

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2016 01:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Amethod Public Charter Schools (U282M160013)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	23
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	5
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	5
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	14
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	8
Sub Total	100	55
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	4
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Sub Total	8	4
Total	108	59

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Charter Management Organization - 2: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Amethod Public Charter Schools (U282M160013)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors--

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The CST/CAASSP test scores provided indicate that AMPS schools have consistently outperformed their districts as well as the state. (e112-3) The OCHS outperformed the district on the CAHSEE in both math and ELA by over 30 percentage points for the period from 2011—2014 (2015 data was not presented), and nearly doubled the pass rates of the comparison school. OCHS also has impressive AP pass rates (although these lack context) and SAT scores which significant outpace the state, country, and district. (e115) The application states that a 2016 Great Schools report ranked OCHS number one among “all exceptional high schools in the... area who are educating students from economically disadvantaged [families].” (e33)

Weaknesses:

The applicants spend significant time discussing the previous impressive results of the schools (2012 and earlier, but provided insufficient and incomplete information for the period from 2012-2015, which the criterion specifically requires.

The application does not demonstrate the demographics of its students, only stating that “our schools are composed almost exclusively of students who fit the educationally disadvantaged category.” (e33)

It is not possible to fully parse the results of the AMPS network because the data presented does not appear to be comprehensive. The application presents data which is not clearly labeled as per which schools are included, and further appears to present data for only come schools. Further, the two sets of schools (Richmond and Oakland) appear to perform at very different levels, which is not explained. It is not clear why 2015 CAHSEE data was not provided, for example. (e114)

The schools in Oakland, especially OCA, seem to have lost considerable ground in both math and ELA once CCSS aligned tests were taken in 2015. In fact, in 2015, that campus was roughly equal to the OUSD on math and ELA and underperformed the state. (e112) This performance trend holds true for all students, minority students, and FRL students.

The RCA campus also shows a falling trend over the past three years.

The lack of a consistent state test (e16) to demonstrate academic achievement trend could easily have been overcome by including information on nationally normed assessments which are broadly used and recognized as reliable measures, such as NWEA MAP, DIBELS/TRC or STEP, etc., however, no data of this type was provided.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

2. (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or

(ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

Strengths:

For AMPS schools, minority students and FRL students appear to be performing similarly to all students on state tests in years when data is available. (e112) Specifically, the difference between the “all students” scores and the scores for minority (Latino and African American) and FRL students are close, and the subgroups outperform their district and state peers by similar margins.

Weaknesses:

Because the narrative does not fully contextualize the demographics of AMPS schools, does not provide comprehensive disaggregated data, and does not address achievement gaps explicitly, it is not possible to fully assess whether the AMPS schools are closing achievement gaps for all students or whether there are gaps between individual subgroups.

It is not possible to fully parse the results of the AMPS network because the data presented does not appear to be comprehensive. The application presents data which is not clearly labeled as per which schools are included, and further appears to cherry-pick and present data for only some schools. Further, the two sets of schools (Richmond and Oakland) appear to perform at very different levels, which is not explained.

It is not clear why various data points were not provided, or why more recent data was not provided. 2015 CAHSEE data, for example, is omitted although it would presumably be available. (e114)

The schools in Oakland, especially OCA, seem to have lost considerable ground in both math and ELA once CCSS aligned tests were taken in 2015. In fact, in 2015, that campus was roughly equal to the OUSD on math and ELA and underperformed the state. (e112) This performance trend holds true for all students, minority students, and FRL students. The RCA campus also shows a falling trend over the past three years.

The lack of a consistent state test (e16) to demonstrate academic achievement trend could easily have been overcome by including information on nationally normed assessments which are broadly used and recognized as reliable measures, such as NWEA MAP, DIBELS/TRC or STEP, etc., however, no data of this type was provided.

Reader's Score: 7

3. The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).

Sub Question

Strengths:

AMPS average attendance rates from 2011 to 2015 ranged from a high of 99.2% (in 2013-14 and 2012-13) to a low of 98.7% in 2014-15. During the same time frame, OUSD attendance was never higher than 96.2%, and WCCUSD feel over time from a high of 92.2% in 2011-12. (e116)

OCHS has an impressive four year college acceptance rate (e31).

Graduation rates for full AMPS cohorts are provided, and can be considered empirically high. It should be noted that they are not disaggregated by school or by all subgroups, nor are they contextualized in comparison to the district or state.

