-5).

When applicable, the management plan identifies specific project team personnel responsible for the work. For example, within Activity 1.1 (conduct subgrant competition and annual renewal), the Project Director is responsible to post/hire coordinator upon notification and the Coordinator is responsible for conducting subgrant award determination. Timeline (complete by) is identified and each activity is aligned to one or more performance measures. To the extent possible, the applicant breaks the timeline into date specific, monthly or quarterly benchmarks. For example, while CSP program oversight review with CSP staff occurs quarterly throughout the project (e77), the applicant more specifically notes that the draft renewal process to authorizers and NACSA will be provided by the contractor by November 30, 2019 (e79).

Weaknesses:

While the response is well developed, it is not without weaknesses. Of particular concern are the renewal timeline process and the time associated for the TA Manager. The timeline described for the renewal process seems to be extremely short. According to the timeline provided, the new process is expected to be approved in April 2021 and ready for implementation by June 2021 (e80). However, it appears that the first set of charter agreements expire in June 2021. Generally speaking, renewals take 6-12 months so this timeframe could result in unanticipated school closures. Additionally, the application describes a robust technical assistance program, but the TA Manager is only .02 FTE throughout the project. It is unclear how the TA Manager will be able to accomplish outcomes on time and within budget with this limited availability.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Parent and Community Involvement

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

Strengths:

The applicant adequately describes its plan and provides some evidence of how it plans to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state. WA Charters documented that family and community engagement is a component in its most recent strategic plan (appendix F-9). This plan is focused on "inclusion and authentic engagement with an effort to be responsive to the context, cultures, experiences and needs of the communities where there are charter schools (e82). WA Charters leads a statewide parent steering committee and annually surveys members of this committee (e83). WA Charters participates in the local community forums that school leaders hold within their communities prior to receiving authorization (e82). Each of these activities provide opportunities for WA Charters to solicit input from parents and community members.

Weaknesses:

This response lacks specificity required to fully meet the selection criterion that a) the solicitation is targeted to understand parent and community perspectives on "the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state," and b) that WA Charters has plans in place to consider these perspectives as they relate to "the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state." For example, the Charter 101 effort, as described, is focused on building awareness and partnerships (e82). The applicant describes the statewide parent steering committee as an opportunity to give resources to parents and build awareness and support for charter schools (e83). Neither example clearly makes a direct connection to how these activities in fact, solicit input from stakeholders about "the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state." The applicant does state that it uses the feedback from community forums to inform leader incubation and PAL program. But, this does not clearly demonstrate how this feedback is considered in regards to "the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state."

Reader's Score: 6

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

The applicant provides an adequately developed response in regards to flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how WA Charters will maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law. This is evidenced by the fact that Washington's flexibility requirements are consistent with the federal definition of flexibility within ESEA section 4310 (2). For example, state law requires that a charter follow all rules and statutes that are made applicable to the school and/or board within the charter contract (e83). In order to ensure flexibility in areas such as scheduling, personnel, funding and educational programs, charter schools and their boards are exempt from all other state statutes and rules that apply to school districts and their boards (e83).

Weaknesses:

The response is not considered fully developed because it lacks specificity in regards to how WA Charters will "work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools." The applicant states that it will 'monitor all new legislation and relevant bills to ensure autonomy and flexibility of charter schools is maintained'. Maintaining current flexibility does not meet the selection criterion requirements to "maximize flexibility" because the response does not address maximization of what currently exists.

Reader's Score: 3

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Equitable Financing

1. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Equitable Financing

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequate response describing the state's efforts to ensure equitable financing (e26-18). The applicant cites relevant code {RCS 28A.710.280(1)} authenticating its statement that state law requires equitable state funding that includes funding based on student characteristics, also known as differentiated aid (e26-27). Furthermore, the State of Washington considers charter schools to function as LEAs and therefore are eligible for any competitive grant for schools or LEA supports (e27). The response offers examples of supports that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the applicant provide which include training and technical assistance to ensure charters know how to access federal and state categorical funds, and assistance in knowing how to apply for other public funds such as 21st Century Community Learning Center (21stCCLC) grants (e28).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant provides an adequate response, there are some weaknesses in regard to equitable and prompt financing. The applicant states that charters have applied for and received funds such as 21stCCLC but the response lacks evidence to document this statement (e28). The application lacks specificity in regards to demonstrating that the state ensures equity as compared to traditional public schools. For example, this response does not include information such as the state foundation per pupil funding that charters and traditional public schools receive. The application lacks clarity in regard to prompt financing. The applicant provides a statement that there have been "no instances of charters not receiving state or federal funds promptly" (e27). However, the response does not include evidence, such as state law or funding schedule for charters and traditional districts, to clearly document payment promptness and equity.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Charter School Facilities

