

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2017 12:07 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Environmental Charter Schools (U282M170043)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	32
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	23
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 1	3	3
School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts		
1. CPP 2	5	0
Sub Total	8	3
Total	108	86

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Charter Management Organization - 5: 84.282M

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Environmental Charter Schools (U282M170043)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. Comments should support your recommendation according to the Selection Criteria. Please address each section and provide your scores for each section separately.

Reader's Score: 32

Sub Question

1. The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages.

Strengths:

Both of the Applicant's middle schools have demonstrated a growth rate higher than the state average for nearly every subgroup, including socioeconomically disadvantaged students from 2015-16, and students outperform those of local districts on ELA and math assessments (pg. e25, 33). The Applicant's graduation rates increased across all subgroups from 2014-15 to 2015-16, as did state assessment scores in ELA and math (pg. e27, 34).

Weaknesses:

Growth data was disaggregated by ethnicity and students with low socioeconomic status but not disaggregate by ELL status and students with disabilities (pg. e34).

Reader's Score: 12

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

Strengths:

The Applicant consistently outperforms local districts and exceeds state averages on standardized tests, has demonstrated a growth rate higher than the state average from 2015 to 2016 for nearly every subgroup, 97% of its last three graduating classes were accepted to four-year colleges or universities, and 75% of students that attend college remain in college after their first year (pg. e24-32).

Weaknesses:

The Inglewood middle school campuses struggled with growth on state math tests from 2014-15 to 2015-16 for students with low-socioeconomic status when compared to state growth rates (pg. e33). The Applicant did not provide information on student attendance and retention rates.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 10

3. The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have not been closed; have not had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have not had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have not had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have not experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; and have not had any significant issues with respect to student safety.

Strengths:

The Applicant has never had a school closed, or charter revoked or non-renewed (pg. e34).

Weaknesses:

In 2012, the Applicant revised its financial policies in response to its authorizer's questions about fiscal management in order to ensure that the Applicant's schools were not commingling funds (pg. e55). Additionally, the Applicant notes that the portable classrooms installed in 2007 never received full approval by the Department of State Architecture inspector, and the Applicant is currently working to get that issue resolved pg. e55-56).

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

1. The extent to which charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant serve educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, at rates comparable to surrounding public schools; and

Strengths:

Although it varies across campus, overall the Applicant serves comparable numbers of students eligible for free and reduced lunch as its surrounding schools (pg. e35). The ECMS-Gardena serves a comparable number of students with disabilities as its surrounding middle school, and the ECMS-Inglewood campuses serves a higher number of students with disabilities than its local middle school.

Weaknesses:

The ECHS campus serves fewer ELL and students with disabilities than its local high schools (pg. e35).

Reader's Score: 8

2. The quality of the plan to ensure that the charter schools the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students.

Strengths:

The Applicant will coordinate with special education and ELL coordinators from feeder public schools in order to recruit students and develop transition plans, and implemented research-based methods of differentiated instruction, in order to ensure that it is recruiting and retaining educationally disadvantaged students (pg. e36-38). The Applicant also identifies plans for identifying and properly supporting ELL and students with disabilities, as well

Sub Question

as supports for socioeconomically disadvantaged students which include parent outreach and community partnerships (pg. e38-42). To the extent possible, the Applicant will monitor enrollment to ensure that the student body enrolled reflects the diversity of the community (pg. e71).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the alignment of the evaluation plan to the logic model for the proposed grant project and 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 proposed grant project articulated in the applicant's response to application requirement (c) and will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the performance period.**

Strengths:

The Applicant intends to contract with an education consultant and researcher with experience in education and both qualitative and quantitative research projects (pg. e43). The plan for evaluating the project is well-considered and includes the analysis of comparison data for students after each year of enrollment and across demographics and the tracking of interim data (pg. e44). The Applicant identifies specific guiding questions and the qualitative and quantitative data that will be used to evaluate those questions, as well as specific timelines for the evaluations (pg. e45-47). The Applicant's logic model aligns to the evaluation plan, includes clear outputs, and describes short, mid, and long-term outcomes (pg. e56-58).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

