

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2016 01:18 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Democracy Prep Public Schools (U282M160018)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	38
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	17
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	4
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	108	85

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Charter Management Organization - 3: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Democracy Prep Public Schools (U282M160018)

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: 38

Sub Question

1. The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

Strengths:

Applicant demonstrates strong track record of success in dramatically raising student achievement, particularly after taking over schools that have historically struggled. Applicant's ability to demonstrate that it has achieved growth with students (e.g., figure 7 on p. 23) and dramatically improved school-level performance for struggling turnaround schools (e.g., DC example on p. 28) is particularly impressive when it comes to this criterion.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not specifically detail its performance with SWDs and ELLs.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

Applicant's general explanation of student performance and the graduation chart on p. 25 suggest that DPPS has had some success in closing achievement gaps. Applicant appears to be outperforming comparable schools.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Data comparing applicant's student performance to the performance of white, non-low-income students at the city, NYC suburb, and state levels would have been very helpful in determining the extent to which applicant has closed historic achievement gaps. The applicant's explicit address of this criterion (p. 24) was lacking in this regard.

Reader's Score: 10

- 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:

Broadly speaking, applicant's overall performance suggests that its students outperform state averages for similar student populations. Most applicant figures in Appendix F exceed state average when applicant school has been open for more than a year. Additionally, applicant's "Advanced Regents" graduation rate is more than double that of the state in 2014-15 (Figure 9, p. 25), and applicant's college persistence rate is more than 10 percentage points higher than the state (p. 26).

Weaknesses:

There are instances in Appendix F where the applicant does not exceed statewide averages. Freedom Prep (Figures 6 and 10) are most glaring examples, but even within its New York schools, there are instances of the applicant not exceeding state averages for certain student populations (e.g., the year 2015 in Figures 2 and 5).

Reader's Score: 10

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:

Applicant's "Democracy Prep Pathways" program appears to be very deliberate and intensive, and directly targeted at bringing students who were previously enrolled in struggling schools up to the performance level of DPPS students. Given the applicant's rigorous model, this program seems highly necessary and a fundamental cornerstone to any expansion/replication efforts. Additionally, applicant appears poised to support many more students in high-needs districts.

Weaknesses:

Application is missing detailed descriptions of proposed locations. Knowing more details about the specific proposed locations of the schools is an important element of assessing the applicant's response to this criterion. Applicant identifies states and metro areas, which have varying degrees of educational need. As such, it's difficult to determine the extent to which the applicant's proposed schools will serve students in educational need.

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:

Outcomes 2a, 2b, 2c, 2e, 2f, 3a, and 3c (p. 35-36) appear rigorous and well-defined. In particular, the post-secondary measures of student success (outcomes 2e and 2f) are especially ambitious yet clearly defined and relevant to this project. Furthermore, the distinction between a general school review and an operational school review (outcomes 3a and 3c), and the inclusion of those detailed rubrics (Appendix H), indicates that the applicant has clear markers of and systems for measuring school quality.

Weaknesses:

Opening four schools annually (p. 34) seems too ambitious for an applicant this size, particularly when the applicant does not currently have specific details regarding where it will expand beyond identifying metro areas.

Outcome 1b seems unrealistic. The "sending districts" portion seems reasonable, but exceeding "charter schools in the state" when it comes to ESEA subgroup enrollment is unclear (i.e., will the applicant exceed every charter school in the state, or just the average?) and possibly irrelevant. It's unclear what the applicant will do if it is located in a district with an ELL population that's lower than the state average.

Outcome 2d (national graduation rate) seems like an odd comparative point, particularly when compared to Outcomes 2a and 2c.

It's unclear when the applicant expects each school to achieve Outcome 3b (p. 36).

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: 17

Sub Question

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 (4 points).**

Strengths:

Applicant has a clear CMO structure and demonstrates an understanding of how structure should support replication and expansion efforts.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not directly address how its prior experience in school growth and/or its current operational model has prepared it for such rapid growth (opening of four schools per year).