Weaknesses:

The response lacks sufficient and recent data that would be needed to fully assess this criterion. Graduation rates fell precipitously from 2012 to 2013 and did not fully recover in 2014, the last year for which network-wide cohort data is provided. (e117)

English language learners and students with disabilities are not discussed in any of the data provided.

College going, participation, and persistence data is not presented and these topics are not addressed in the narrative.

Comparison data for the districts or states are not provided, making it difficult to parse the relative performance of the individual schools.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.**

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The application states that AMPS schools “tend to 80% plus free and/or reduced lunch, over-represent English language learners and are composed almost entirely of minority students.” (e33)

A 2016 Great Schools report ranked OCHS number one among “all exceptional high schools in the... area who are educating students from economically disadvantaged [families].” (e33)

The application states that the first Oakland replication school will open in 2016 and “will continue to serve a diverse and low income population as our current schools. [sic]” (e34)

The second replication campus, AMPS West County Elementary will open in 2017-18, in WCCUSD which is 70.9% FRL and 35% English language learners. The application notes that AMPS “expects to initially draw an overrepresentation of low income families and ELLs...” (e34) The third and fourth replications, AMPS West County Middle and East County Middle, expect to also have the same demographics as WCCUSD. (e35)

AMPS places all students in “heterogeneous environments. This means there are ‘seats’ in every classroom for every potential learner ensuring a FAPE.” (e35) Further, “students receive appropriate support services woven into the school day and extended school hours.”

The application indicates that AMPS will continue to meet all legal requirements for English language learners and students with disabilities populations. (e36)

Weaknesses:

The application does not fully address this criteria. Specifically, no data regarding students with disabilities or English language learners students is provided in the narrative or the attached tables. No comprehensive demographic profile of the network or the school, and no subgroup comparisons are discussed. The application does not provide any concrete evidence of success in serving educationally disadvantaged students in any of the named subgroups. Further, the application fails to fully address in the narrative or provide sufficient data to demonstrate a focus on or track record of serving all students well.

The first replication school is slated to open in fall 2016, however no information about the status of the application/contract is provided. (e34)

The application does not contemplate serving students with disabilities along the full spectrum of needs and services. While using an inclusion model is laudable, the application narrative includes ambiguous language that appears to allude to an exclusion policy: “[AMPS] recognizes its responsibility to enroll and support students with disabilities who can benefit from its programs...” (e35)

Given the lack of specificity around the “deliberate” siting process and the varied geographic performance, and the lack of disaggregated demographic information, the locations of the schools are not sufficiently specific as they encompass entire USDs.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the 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 extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

Strengths:

The applicants see to maintain a geographic profile aligned with the communities they already serve, and seek to maintain the demographics they attribute to the current portfolio. Specifically, AMPS seeks to grow its portfolio of schools in educationally underserved communities. (e37)

The project explicitly includes an objective aimed at increasing strategic focus of the CMO, as well as an improved plan for self-evaluation using an external provider.

Weaknesses:

The goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project are vague and not presented in SMART terms, which, combined with the previously mentioned lack of context and data makes it difficult to understand the full scope of impact the project seeks to have.

The application divides the network’s growth into two halves: adding 830 students to “substantially expanded” schools and adding 890 students to four new schools. (e37) However, it is not explained how these students will be added, where, or what they will look like or achieve. For example, it is not possible to understand whether the 830 students in expanding schools are just students entering schools which have opened recently and are not yet adding capacity, or of these are expansions to campuses that require MMAs or are currently significantly undersubscribed.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-

Reader's Score: 14

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The application includes a table of work streams that the project will include and assigned high level responsibility for each. (e40-44) This table includes a wide variety of CMO and school launch areas including staff and student recruitment, facility, and grant management.

It is not clear how and when site "leaders" or directors (assuming these are synonymous) are recruited or if, in the case of new replication campuses, they are solely focused on the new school, or if they are meant to also serve in other roles, which, given the significant amount of work they are assigned, appears unsustainable. (e40-43)

Weaknesses:

The table provided, while it appears to cover most of the work streams required for the proposed expansion, is confusing as it conflates the tasks for new school launch, existing school openings, and CMO expansion. Additionally, the timing discussed is vague, and roles and titles are inconsistently applied here and in other application sections.

The new school facility section of the plan does not demonstrate an understanding of the somewhat linear timing of facilities identification and preparation. (e42)

The narrative does not contemplate the additional and continually growing requirements on existing CMO-level staff while expanding (for example, adding staff, facilities, and growing contracts, all of which are directly overseen and or specifically designated as centrally managed) at this rate.