- 1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers—**

Reader's Score: 18

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**

Strengths:

The Applicant provides the outline of a management plan which includes parties responsible for accomplishment of each task and timelines, which plan spans a four-year time period (pg. e48-51). The plan covers key initiatives including the charter petition, recruitment and development of staff, curriculum replication, facility acquisition and preparation, student recruitment, community outreach, and project evaluation (pg. e48-51).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Although the plan identifies the timeframes for completion and milestones relating to evaluating financing, the milestones relating to financing are broad and do not provide sufficient detail to demonstrate how the Applicant will achieve the objectives of the proposed project within budget.

Reader's Score: 3

2. **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; and**

Strengths:

The Applicant team and key project personnel, which includes the Executive Director and founder of the school and a director of finance and operations with over ten years of relevant experience, have demonstrated experience in charter school start up and operation, and their experience indicates that the project personnel are equipped to manage projects of the size and scope proposed (pg. e51-52).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

3. **The ability of the applicant to sustain the operation of the replicated or expanded charter schools after the grant has ended, as demonstrated by the multi-year financial and operating model included in the applicant's response to application requirement (g).**

Strengths:

The Applicant requires approximately \$1.4 million in start-up funds, \$500,000 of which is projected to come from the state department of education (pg. e52). The Applicant projects that it will be able to sustain daily operational costs through state and federal per pupil funding sources in year one of operation (pg. e53). The Applicant provides contingency plans for start-up funding, if needed (pg. e53).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. **This priority is for projects that will provide for the replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools that have an intentional focus on recruiting and retaining racially and socioeconomically diverse student bodies (see Section 4305(b)(5)(A) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA).**

Note: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf).

Strengths:

To recruit and retain a diverse student body, the Applicant will locate the replicated school in an area that is racially diverse and will employ a number of efforts designed to achieve and maintain racial and ethnic balance, which include the securing of bilingual staff members, a Tribes program designed to address cultural differences, and engaging an Equity

and Diversity Taskforce (pg. e20-21). The Applicant also identifies targeted outreach that can be used in the case that the Applicant does not achieve its targeted diversity, and has ongoing plans for monitoring its demographic (pg. e21-22, 70).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts

1. This priority is for applicants that both:

(a) Demonstrate past success in improving the academic performance of one or more academically poor-performing public schools by taking over the operation of the school or restarting the school as a charter school; and

(b) Propose to use CMO funds to restart as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public schools during the project period, to do so by replicating a successful charter school model for which the applicant has provided evidence of success, and to do so by targeting a similar student population in the replicated charter school as was served by the academically poor-performing public school. In accordance with section 4310(2)(B) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, students who are enrolled in the academically poor-performing public school at the time of restart are exempt from the charter school's lottery.

For purposes of this priority, academically poor-performing public schools may include, but are not limited to, persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined in this notice and the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program under Title I of the ESEA (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>); and priority schools in States that exercised flexibility¹ under the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (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 December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>).

Note: For applicants proposing to use CMO grant funds to replicate a high-quality charter school by restarting as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public schools, the CMO's proposed charter school must be newly created and operating under a separate charter and governance than the academically poor-performing public school.

Footnote 1: As of August 1, 2016, States may no longer exercise flexibility, except in the limited circumstances where they implemented interventions previously in priority schools under the SIG program. For additional information related to ESEA flexibility and interventions in priority schools, see section B of the Department's June 29, 2016 guidance entitled, "Transitioning to the Every Student Succeeds Act – Frequently Asked Questions," at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essafaqtransition62916.pdf>.

Strengths:

Applicant did not respond to this section.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not respond to this section.