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:

Applicant has a clear plan for financial sustainability (beginning on page 46). CMO management fee seems reasonable, and applicant aims to have schools financially self-sufficient at scale.

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:

Applicant outlines a detailed budget narrative and other robust financial projection documents (Appendix G). Additionally, applicant demonstrates strong high-level support from key stakeholders that will be central to their replication and expansion efforts (Appendix C).

Weaknesses:

Applicant lacks detail regarding "ground-level" support for their expansion efforts. While it's important to have mayoral-level support (and the like), community- and parent-level support (to the extent possible) for replication and expansion efforts are important, particularly for turnaround efforts.

Additionally, for some CMO-level positions, it would seem prudent to scale down the percentage that CSP funds were covering (i.e., start that percentage at 100% in year 1, but reduce it to 25% or lower by the end of the grant) to ensure the applicant is better prepared to cover those costs post-CSP project. Specifically, the VP and Asst. Director of Talent Development and PD Coordinator are positions of concern in this regard (outlined in budget narrative).

Sub Question

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:

Earlier in the application, applicant details clear plan to ensure schools are held to high standards and supported in the event that they struggle. Applicant's success with turnaround schools suggests that applicant has been successful with school intervention. Applicant has clear plan for addressing schools that struggle, and shuttering them if necessary (p. 47-48).

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:

Given emphasis on school turnaround and dramatically improving student performance, it's important to note that the current CEO lead the applicant's turnaround efforts at Harlem Prep (p. 48). Project Director (p. 49-50) seems well-suited to manage this project, particularly given prior experience with 2012 CSP grant.

Weaknesses:

Leadership team appears to be very New York-heavy, which is somewhat concerning given applicant's plan to expand/replicate in other areas of the country.

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:

Applicant proposes to continue its strong history of independent, "gold standard" charter school evaluations (i.e., comparing lotteried-in students to lotteried-out students). Additionally, applicant seems prepared to take its evaluation efforts to a broader, more locally relevant level with evaluation of civic engagement and school-level outcomes. Given the applicant's efforts across geographic regions, evaluating the impact on the school model and school leaders in these separate areas seems critically important to the continued expansion of this CMO.

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:

Applicant has a clear history of success with turnaround efforts, an approach which is central to its school/CMO model. Additionally, the letters of support in Appendix C clearly indicate that applicant has laid the groundwork for important partnerships to execute future turnaround efforts in the areas proposed in the application (e.g., within Appendix C, letter from Nevada state-level leaders on page 9).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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:

Enrolling a more diverse student body does not appear to be central to the applicant's mission. Furthermore, applicant does not outline its SWD and ELL populations compared to surrounding schools in addressing this CPP (p. 3). Additionally, given that the applicant is known for turnaround efforts, it seems critically important that they demonstrate that they are serving the same students - or at least the same student populations - than prior operators. A more transparent, explicit reporting of SWD and ELL student populations would have allayed any concerns in this area.

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Democracy Prep Public Schools (U282M160018)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	37
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	7
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	15
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	4
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	108	80

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Charter Management Organization - 3: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Democracy Prep Public Schools (U282M160018)

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: 37

Sub Question

1. The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

Strengths:

Democracy Prep had studies commissioned in 2012 and 2015 that measured the achievement differences between students who were "lotteried-in" and students who were "lotteried-out." The authors of studies found positive and significant differences for students who attended DPPS. (p. e36 or p. 19) Performance for the many of the grades and schools in the DPPS outpace the local district and are generally aligned with data from NY State. (p. e146) DPPS provides strong academic indications that their schools positively and significantly affect student achievement, which reflects their strength as a high quality applicant.