The narrative fails to specifically address the opening of the first grant funded school in fall 2016, which essentially happens concurrent with announcement of grant awards.

The application fails to clearly demonstrate how the expansion seats are distributed (for example, whether these are simply seats in grades that the existing schools are already scheduled to add, or instead existing schools intend to add classes to expand grade level cohorts). (e38-9)

Reader's Score: 2

Sub Question

2. **The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools (4 points).**

Strengths:

AMPS uses EdTec for back office services. (e45) The application states that AMPS has a “business plan for school development and growth [that] begins with a market analysis, assessing educational need, political and community support and context for chartering...” and that “for a school to be green lighted, we progress through a decision matrix...” (e45) The application notes that facilities and or facilities funding may be garnered through two legislative mandates, Proposition 30 and SB740. (e45)

Weaknesses:

It is not clear why AMPS need a COO, a director of finance, a director of operations and finance, a real estate manager, and a back office support firm. It is unclear whether AMPS intends to take over more back office work and use less services from EdTec in future years of the grant.

The “business plan” and greenlighting “decision matrix” are not provided with the application nor are they explained in sufficient depth to demonstrate that the applicant is prepared to double the size of its portfolio without damaging whatever unsubstantiated success it has had to this point. Neither Prop. 39 not SB740 are explained in such a way that their impact or importance in the siting of new AMPS campuses is apparent. The application states that “at the end of the grant period all of our schools are financially self-sustainable and the CMO should be continuing to build reserves...” however there is no explanation of how this is possible, whether this means on public dollars only in the first year following the close of the grant, or how this come to pass given that the four replication schools will be in different stages of maturity.

Reader's Score: 2

3. **A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success (4 points).**

Strengths:

The COO manages EdTec, a vendor that provides financial services to AMPS. (e46) Payroll is outsourced to ADP. CMO support functions include operations and compliance reporting, teacher recruitment, teacher and school leader PD, attendance, facility maintenance, and vendor oversight including food service and special education services. (e47)

The narrative states that AMPS has a staffing pipeline program, the UCLP, which allows teachers to apply for leadership residencies as deans, instructional leaders or trainers. (e49)

The high level financial projections presented indicate that by the end of the grant term, AMPS will have a collective net positive cash balance of over \$3.8M. (e124)

Weaknesses:

The need to add additional back office staff (real estate manager, director of finance, director of development) is not established clearly in the narrative. Further, the single largest change to the organization will be the addition of teaching staff as the size of the student population doubles, but the CMO does not appear to contemplate this staffing increase in its plans for growth (for example in the CAO or Talent offices).

The UCLOP is not sufficiently explained, nor does the narrative establish that AMPS has a pipeline of leaders and enculturated staff ready to support the growth of the existing schools and at least the school proposed to open in fall of this year.

Sub Question

The application states that private funding is available but provides no evidence of this, nor is there any information about AMPS's historical success in raising funds for any of its schools.

Further, the financial projections included show that each of the new schools added in this project will operate at a deficit of about \$105K in its first year, and there is no explanation of how this loss will be covered, nor do these losses appear to carry over at the school level or anywhere else in the budget, so the operating reserves will be, about \$60K less per new school for a total \$180K less than projected in 2020-21. (e121-4)

Reader's Score: 3

4. The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).

Strengths:

The application indicates that if a school does not meet quality standards and does not respond to corrections, the Board will vote to close it. (e51)

The application lists a variety of closure related tasks, including appropriate notifications to a variety of stakeholders, preparation of pupil records, and assistance for families in placing students in new schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

5. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, chief executive officer or organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project (6 points).

Strengths:

The management team have significant experience in relevant areas of management of a school network. The CEO is the founder of the organization and CAO was grown into her position, having previously staffed and led AMPS schools. (e52)

The organization's budget has increased significantly over time, and the CMO outsources functions that will need to scale rapidly as staff increases, such as payroll.

Weaknesses:

Only the CEO and CAO have any significant history with the AMPS organization.

The application does not address the previous growth pace of the organization thus it is not possible to understand whether the CEO has the capacity to oversee rapid growth or whether the board is prepared to evaluate and greenlight new schools.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Evaluation

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project.**

Strengths:

AMPS intends to hire the Charter School Development Center to “conduct periodic audits” of the portfolio of schools to “verify sound academic, operational, and financial results.” (e36)

CSDC’s evaluation will include an analysis of governance policy as compared to practice and implementation.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan does not appear to relate directly to the project, as a whole, meaning that it does not appear to feed into the board’s annual evaluation, the greenlighting process, or consideration of whether grant funds are being appropriately used.