Reader's Score: 0

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Environmental Charter Schools (U282M170043)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	31
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	23
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Sub Total	100	82
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 1	3	3
School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts		
1. CPP 2	5	0
Sub Total	8	3
Total	108	85

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Charter Management Organization - 5: 84.282M

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Environmental Charter Schools (U282M170043)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. Comments should support your recommendation according to the Selection Criteria. Please address each section and provide your scores for each section separately.

Reader's Score: 31

Sub Question

1. The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages.

Strengths:

The proposal demonstrates a comparably high percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards for ELA and math on the state tests (p. 8-15). For example, the proposal shows the comparison of Environmental Charter School students' performance compared to neighboring schools and the state's percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standards in ELA and math and the ECS students outperformed the others (p. 8-10). To further demonstrate success in increasing achievement, the proposal also shows growth rates of their students, which are higher than the state average (p. 15-16).

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not make clear or disaggregate what the achievement scores are for their EL students and their special education students.

Reader's Score: 11

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

Strengths:

The proposal shows that most students in identified racial and economically disadvantaged subgroups are outperforming the state average in ELA and mathematics state assessments.

(p. 16).

In addition, the proposal states that most of the subgroups of educationally disadvantaged students are outperforming the state average when it comes to graduation rate (p. 17). Moreover the graduation rate has shown improvement over the previous two years (p. 17).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

There were some places in the proposal where some of the ECS schools were not performing well compared to the state average. For example, ECS-I has not shown better growth than the state when it came to economically disadvantaged students. (p. 16).

Also, it is not clear how the SPED or EL students performed on the state assessments compared to the state average.

Reader's Score: 10

- 3. The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have not been closed; have not had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have not had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have not had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have not experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; and have not had any significant issues with respect to student safety.**

Strengths:

The proposal states that ECS has never had a school closed, or a charter revoked or not renewed. (p. 17). In addition, the school has had more than 15 annual, independent audits and all have been clean with no significant issues with compliance (p. 17).

Weaknesses:

On page 38 in the proposal, it was noted that the charter authorizer found two issues in the past: one having to do with financial practices and the other with structural safety. For example, the issue had to do with the ways in which the finances were being tracked and the organization's financial policies were updated to reflect these concerns.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary**

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant serve educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, at rates comparable to surrounding public schools; and**

Strengths:

The proposal demonstrates that ECS is serving economically disadvantaged students. For example, ECS is serving a higher percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch compared to neighboring schools (p. 18). Moreover, two out of the three schools are serving more or comparably the same EL students than neighboring schools (p. 18). Finally, the three schools are serving comparable or more students with disabilities than the neighboring schools.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The proposal notes that one of the schools is serving a fewer percentage of EL students than one of the neighboring schools.

Reader's Score: 8

- 2 The quality of the plan to ensure that the charter schools the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students.**

Strengths:

The proposal states that ECS will carry out a similar plan of recruiting for students as with their previous schools, which has yielded a diverse student population. In addition, the proposal states that ECS will engage with the special education and English language coordinator from the feeder schools in order to recruit students. (p. 19). Moreover, on page 70 of the proposal, the school provides a specific plan for reaching educationally disadvantaged students with specific strategies noted.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the alignment of the evaluation plan to the logic model for the proposed grant project and 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 proposed grant project articulated in the applicant's response to application requirement (c) and will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the performance period.**

Strengths:

The proposal identifies an evaluator with experience and expertise to carry out the evaluation. This suggests that the evaluation can be carried out in a rigorous manner. (p. 26). The evaluation plan includes guiding questions that will be addressed with quantitative and qualitative data. (p. 27-29). Also, the evaluation plan in the proposal includes a logic model to guide the overall work of the evaluation making explicit the outputs and outcomes anticipated from the project. (p. 39-41).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

- 1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers—**

Reader's Score: 18

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**

Strengths:

The proposal provides a management plan. This includes a very general timeline for the project with activities that are to be carried out for the project and the personnel who will be responsible for the activities (p. 31-34).