Weaknesses:

While it is clear from the application that DPPS affects many children positively, it is also clear that DPPS has room to improve. While perhaps a function of the state assessment, the data provided in the application indicates difficulty in grade 5 and with improving cohorts of students year over year. (p. e146)

Reader's Score: 16

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:

DPPS students who identify as Black or Hispanic generally perform better and improve at faster rates when compared to Black or Latino students across the state (p. e150). This same is true of students with IEPs (p. e149).

Sub Question

Furthermore, DPPS graduation rates in New York pace significantly ahead of those across the state (p. e42).

Weaknesses:

The data for Freedom Prep Charter, one of the schools in the DPPS portfolio (p. e206), does instigate questions about how the CMO reacts to data from one year to the next. Freedom Prep is in its second year (with one year of data available in the grant) and students in grades 3 through 5 performed far below students across the New Jersey (p. e153). While the grant does talk about being a data-driven organization, it does not speak directly or specifically to some of the challenges it faces when serving students at Freedom Prep. (p. e25) This information would be critical to understanding exactly how Democracy Prep closes achievement gaps as it has so convincingly done in New York.

Reader's Score: 9

- 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:

DPPS maintains strong attendance records and mostly strong retention rates. (p. e156) Graduation rates at DPPS in New York are stronger than the state and other metropolitan areas. (p. e42) The academic testing data is mostly strong with a few exceptions. (p. e149) Overall, DPPS has demonstrated relatively strong success in New York.

Weaknesses:

There appears to be some discrepancies between the New York DPPS schools and those DPPS schools located elsewhere. (p. e149 - p. e157) However it is not clear in the grant as to why these discrepancies exist or to what DPPS attributes to them.

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:

The application clearly delineates programs and plans to assist educationally disadvantaged students. For example, the Democracy Prep Pathways program broadens their spectrum of services for students with IEPs increasing the CMO's ability to serve students in the least restrictive environment. (p. e44 or p. 27) The application's description of the applicants turnaround plans and apparent efficacy is another strong indication that the applicant would continue and expand its

services to educationally disadvantaged students (p. e45).

Weaknesses:

While the application does discuss general locations by using strong letters of support, it does not clearly specify where it proposes to locate new schools or expand programs (p. e46). As the RFP notes, "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." The applicant refers to potential states where they applicant might expand but there is no certainty or specificity. Since the proposed locations are not stated explicitly, it is difficult to ascertain exactly where new schools would be placed. Without this level of specificity, the application, in the reader's professional opinion, is insufficient.

Reader's Score: 7

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 goals, objectives and outcomes in the application are mostly specified, measurable and attainable. For example, from the application a reader might be able to determine the applicant intends to more than double its size to serve high-need students and significantly move their academic achievement within a brief period of time (p. e51 - e53). The reader knows who is responsible for what tasks and in what phase each task would be completed (p. e56). Given the applicant's history of expanding its operations to absorb and turn around other schools (p. e19) and the applicant's clarity related to measurable objectives and activities (p. e51 - e53), the proposed design of the project is feasible.

Weaknesses:

While the objectives and outcomes are mostly measurable, the application does lack specificity regarding the communities and districts with which it would seek to partner (p. e46). This lack of specificity makes it extremely difficult for the reader to assess the attainability of the project plan. Perhaps if the applicant had identified specific school districts or even cities where they had chosen to expand, the application may have scored higher.

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: 15

Sub Question

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 (4 points).**

Strengths:

Given that the application specifies three replication strategies (p. e53 - e55), it makes sense that the application differentiate management plans that relate to the chosen strategy. The application specifies separate management plans for separate strategies for replication. (p. e56 - e58) This demonstrates the applicant has considered the timelines and necessary personnel that are required to meets the milestones of the grant. The grant has included a planning year (p. e51) increasingly the applicant's ability to clarify timelines and roles even more precisely should the grant be awarded.