There is no information about the CSDC and their evaluation protocol to establish them as an expert or high quality program evaluator. (e56) Additionally, it is unclear why an external organization will be setting school academic achievement baselines and goals. (e56)

Reader's Score: 8

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students**

1. This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through one of the methods described below. An application may receive points for only one of the three parts of Competitive Preference Priority 1, and should specify which part it is addressing. If an applicant addresses more than one part of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and does not specify whether it is addressing part (a), (b), or (c), the application will be awarded priority points only for the part addressed in the application that has the highest maximum potential point value, regardless of the number of priority points the application is awarded for that particular part of Competitive Preference Priority 1.

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through element (a), (b) or (c) as described below:

(a) Supporting High Need Students. (0 or 5 points).

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes, learning environments, or both, for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

(b) School Improvement. (0 or 4 points).

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the ESEA, and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

Note: Applicants in States that are exercising flexibility under the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, in the 2015-16 school year may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department’s June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, “ESEA Flexibility,” at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (OESE’s) December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>). Applicants in all States should review OESE’s January 28, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transitionsy1617-dcl.pdf>, for information on interventions required in 2016-2017.

(c) Promise Zones. (0 or 1 point).

This priority is for projects that are designed to serve and coordinate with a federally designated

Promise Zone.

Note: As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and nine other Federal agencies to support comprehensive revitalization efforts in 20 high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. Each application for Replication and Expansion grant funds that is accompanied by a Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD Form 50153), signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization of a Promise Zone designated by HUD or USDA supporting the application, will meet this priority. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to www.hud.gov/promisezones. The certification form is available at https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf.

Strengths:

The application states that Amethod is a partner in the "OUSD Quality School Development policy and will work with the district to support turnarounds in existing Tier 3... and will work with school development teams and or propose to potentially open new AMPS charter schools at external turnaround partners." (e23) It should be noted that the applicant's letters of support from Oakland indicate a bent towards continued expansion in the city, but do not explicitly reference an official partnership or indicate specific partner benefits (e.g. guarantee of charters or facilities). (e102-103)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 4

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding (as defined in this notice) under this grant), taking active measures to --
 - (a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
 - (b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and
 - (c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

In support of this priority, applicants must provide enrollment data as well as descriptions of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken.

Note: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2 is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

Strengths:

No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

It is not possible to fully assess the assertions made in the application because it does not appear to provide a specific demographic breakdown for the schools. Further, the applicant explicitly states that the school serves less students with Disabilities than the district, and goes on to apparently state that this is a historical norm. It should be noted that as of SY 2015-16 AMPS is serving as its own LEA for some of its schools and has hired a director of special education.

The application indicates that AMPS promotes diversity “though active, multi-lingual outreach... deliberate siting of schools...”, however, this statement is not further explained(e23) Currently, AMPS focuses on three languages other than English: Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mandarin. (e24) The narrative states that newer schools in the network are more racially diverse, for example, the Oakland HS, set at the convergence of several diverse neighborhoods, has “roughly equal pluralities of Latinos and Asian-American students while still remaining 79% low income.” However, it is not possible to assess the veracity of this statement without a comprehensive presentation of individual and network demographics. The application states that AMPS has “consistently served a higher percentage of ELLs than host districts.”

Reader's Score: 0

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Applicant: Amethod Public Charter Schools (U282M160013)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	45
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	8
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	89
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	0
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Sub Total	8	0
Total	108	89

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Charter Management Organization - 2: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Amethod Public Charter Schools (U282M160013)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors--

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

Per the applicant, the network has had several successes where many of those successes are assigned to OCA (its first school): 1) became a No Child Left Behind-National Blue Ribbon School in 2008 (the second in the district to receive this award); 2) awarded the California Department of Education Title I Achievement Award in 2007-2010 and then again in 2012; 3) was awarded the California Charter Schools Association Hart Award in 2009 (besting 999 other schools in the state). Several other achievements for this school are listed on page e17.

Its second school, OCHS, also has had several successes: 1) it became the fourth highest performing high school in the state (California) and the top high school in the city (Oakland); 2) has been named a California Distinguished School with over 90% of its graduating class being accepted into a four year college. Several other achievements for this school are listed on page e18.