Weaknesses:

The timeline lacks specificity to understand when the activities will begin and end other than during a particular year. For some of the activities listed in the timeline, there are not evident milestone associated with the activities. (p. 31-34).

Reader's Score: 3

2. **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; and**

Strengths:

The proposal provides the key personnel who will lead this effort (p. 34-35). These personnel possess extensive expertise and experience, which suggests that they will be capable of carrying out the work as intended. In addition, their skills represent a diversity of know-how necessary to expand the schools as they are planning (p. 34-35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

3. **The ability of the applicant to sustain the operation of the replicated or expanded charter schools after the grant has ended, as demonstrated by the multi-year financial and operating model included in the applicant's response to application requirement (g).**

Strengths:

The proposal includes a multi-year budget summary, which suggests the financial direction of what ECS is planning (p. e164-e169). In addition, the proposal lists how they may apply for credit from the state (p. 36). Also, the proposal lists the names of foundations and grant programs, from which they have received money, which indicates that they may be able to raise similar amounts of funds in the future.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. **This priority is for projects that will provide for the replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools that have an intentional focus on recruiting and retaining racially and socioeconomically diverse student bodies (see Section 4305(b)(5)(A) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA).**

Note: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use

Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools” (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf).

Strengths:

The proposal states that the school will be intentionally located in an area with a diverse population. The proposal adds that the recruiting efforts will target families within the immediate radius of the school. Moreover, the proposal states that recruiting efforts will use informational sessions and direct mailings translated into multiple languages to reach the most possible families. (p. 3).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts

1. This priority is for applicants that both:

(a) Demonstrate past success in improving the academic performance of one or more academically poor-performing public schools by taking over the operation of the school or restarting the school as a charter school; and

(b) Propose to use CMO funds to restart as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public schools during the project period, to do so by replicating a successful charter school model for which the applicant has provided evidence of success, and to do so by targeting a similar student population in the replicated charter school as was served by the academically poor-performing public school. In accordance with section 4310(2)(B) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, students who are enrolled in the academically poor-performing public school at the time of restart are exempt from the charter school's lottery.

For purposes of this priority, academically poor-performing public schools may include, but are not limited to, persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined in this notice and the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program under Title I of the ESEA (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>); and priority schools in States that exercised flexibility¹ under the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (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 December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>).

Note: For applicants proposing to use CMO grant funds to replicate a high-quality charter school by restarting as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public schools, the CMO's proposed charter school must be newly created and operating under a separate charter and governance than the academically poor-performing public school.

Footnote 1: As of August 1, 2016, States may no longer exercise flexibility, except in the limited circumstances where they implemented interventions previously in priority schools under the SIG program. For additional information related to ESEA flexibility and interventions in priority schools, see section B of the Department's June 29, 2016 guidance entitled, "Transitioning to the Every Student Succeeds Act – Frequently Asked Questions," at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essafaqstransition62916.pdf>.

Strengths:

This priority was not addressed.

Weaknesses:

This priority was not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/17/2017 05:35 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/17/2017 12:07 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Environmental Charter Schools (U282M170043)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
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1. Quality of Applicant	45	32
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1. Disadvantaged Students	25	23
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	10
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 1	3	3
School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts		
1. CPP 2	5	0
Sub Total	8	3
Total	108	86

Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Charter Management Organization - 5: 84.282M

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Environmental Charter Schools (U282M170043)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

1. Comments should support your recommendation according to the Selection Criteria. Please address each section and provide your scores for each section separately.

Reader's Score: 32

Sub Question

1. The degree to which the applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students and for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, attending the charter schools the applicant operates or manages.

Strengths:

School level ELA data provided for 2016 shows an increased percentage of ECHS students scoring at Standard Met or Standard Exceeded as compared to the prior year (e26).