Weaknesses:

While the objectives and outcomes are mostly measurable and attainable, the application does lack specificity regarding the communities and districts with which it would seek to partner. (p. e46) Without specifics regarding the location of the proposed schools, it is very difficult to gauge feasibility of the timeline and the applicant's ability to meet timeline and budget. If the applicant had provided specific locations, it might have provided the application with more context and a more detailed budget that would have communicated to the reader the information needed to score this element differently.

Reader's Score: 2

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 clarity with which the applicant describes its business practices assures the reader that there are established processes and dedicated personnel for handling public monies with integrity and discretion. (p. e293 - e309). The budget narrative accounts for things like an inflationary factor of 3.5% yearly. (p. e250) The application also explains that Democracy Prep has built its model to sustain itself with minimal fundraising and primarily on public revenue streams that are regularly allocated to public schools. (p. e63) Given the application's procedural and fiduciary clarity and the CMO's financial and operational model, the schools created with potential funding from this grant are highly likely to be sustainable beyond the life of the grant.

Weaknesses:

While the detailed budget narrative outlines cost for personnel, the narrative does not clearly outline funds for school replication. (p. e253) This probably relates to the application's lack of specified locations for replication and/or expansion. If the applicant had chosen specific sites and school districts for replication and expansion, then the reader could have more effectively gauged the need for facilities and other large capital investments.

Reader's Score: 3

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).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The application clearly outlines the financial model. (p. e63, p. e250, p. e293 - e309)

Weaknesses:

While the letters of support provide strong evidence that stakeholders supporting the application are diverse geographically, the application does not include letters from crucial stakeholder groups like parents, teachers and local (as opposed to national) civic leaders. (p. e106)

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 includes a feasible plan for the closure of schools. (p. e64)

Weaknesses:

The plan for closure, while mostly adequate, does not specify responsible personnel or timelines in the application. (p. e64)

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 personnel outlined in the application are clearly invested in DPPS, steeped in the organization's successful growth and development over the years. (p. e65, p. e81 - p. e103) The application also includes an organizational charter that specifies responsibilities and lines of authority. (p. e104) If a reader connects the individuals with the organizational chart (p. e104) and the organization chart with the grant management plan (p. e56 - p. e58), then one can clearly see the application documents the assigned task and roles to specific individuals. Therefore, the application delineates the qualifications of personnel and their roles in completing the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

Given the broad geography of the proposed project, the application would have benefited from a detailed hiring and staff recruitment plan that demonstrated exactly how the applicant planned to address the wide geographic scope of the process. This also relates to the lack of specified locations for replication and expansion. This detail would have enabled the applicant to be more specific about staffing.

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:

The proposed project evaluation describes the type of evaluation, the outcomes that will be measured and the intended individuals with whom the applicant with contract to conduct the evaluation. (p. e71 - e76)

Weaknesses:

The proposed project evaluation does not address all of the outcomes stated in the grant. (p. e53 - e55 and p. e71 - e76)

Reader's Score: 9

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:

Democracy Prep has a history of working with LEAs and forming charters through turnaround schools. (p. e19 or p. 2) Their ability to assume responsibility of schools demonstrates Democracy Prep's ability and willingness to partner with LEAs and charters to implement structural interventions that serve schools in need of improvement. From Camden's Promise Zone to the Superintendents of the Louisiana Recovery School District and the Nevada Achievement School District, the letters of support for this application demonstrate Democracy Prep's geographically broad partnerships. (p. e46 or p. 29)

Weaknesses:

While it is clear that Democracy Prep (DPPS) has partnerships across the country that demonstrate success and potential of their work, the grant application does not make it clear precisely where they intend to build the proposed school replications or expansions. (p. e46 or p. 29, p. e62 or 45). 82% of the potential grant award would be directed to replicating DPPS schools, but the grant does not clearly indicate where the replicated schools will be placed. Therefore, it is not clear with whom they will partner (LEA or otherwise) to replicate DPPS. (p. e250)

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:

As stated in the application, the DPPS primarily draws from populations that are Black and Latino. (p. e20 or p. 3) Furthermore, DPPS schools are not presently diverse and there is not a clear plan for diversifying their populations in the future whether by their recruitment or enrollment practices (Figure 1, p. e22 or p. 5).