Its third school DCA maintaining a 99% attendance rate over the past year despite its growth (where it doubled in size); 75% of students are proficient in ELA, 77% are proficient in math, and 93% are proficient in science "far exceeding the state and surrounding districts," making it one of the top middle schools serving low income students. Other achievements for this school are listed on page e19.

RCA, another school in the network, achieved the status of highest performing middle school in WCCUSD, making it the highest performing public middle school in the history of Richmond Public Schools. RCA proficiency rates exceed both the local district and the state, "especially among minority and low income students." Other achievements for this school are listed on page e20.

The applicant provides more achievement data for two additional schools (BJE and JHHS) on pages e20-21. It is important to note however, that the applicant outlines the performance of the network on specific achievement indicators outlined on pages e28-33 (California State Test; Academic Performance Index; National test performance; attendance, suspension, and expulsion rates, etc.). Clearly the network has demonstrated success in increasing the academic achievement and attainment for all students.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified for this section.

Reader's Score: 20

2. (i) **The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or**

(ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111 (b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

Strengths:

The network exclusively serves historically educational disadvantaged students and it has produced achievement results (as indicated in Element 1).

Great Schools ranked one of its schools (OCHS) as number one in all exceptional high schools serving economically disadvantaged students (page e33).

The applicant provides a noteworthy distinction about the performance of ELL in the network. According to the applicant, there is a trend showing student proficiency rates decreasing the longer students are in the district whereas in the network, the trend shows rates increasing the longer they are in attendance (discussed on page e33). This "trend" shows the impact that the network is having on the hope and efficacy of its learners in addition to the attainment of core academic skills (as per testing rates [and graduation rates] discussed on pages e28-32).

Weaknesses:

The one weakness in this section is the lack of attention given to showing a decrease in the achievement gap amongst the actual learners enrolled in the network. To do this, the applicant would need to show how those learners identified as educationally disadvantaged were underperforming in schools they previously attended and then by way of the programming within the network show their performance becoming comparable to learners who have historically performed. Without demonstrating an increase in students' performance, it is not clear if the network is closing the gap or simply attracting higher performing students who incidentally represent (racially, socioeconomically, etc.) communities who have historically underperformed.

Reader's Score: 13

3. **The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).**

Strengths:

In the early part of the application (in sections for Absolute Priority 1, Absolute Priority 2, Competitive Preference Priorities 1 & 2, and Elements 1 and 2 of Quality of Eligibility), the applicant shows two conditions of the network: 1) it serves low-income and other educational disadvantaged learners; and 2) it is high performing. There is no need to segregate data into subgroups within the schools as its schools (almost exclusively comprised of educationally

Sub Question

disadvantaged learners) are producing results.

Weaknesses:

To strengthen this section, the applicant should provide comparative data of its students performing in the network against how they performed in previously enrolled schools. This additional information will show that the program is having an effect on the achievement of students as opposed to higher performing students having an effect on the achievement of the network.

Another weakness is the underperformance of one of its schools (OUSD) in 2012 and 2013 across all demographics (as indicated on page e118).

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.**

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

Each of the schools proposed for the replication project will continue to serve students similar to those that are already in the network (as evidenced by higher and graduation rates [when compared to the rates of the district] discussed on pages e28-32). The network replication plan is driven by a need to provide schools within current local districts.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not identified specific location in terms of address or neighborhoods within the district-areas selected.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the 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 extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

Strengths:

On page e37, the applicant outlines two goals for the project: 1) continued growth in the network in educationally underserved communities; and 2) strategically grow and improve the responsiveness of the network as a CMO. There are five objectives attached to these two goals relating to enrollment, instructional replication, school development, CMO development, and evaluations. The outcomes of the project will be 830 new students in expanded schools, creating new seats and new sites, personnel hiring (Director of Instruction, Director of Finance, Real Estate Manager and Development Manager) and fund development.

On pages e37-38, the applicant provides clarity of the intended outcomes by adding specific details. Specifically, the applicant discusses expanding its Home Office and its capacity for the network to stay fiscally viable and sustainable.

Weaknesses:

The outcomes provided in the narrative on pages e37-e38 do not exactly align with those outlined in the table provided on page e37 (there are three outcomes in the narrative and six outcomes in the table). This general oversight/inconsistency weakens the articulation of the project’s vision/goals.