Math data for the two ECS middle schools also demonstrates improved performance in Math (e102).

Cohort growth data (from 6 to 7 and 7 to 8) for students in low socioeconomic status shows increased achievement as compared to the state.

Weaknesses:

School level Math data provided for 2016 shows a comparable percentage, but no improved percentage of ECHS students scoring at Standard Met or Standard Exceeded as compared to the prior year (e26).

Although student achievement data was disaggregated by ethnicity, no data was provided for each of the subgroups of students described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA to demonstrate improved academic achievement for these groups.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Strengths:

Growth data for students with low socioeconomic status (for grades 6 to 7 and 7 to 8) was provided that demonstrates greater growth in ELA and Math than the state average. (e33)

Sub Question

High school graduation rate data for 2016 shows that in each of the subgroups ECS schools graduate students at a greater rate than the prior year, and that in 2015 ECS schools graduated a greater percentage of ELL and socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and a comparable percentage of students with disabilities.(e34)

Weaknesses:

State achievement data was not provided for ELL and students with disabilities to provide a comparison to performance of these subgroups at the state level.

For students with low socioeconomic status students at ECMS-I scored demonstrated lower growth than the state average. EMCS-I students achieved 1% growth, while the state average was 4%. (e33)

Reader's Score: 10

- 3. The extent to which charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have not been closed; have not had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; have not had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation; have not had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management; have not experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter; and have not had any significant issues with respect to student safety.**

Strengths:

The applicant provided a general statement indicating that it has not had any significant compliance issues or had any schools closed or charters revoked. (e55)

Weaknesses:

The applicant described an issue regarding fiscal management that was raised by its authorizer. The authorizer had questions regarding the tracking of revenue and expenses. ECS responded by updating its policies. Although it appears that the issue was corrected, there was a concern regarding ECS's financial policies in the past. (e55)

The applicant also describes a current issue regarding approval of portables used by ECS and the lack of final approval from the Department of State Architecture. Without additional detail regarding the issue that needs to be resolved, including the modifications that have been made to the property, the severity of this issue cannot be determined. However, since the school is operating in facilities that have not received final approval from DSA, it is clear that ECS is not in compliance with all requirements of its authorizer. (e55-56)

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

- 1. The significance of the contribution the proposed project will make in expanding educational opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students and enabling those students to meet challenging State academic standards. In determining the significance of the contribution the proposed project will make, the Secretary**

Reader's Score: 23

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant serve educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities and English learners, at rates comparable to**

Sub Question

surrounding public schools; and

Strengths:

The applicant provided data that demonstrated the majority of its schools serve greater percentages of educationally disadvantaged students. (e35). All school operated by ECS serve a greater percentage of FRL students than the comparison schools. The two middle schools also serve a greater or comparable percentage of ELL and students with disabilities.

Weaknesses:

ECHS serves fewer ELL and students with disabilities. For ELL students the percentages is significantly smaller (8% at ECHS compared to 19% and 11% at the comparison schools) (e35).

Reader's Score: 8

2 The quality of the plan to ensure that the charter schools the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit and enroll educationally disadvantaged students.

Strengths:

The applicant indicated that it will engage with coordinators from local schools to recruit students with disabilities and ELLs. This includes providing descriptions of transition plans for students that will enroll at ECS schools. (e36)

Enrollment will also be monitored to ensure that the diversity of the community is reflected in the student population, including ELL and students with disabilities. (e71)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

1. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the alignment of the evaluation plan to the logic model for the proposed grant project and 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 proposed grant project articulated in the applicant's response to application requirement (c) and will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the performance period.

Strengths:

The provided logic model (e56-58) identifies activities, outputs, and outcomes that focus on the planning and launch of the school.

The described evaluation will focus on two elements: the implementation of the project, and evaluation of project outcomes. (e43) Guiding questions have been provided for of Phase 1 of the evaluation. These guiding questions focus on key components of the ECS model and that launch of the replicated school. Both qualitative and quantitative data sources are identified that will be used to answer the evaluation questions.