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/03/2016 10:46 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2016 01:31 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Democracy Prep Public Schools (U282M160018)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	36
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	7
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	8
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	16
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	8
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	0
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	108	75

Technical Review Form

Panel #3 - Charter Management Organization - 3: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Democracy Prep Public Schools (U282M160018)

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: 36

Sub Question

1. The degree, including the consistency over the past three years, to which the applicant has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement and attainment for all students, including, as applicable, educationally disadvantaged students served by the charter schools operated or managed by the applicant (20 points).

Strengths:

The proposal indicates the applicant demonstrates comprehensive capacity to implement the replication project effectively. (pages 4-6)

The accompanying chart on page 5 indicates a targeted student population of educationally disadvantaged students have been consistently served in the previous 10 years and citations are provided on page 6 to provide detail on the applicant's history as a high quality school model and the communities the applicant serves.

The proposal includes data from research on page 19 that demonstrates effectiveness of the school model for the targeted student population.

There are relatively high attendance rates found in in Appendix F.

Weaknesses:

Achievement data found in appendix F appear to indicate proficiency levels are low very few students scoring above 50% in English, language arts, and math across grade levels. The response in this area would be improved with a brief statement that explains the numbers mean, how the numbers compare nationally, and describes specific initiatives being proposed to ensure high quality educational programming is in place.

Reader's Score: 17

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

Sub Question

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:

On page 24 the proposal provides a brief discussion of efforts to close the achievement gap.

Weaknesses:

The plan to close the achievement gap lacks detail. The applicant's response needed a comprehensive discussion of the applicant's record to address learning discrepancies among subgroups along with supporting data indicating consistent effectiveness in this area for the targeted student population. Additionally, greater discussion of comparisons African and Latino subgroups with the white and Asian peers would improve the response.

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).**

Strengths:

The applicant provides ample evidence including charts, graphs and narrative summary demonstrating consistent success over the past three years on student attendance, student academic growth on statewide tests, high school graduation, and college persistence. (pages 26 and 27).

Weaknesses:

The applicant's response lacks a brief summary of the impact for low income and other educationally disadvantaged students.

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:

The project is likely to assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting or exceeding academic objectives through the targeted efforts to turnaround schools.

On Page 27 the applicant describes new model, Democracy Prep Pathways, to meet the specific needs of struggling

middle schools students with disabilities.

The proposal describes the role the turnaround schools overseen by the applicant have had on improved academic outcomes for the targeted student population, the proposed locations, and student population. (page 27)

The discussion found on page 31-33 describes specific strategies and initiatives intended to meet the needs of the targeted student population with a focus on student with disabilities and English Language learners. In particular, the applicant will focus effort on recruiting and serving students with disabilities and hard to reach students. Strategies for students with disabilities are provided on page 32 that indicate a comprehensive plan in place to assist students in mastering stated goals.

Weaknesses:

The response lacks detail on special education programming in existing schools. The inclusion of a summary of prior success with special education programs that includes a discussion of the intended location for the schools would improve the response in this area.

A strong response would discuss the reasoning for developing and implementing the new Democracy Pathways initiative that includes supporting data used to inform this process.

Reader's Score: 7

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 applicant effectively details plans to replicate and expand the school model for more than 11,000 students during the project period. The project design appears appropriately comprehensive and is highly likely to meet that stated goals. (33-39)

The proposal describes the goals and measurable objectives and outcomes (page 34 and 35) including a chart that outlines key metrics,

There is a description of the various replication strategies, including parent inputs (page 38-39). Additionally the applicant provides a sample of the timeline on page 40 and explains a process that includes incubation, comprehensive school assessment staffing, and turnaround school opening.