Reader’s Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-

Reader’s Score: 18

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a table that outlines specific information regarding major milestones; tasks, targeted timelines, and responsible leaders and support staff (pages e40-44). With this information, the applicant shows how the network has a strong vision of the project and the work that it entails. The significant value in this part of the proposal is the designation of key staff for specific tasks.

Weaknesses:

To strengthen this section, the applicant could have provided dollar amounts associated with the tasks where feasible.

One notable gap in this section is the lack of attention given to the tensions associated with expanded duties assigned to pre-existing positions. In an earlier section, the applicant identified new positions that will be secured through the project. Discussing the additional positions in this section would have provided stronger clarity in understanding the network’s additional load and the embedded tensions that the expansion will bring. In addition, some expansion/replication tasks are being assigned to pre-existing positions. A discussion is needed to show how

Sub Question

these individuals can effectively handle additional responsibilities while maintaining existing responsibilities.

Reader's Score: 3

- 2. The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools (4 points).**

Strengths:

On pages e45- 50, the applicant provides details to show the networks commitment and capacity to attend to the project after the initial period of the grant. What is notable is that each area of interest by the U.S Department of Education/Secretary (facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools) is specifically addressed with its own section/narrative which outlines the names of specific positions and partners (already) established to continue the project.

In addition to what has been provided on these pages is the network's track record of growing and maintaining highly successful schools without the grant dollars it is requesting. The ability to grow and run its network prior to the grant makes a competitive argument that it can continue to grow/run its network after the grant.

Weaknesses:

No weakness identified in this section.

Reader's Score: 4

- 3. A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success (4 points).**

Strengths:

Having successfully started and managed six schools in a financially challenging environment (as discussed on page e50) has groomed the network into a fiscally lean and efficient organization." In the three multiyear financial model provided in Appendix G (page e120-124), the organization shows its ability to maintain a positive yearly cash balance as well as a strong revenue to cost ratio and reserve.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in this section.

Reader's Score: 4

- 4. The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).**

Strengths:

The closure plan outlined on page e51 provides specific action: stakeholder notifications; information to be released to parents and the community; information/assistance for continued student learning in other programs; a final audit of the school. The network also has a separate fund for closure expenses. More details are provided for their closure plans on page 122 in the application.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide specific indicators for closures (on general statements about underperforming).

Reader's Score: 1

5. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director, chief executive officer or organization leader, and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project (6 points).

Strengths:

A strong case is made for the capacity of the management team to effectively carry out this project by exploring the team's past track record. On page e40, the applicant identifies that the network has grown from one school to six, increasing its staff count from a dozen to 100; and increasing its budget from 2-3 million to 21 million. During this time, they have maintained their ability to stay fiscally sound, have had clean audits, and have had no compliance issues. This performance adds value to the key personnel profiled along with their credentials and experiences (listed on pages e52-54).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in this section.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Evaluation

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project.

Strengths:

The applicant outlines the network's comprehensive approach to program evaluation. A significant part of the plan is to partner with an outside evaluator (already identified/named) that is experienced with working with charter schools. This external evaluator will evaluate the project yearly and keep track of important data regarding the project's growth. Specifically, this partner evaluates the network's educational program (page e56); the network's governance and operations (page e57); and the network's financial management (page e57). This applicant provides additional information that justifies the selection of this external evaluator to play an integral role in its evaluative plan.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified in this section.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students

1. This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through one of the methods described below. An application may receive points for only one of the three parts of Competitive Preference Priority 1, and should specify which part it is addressing. If an applicant addresses more than one part of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and does not specify whether it is addressing part (a), (b), or (c), the application will be awarded priority points only for the part addressed in the application that has the

highest maximum potential point value, regardless of the number of priority points the application is awarded for that particular part of Competitive Preference Priority 1.

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through element (a), (b) or (c) as described below:

(a) Supporting High Need Students. (0 or 5 points).

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes, learning environments, or both, for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

(b) School Improvement. (0 or 4 points).

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the ESEA, and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

Note: Applicants in States that are exercising flexibility under the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, in the 2015-16 school year may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility," at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's (OESE's) December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>). Applicants in all States should review OESE's January 28, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transitionsy1617-dcl.pdf>, for information on interventions required in 2016-2017.

(c) Promise Zones. (0 or 1 point).

This priority is for projects that are designed to serve and coordinate with a federally designated Promise Zone.