Evaluation goals also focus on the academic outcomes for students enrolled at ECS schools. (e43-46)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

- 1. In determining the quality of the management plan and personnel to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools under the proposed project, the Secretary considers—**

Reader's Score: 18

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**

Strengths:

The management plan covers a 4 year period and describes actions to be completed in multiple areas that are essential to the launch of a new charter school: charter petition, recruitment and development of staff, curriculum replication, facility acquisition and preparation, student recruitment, communication/outreach, and project evaluation. Each action identifies a position title that appears to have responsibility for the task. (e48-51)

Weaknesses:

The management plan does not include specific timeframes and milestones within each project year to allow for management of tasks during the year. No budget or milestones for completion of tasks are identified. Descriptions of tasks are overly broad and general and do not contain milestones, deadlines, or budgets to provide guidance or expectations for the completion of each task. (e48-51)

Reader's Score: 3

- 2. 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; and**

Strengths:

Brief biographies and resumes were provided for key members of the project team. Experience and expertise was demonstrated for the fiscal oversight, academic development of the program, and operational management of the project. (e51-53, e78-83)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

- 3. The ability of the applicant to sustain the operation of the replicated or expanded charter schools after the grant has ended, as demonstrated by the multi-year financial and operating model included in the applicant'**

Sub Question

response to application requirement (g).

Strengths:

Although the applicant indicated that it requires funding above and beyond the grant funds provided for this project, and has projected deficits during the planning phases of the project, by the first year of operations of the school (2019-2020) the revenues are projected to exceed expenses. (e164) The applicant also described its prior success in acquiring funding from foundation grants, and plans to leverage contributions for current funding partners.(e52-e53). For prior funding amounts and organizations were identified to demonstrate the applicant's capacity for securing funding.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

1. This priority is for projects that will provide for the replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools that have an intentional focus on recruiting and retaining racially and socioeconomically diverse student bodies (see Section 4305(b)(5)(A) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA).

Note: For information on permissible ways to meet this priority, please refer to the joint guidance issued by the Department's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice entitled, "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" (www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf).

Strengths:

The applicant described a detailed plan for recruiting and retaining a student population with diverse demographics. In addition to distributing flyers in multiple languages to local businesses and community organizations, and making bilingual staff members available, an equity and diversity taskforce will propose methods for improving practices to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in the student population. (e19-22)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 3

Competitive Preference Priority - School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts

1. This priority is for applicants that both:

(a) Demonstrate past success in improving the academic performance of one or more academically poor-performing public schools by taking over the operation of the school or restarting the school as a charter school; and

(b) Propose to use CMO funds to restart as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public schools during the project period, to do so by replicating a successful charter school model for which the applicant has provided evidence of success, and to do so by targeting a similar student population in the

the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, students who are enrolled in the academically poor-performing public school at the time of restart are exempt from the charter school's lottery.

For purposes of this priority, academically poor-performing public schools may include, but are not limited to, persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined in this notice and the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program under Title I of the ESEA (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>); and priority schools in States that exercised flexibility¹ under the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (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 December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>).

Note: For applicants proposing to use CMO grant funds to replicate a high-quality charter school by restarting as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public schools, the CMO's proposed charter school must be newly created and operating under a separate charter and governance than the academically poor-performing public school.

Footnote 1: As of August 1, 2016, States may no longer exercise flexibility, except in the limited circumstances where they implemented interventions previously in priority schools under the SIG program. For additional information related to ESEA flexibility and interventions in priority schools, see section B of the Department's June 29, 2016 guidance entitled, "Transitioning to the Every Student Succeeds Act – Frequently Asked Questions," at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essafaqstransition62916.pdf>.

Strengths:

Applicant did not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

Applicant did not address this priority.

Reader's Score: **0**

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