1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Charter School Facilities

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant adequately describes the extent to which the state provides facility supports for charters as it provides evidence of one or more ways that the state supports charter school facilities and relevant law citations are included within the response (e28-30). Washington state provides three avenues of facilities support for charter schools: state law {RCW 28A.710.230 (1)} provides charter schools with the ability to apply for construction funding; access to public facilities is formalized through the state charter law {E2SSB 6194}; and, right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings is codified through {RCW 28A.335.040}.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant adequately describes the state's facilities supports, there are some weaknesses identified. Each of the citations listed above lack evidence describing the extent to which charters are able to access these resources. For example, even though state law permits charters to apply for construction funds, there is no evidence provided in this response, such as the percent of charters that have applied for and received this funding, in comparison to traditional LEA success in obtaining such funds. Also, while the applicant describes its role in assisting charters with facility acquisition, the prompt requires analysis of the extent to which the State of Washington provides this support, such as information about how this organization works in partnership with the state and/or other partners within the application. It is also unclear the extent to which this organization serves statewide and provides equitable services that are accessible across the sector.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools/LEAs**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Best Practices to Improve Struggling Schools and Local Educational Agencies**

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides an adequately developed response addressing how the State of Washington uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs, even though the charter initiative is only five years old. Two years ago, the Rural Alliance, which serves 70 rural LEAs, invited charters to participate in their annual conference. Rural districts learned about the Summit Learning Platform which is used in three Summit Public Schools in Washington and many more schools across the nation. There are now 14 schools in seven districts using this platform to personalize learning for their students (e31). Last year, the Washington State Charter School Commission (The Commission) and State Board of Education (SBE) were invited to present charter best practices as the Statewide Education Research Association conference (e31). This past year, the SBE adopted the Washington School Improvement Framework (WSIF) which is to be the universal statewide improvement framework. This new framework will not be a shift for charters because Washington charter schools have been using the Charter Academic Performance Framework which includes the same processes for three years (e31-32).

Weaknesses:

The response is not fully developed because the applicant does not clearly describe the role of state leadership in using best practices of charters to improve struggling charters AND traditional schools. While the applicant cited many examples of the use of best practices, they were non-profits or other organizations. This does not provide clear evidence of how the State of Washington is working to disseminate best practices.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Serving At-Risk Students

1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Serving At-Risk Students

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

Strengths:

The applicant's response is fully developed and clearly describes how it supports charters that serve at risk students. The applicant cites relevant state law that requires charters and authorizers to support and have a preference for serving at-risk students {E2SSB 6194 Sec 107, RCW 28A.710.070} and states that Washington Charter Schools Association (WA Charters) aligns all of its incubation and technical assistance services to this expectation (e32). The applicant follows with specific evidence describing examples of this work. WA Charters offers a charter incubation program and robust technical assistance (TA) to support school founders and leaders in providing inclusive and responsive education (e35). The True Measure Collaborative (TMC) supports schools to meet the unique needs of underserved populations. This project helps schools ensure their students with disabilities receive highly inclusive education, have responsive individual education plans (IEPs) and strong post-graduation plans (e36). Stanford University documented the success of this effort in a recent CREDO study which reported that while, overall, WA state charter students perform on par with traditional districts, the English learning (EL) student growth is considerably higher in charter schools (e34). Additionally, WA Charters created access for all charters to an early warning system for dropout prevention (e36). WA Charters also provides all schools with a free subscription to Washington Assessment of Risks and Needs of Students reports and provides training on best practices aligned to this research (e36). Finally, in 2017, the state legislature began requiring all schools with over 300 students to partner with local courts to offer Community Truancy Boards and WA Charters facilitates the boards for charters across the state (e36).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority 6 - Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

1. Competitive Preference Priority 6: Best Practices for Charter School Authorizing

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

Strengths:

The applicant's response is well developed and provides strong evidence describing how WA Charters works to ensure two of the three best practices for authorizing in accordance with Assurance E. From its inception, WA Charters, The Commission, SBE, Spokane Public Schools (SPS), and OSPI have been active partners leading legislative efforts to ensure the State of Washington uses best practices for authorizing high-quality charts and providing effective oversight of charter schools (e37). These partners worked closely with National Association for Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) during the first four years of the charter initiative to ensure state law aligned with best practices. This is evidenced by state law {RCW 28A.710.100}which requires authorizers to implement 'policies and practices consistent with' at least five of NACSA's principles and standards for quality charter authorization. At minimum, authorizers must align to: organization

capacity and infrastructure, charter application, performance contracts, oversight and evaluation, and charter renewal (e37). As a result of this strong alignment for each of the last two years, the State of Washington's charter law has been ranked 3rd in the nation by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) (e22). Also, NACSA gave the state 30/30 on its 2014 evaluation, which is the highest score possible among states with few authorizers (e36).

WA Charters has also partnered with both authorizers (the Commission and SPS) and the SBE to ensure both authorizers are using NACSA best practices for monitoring and oversight (e41). This was evidenced by WA Charters facilitating the early collection of stakeholder input into the development of the Charter Academic Performance Framework (Framework) and provided most of the early onboarding and planning supports for schools implementing the Framework in 2014 (e41). This framework provides the foundation for annual performance data and reporting for schools. WA charters continues to co-plan onboarding with the Commission and OPSI and annually provides input regarding recommendations for improvements to the authorizer monitoring process.

Weaknesses:

The Notice Inviting Applications identified that best practices should demonstrate evidence of meeting Assurance E. Assurance E has three components, one of which was to provide TA to support authorizer to improve authorizers ability to monitor independent financial audit of schools. This response lacks evidence describing how WA Charters provides support to authorizers regarding monitoring of the independent financial audit of charter schools.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
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