Note: As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and nine other Federal agencies to support comprehensive revitalization efforts in 20 high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. Each application for Replication and Expansion grant funds that is accompanied by a Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD Form 50153), signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization of a Promise Zone designated by HUD or USDA supporting the application, will meet this priority. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to www.hud.gov/promisезones. The certification form is available at https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf.

Strengths:

No strengths identified in this section.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant says the network is partnering with OUSD (the LEA) to provide turnaround support in its Tier 3 schools (which are the lowest performing schools identified for corrective action by the district), the applicant only says the network will participate "where feasible" (page e23) leaving unknown the exact nature of the partnership. To strengthen this segment of the application, the applicant should provide proof of an agreement obligating the network to the LEA (letters of "support" do not indicate partnership with the LEA; it indicates support for the network) and specifically list the services it actually will provide (as opposed to what it could or might provide).

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding (as defined in this notice) under this grant), taking active measures to --

- (a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
- (b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and
- (c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

In support of this priority, applicants must provide enrollment data as well as descriptions of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken.

Note: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2 is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

Strengths:

No strengths identified in this section.

Weaknesses:

A) California is a very diverse region. The network's inability to service other demographics does not make a competitive case in its capacity/commitment to promote diversity. B) The applicant identifies staffing/programming gaps with its partnership with the district which prevents the servicing and referrals for new IEP students. This discussion demonstrates an administrative weakness in the network's ability to provide available services to its students. C) While the applicant indicates the network's strong enrollment with ELL learners, it does not provide contrasting data to that of the state or district's ELL enrollment. Making the contrast would strengthen the applicant's competitive edge for its program.

Reader's Score: 0

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Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2016 11:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Amethod Public Charter Schools (U282M160013)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	35
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	10
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	7
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	20
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Sub Total	8	8
Total	108	90

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - Charter Management Organization - 2: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Amethod Public Charter Schools (U282M160013)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. In determining the quality of the applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors--

Reader's Score: 35

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates three years of success in significantly increasing student achievement for all students, including educationally disadvantaged students because math, English/language arts and science scores increased for all students as well as their disadvantaged students, Narrative, p. 14+ and Appx. F (Table 1).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

2. (i) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in closing historic achievement gaps for the subgroups of students described in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant, or

(ii) The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which there have not been significant achievement gaps between any of the subgroups of students described in section 1111 (b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA at the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant and to which significant gains in student academic achievement have been made with all populations of students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (15 points).

Strengths:

The educationally disadvantaged sub group had achievement gap successes during the past three years (Table 1, 2012-15) such as improved proficiency (CST math and English Language Arts tests) from 25-68% compared to host districts, pages 14, Narrative, and p. e112+, Appendix F.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Student achievement for Latino and AA groups are combined making it difficult to clearly determine achievement of each sub group, Table 1, Appx. F.

ELL student achievement data is not disaggregated making it difficult to determine whether their achievement gaps was closed or reduced, Appendix F, Table 2.

Reader's Score: 8

- 3. The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has achieved results (including performance on statewide tests, annual student attendance and retention rates, high school graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college persistence rates where applicable and available) for low-income and other educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant that are significantly above the average academic achievement results for such students in the State (15 points).**

Strengths:

Data for these elements demonstrate positive results: attendance (over 98% rate, Table 6), high school graduation (Table 8: over 85% in 2013-14) and college attendance (90 to 95% rate, Narrative, p. 17).

Weaknesses:

State student achievement results were not found in the application.

Attendance rates were not found in the application for four schools, Table 6, Appx. F.

College persistence data appears to be lacking.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The contribution the proposed project will make in assisting educationally disadvantaged students served by the applicant to meet or exceed State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards, and to graduate college- and career-ready. When responding to this selection criterion, applicants must discuss the proposed locations of schools to be created or substantially expanded and the student populations to be served.**

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to describe their prior success in improving educational achievement and outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners. In addition, the Secretary encourages applicants to address how they will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education and how the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

Strengths:

The applicant provides significant details about effective strategies to be implemented in assisting disadvantaged students. These include: Johns Hopkins University- Center for Talented Youth (CTY), connecting with families and community, Tiered Support model and preventive academic and Behavioral Instruction. Page 22+.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the 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 extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

Strengths:

Goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable because they provide detailed and sound descriptions of each of their three outcomes as well as specific enrollment projections through 2019-20, page 23+, Narrative.