The proposal also describes acquisition replication strategy includes efforts to acquire small, struggling schools in which to replicate the school model. (page 39)

Weaknesses:

The response lacks a discussion of the specific locations in which the schools are likely to be located. Due to this, it is not clear the level at which the applicant will be serving a similar or significantly different student population.

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: 16

Sub Question

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 (4 points).

Strengths:

The applicant provides ample information and data indicating a high capacity to achieve the objectives of the proposed plan on time. Evidence includes a pre-opening project management plan (page 39-40 figures 15, 16, and 17) that details responsibilities, timelines, milestones, and resources. The information provided indicate an adequate management plan is in place to achieve the objectives of the proposed project in a timely manner and with sound financial oversight.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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:

A comprehensive business plan is provided includes a description of the strategies to be used including best practices, information sharing, and quality assurance. (page 43-4) d A sample of the schoolwide self-assessment is provided in Appendix H and the use of student achievement data to inform business operations is described on page 45. It appears likely the business will support efforts to improve and sustain the quality and performance of the replicated school sites.

Weaknesses:

The applicant refers to brand management (page 44) as a key component of the business and management plan. The applicant's response needed a brief definition of this performance indicator to more fully explain the alignment to the business plan goals.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 3

- 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 comprehensive multi-year financial model is provided in Appendix G and described in the narrative. The proposal narrative demonstrates a commitment to solid fiduciary oversight. (page 47)

Weaknesses:

The expected support from current and future partners lacks detail. A strong response would include the type of support and the expected impact stakeholder support will have on efforts to meet school objectives and how this support is aligned to the financial and operating model. (page 47)

Reader's Score: 2

- 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:

An adequate closure plan is described for schools that do not meet high standards of quality. The plan includes reallocating resources for up to three years, implementing turnaround intervention strategies, and targeted staffing changes. Unsuccessful schools will work with the authorizer to cease operations including student and records transfer and the dissolution of school assets. (Page 47)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are evident in this area.

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 qualifications and experience of key personnel is provide including the Project Director (Chief of Staff) Chief Executive Officer, (page 48) as well as project staff for executive, administrative, legal, support, and community needs. The personnel possess the skills and experience needed to implement and manage the proposed expansion project (Pages 48-53)

Weaknesses:

The applicant's response needed greater detail on the efforts to use training to ensure ongoing success, sustain the high quality of an greatly expanding national school network. Training efforts could include conferences, professional development sessions, authorizer training, or mandated State Education Agency training expected to take place during the grant cycle to ensure effective oversight of a large national school network.

Sub Question

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:

Evaluation plan described in the proposal appears comprehensive and appropriately aligned to the intended outcomes of the project. Applicant will work with both internal evaluators and independent researchers (page 54) to conduct quantitative analysis and design and conduct studies that will be made available for a broad group of stakeholders. The applicant will use academic outcomes

The applicant will use appropriately robust designs to measure system-wide outcomes in turnaround schools that will use the academic student outcomes based on performance measures found on page 35.

Weaknesses:

The evaluation process plan relies heavily on experimental processes. The applicant's response needed a description of a research based, proven evaluation model that is specific to measuring the effectiveness of a nation-wide school network.

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 proposal briefly describes a successful turnaround project for one of the applicant's existing schools.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not clearly demonstrate how the proposed project will occur in partnership with, or be designed to assist LEAs in establishing a high quality school to serve a targeted student population attending schools that have been identified for restructuring, closure, improvement, or corrective action.

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:

The proposal provides a brief description that demonstrates a record of promoting diversity among Black and Latino students. The applicant response includes data that indicates continuous success in recruiting and maintaining student populations from a variety of ethnic and racial groups.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's response lacks a discussion and data demonstrating the percentage of English Language Learners and students with disabilities served in recent years. Due to this, the applicant fails to meet the criteria in this area since it is difficult to ascertain the level at which students with disabilities and English Language Learners will be served at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted

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