Weaknesses:

Student achievement outcomes were overly general and not measurable, Narrative, page 23.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate and substantially expand high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice). In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers-

Reader's Score: 20

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The management plan includes responsibilities, timelines, and milestones that are clear, thorough and well described because they include appropriate Home Office tasks, school expansions, and detailed program features, Narrative and chart, p. 26-30.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

- 2. The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office, student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools (4 points).**

Strengths:

The business plan is focused and thorough because at the end of the grant period all schools must be financially self-sustainable. The applicant will also continue to build reserves to provide school support and met contingencies, Narrative, pages 30-36.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

- 3. A multi-year financial and operating model for the organization, a demonstrated commitment of current and future partners, and evidence of broad support from stakeholders critical to the project's long-term success (4 points).**

Strengths:

A multi-year financial and operating model is included. It shows a solid commitment of current and future partners and evidence of broad support from stakeholders, Narrative and Appx. G.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

- 4. The plan for closing charter schools supported, overseen, or managed by the applicant that do not meet high standards of quality (2 points).**

Strengths:

The qualifications, training and experiences of the key personnel are appropriate to the project as evidenced by their resumes and bios. For example, the executive director has over 12 years' experience directing Amethod and holds a master's degree and the chief operations officer has appropriate work experiences with other comparable leadership and training programs, Narrative, p. 38+ and Appendix B.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Sub Question

5.

Strengths:

The qualifications, training and experiences of the key personnel are appropriate to the project as evidenced by their resumes and bios. For example, the executive director has over 12 years' experience directing Amethod and holds a master's degree and the chief operations officer has appropriate work experiences with other comparable leadership and training programs, Narrative, p. 38+ and Appendix B.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 6

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Evaluation

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project.**

Strengths:

Evidence of sound evaluation includes the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project, pages 26-30.

The Charter School Development Center (CSDC), Sacramento, will be the external evaluator. They have a long standing, positive reputation for conducting quality work and services for charter schools, p. 43+.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students

1. **This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through one of the methods described below. An application may receive points for only one of the three parts of Competitive Preference Priority 1, and should specify which part it is addressing. If an applicant addresses more than one part of Competitive Preference Priority 1 and does not specify whether it is addressing part (a), (b), or (c), the application will be awarded priority points only for the part addressed in the application that has the highest maximum potential point value, regardless of the number of priority points the application is awarded for that particular part of Competitive Preference Priority 1.**

This priority is for projects that will serve high-need students through element (a), (b) or (c) as described below:

(a) Supporting High Need Students. (0 or 5 points).

Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes, learning environments, or both, for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

(b) School Improvement. (0 or 4 points).

To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or restructuring under section 1116 of the ESEA, and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

Note: Applicants in States that are exercising flexibility under the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, in the 2015-16 school year may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility," at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's (OESE's) December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>). Applicants in all States should review OESE's January 28, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transitionsy1617-dcl.pdf>, for information on interventions required in 2016-2017.

(c) Promise Zones. (0 or 1 point).

This priority is for projects that are designed to serve and coordinate with a federally designated Promise Zone.

Note: As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and nine other Federal agencies to support comprehensive revitalization efforts in 20 high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. Each application for Replication and Expansion grant funds that is accompanied by a Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD Form 50153), signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization of a Promise Zone designated by HUD or USDA supporting the application, will meet this priority. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to www.hud.gov/promisezones. The certification form is available at https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates that its proposed expansion will occur in partnership with, and will assist, an LEA (i.e., Oakland Unified School District) in implementing academic or structural interventions, pages 9-10.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for applicants that demonstrate a record of (in the schools they currently operate or manage), as well as an intent to continue (in schools that they will be creating or substantially expanding (as defined in this notice) under this grant), taking active measures to --

- (a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
- (b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and
- (c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

In support of this priority, applicants must provide enrollment data as well as descriptions of existing policies and activities undertaken or planned to be undertaken.

Note: An applicant addressing Competitive Preference Priority 2 is invited to discuss how the proposed design of its project will encourage approaches by charter schools that help bring together students of different backgrounds, including students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to attain the benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The applicant should discuss in its application how it would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates they will be actively promoting diversity by these focused strategies: multi-lingual outreach, outreach to families, and siting school sites in targeted neighborhoods.

Students with disabilities and ELLs are served through a variety of effective activities such as focused Tier support, extra support in the classroom and pull out tutor sessions, page 12.

Detailed applicant ELL enrollment data is provided as well as comparable rate in surrounding public schools, Appendix F, Table 10, p. e118.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/03/2016 11:32 PM