

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/07/2017 09:36 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Freedom Preparatory Academy, Inc. (U282M170044)

**Reader #1:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	38
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	23
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel</b>		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	88
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	0
<b>School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts</b>		
1. CPP 2	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	5
<b>Total</b>	108	93

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Charter Management Organization - 1: 84.282M

Reader #1: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Freedom Preparatory Academy, Inc. (U282M170044)

## 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: 38

#### 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 applicant has thoroughly demonstrates success in increasing academic achievement, including for all students and for African American and economically disadvantaged described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. The applicant provided evidence of FPA schools outperforming neighborhood schools, Shelby County Schools and State. For example, the applicant provides comparative data as evidence of increasing achievement. The comparative data includes the comparative Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), state accountable test results shows that 6th-8th grade Math averages for FPA (Economically Disadvantaged) was 55.2, and Science was 61 compared to the State of 54 for both areas, and Shelby County of 41.6 and 41.7, respectively. The neighborhood scores ranked far below at 13, 21.7, 17.1 for Math and 29.1, 41, 33.9, and Shelby County (41.7) for Science (pgs. 7, 8). The applicant indicates that the economically disadvantaged student's results for 2012-2013 to 2014-15 school years showed 6th-8th grade Math averages for FPA was 54.3, and Science was 61 compared to the State of 54 for both areas, and Shelby County of 41.6 and 41.6, respectively. The neighborhood scores ranked far below at 132, 18, 16.2 for Math and 28.7, 40.7, 31.6, and Shelby County (41.7) for Science (pgs. 6-9). The applicant provides additional evidence of success that includes performance of Elementary students and high school students on the ACT. (pgs. 13-19, e31-e37)

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide 2015-2016 performance data for subgroups in addition to African American and economically disadvantaged. For example, the applicant failed to present recent performance data for students with disabilities (SWD), English Language Learners (ELL) or other subgroups for each grade range (elementary/middle/high) (p19-20, 24).

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.

### Sub Question

#### Strengths:

The applicant demonstrated how students have exceeded the average academic achievement results for the State. The applicant provides evidence of academic achievement according to analysis results for economically disadvantaged students, black, Hispanic, and Native American students that indicate that these subgroups are proficient at rates that exceed both district and state on all assessments. The applicant documents that the annual attendance rate (98.2) exceed that of the State (95.4) (p. 21). In addition, the applicant documents that retention rate has improved each year from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015. The applicant documents that in previous years, FPCS have outperformed both the District and the State on the percentage of students with disabilities scoring P/A in both ELA and Math. In the 2013-14 SY, in Math, 33.3% of SWD scored proficient or advanced compared to 31% in the District, and 28.5% in the State. (pgs. 24, 25, e42, e43, e213, e214)

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide academic subgroup data for students with disabilities or English Learners (p. 39).

Reader's Score: 12

- 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 evidence that FPCS opened in 2009 and continues to be in operation with no closures or revocations. The applicant stated that it has had no material weaknesses nor any significant deficiencies offered in control environment. In addition, FPCS documents that it has received passing scores on our most recent district Operational Scorecard on audits. Since inception, FPCS has also not identified any compliance issues within its schools in the areas of student safety, financial management, or statutory or regulatory compliance. (pgs. 22, 23, e40, e41)

#### Weaknesses:

No Weakness noted.

Reader's Score: 15

### 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**

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

The applicant indicates that FCP has continuous efforts to educate a community of students with disabilities (SWD). The applicant documents that approximately 10-13% of all students were identified as SWD. The applicant presents a table with comparative enrollment data for neighborhood schools. FCP schools serve 91% economically disadvantaged students in comparison to Ford (0.0), Geeter (99.3), Chickasaw (99.8), Manor Lake (87.8), and Havenview (69.8). The ELL rates are comparable to four of the other neighborhood schools with a rate of <1%, and Ford Road with 1.6%. The rates for SWDs served at FPCS are 9.7% compared to 14, 20.6, 18.8, 10.2, and 19.7%. The African American student population served at FPCS is 96.8%, and Hispanic is 3.2 compared to Manor Lake with 98.3% and 1.7%, respectively. (p. 23, 24, e42, e43)

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## 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 presents a plan for recruiting and enrolling educationally disadvantaged students. For example, the applicant documents the intent to continue to serve a population that is educationally disadvantaged, with nearly 90 percent of all students qualifying for the free or reduced price lunch and approximately 10 percent qualifying for special education services. FPCS schools have supported students in outperforming neighborhood, district, and state comparison groups on key academic measures. In addition, the applicant indicates that the project will support the replication and expansion of five new schools that will result in serving 2,300 students. The schools will be located in Southwest Memphis communities with a large population of educationally underserved students within the zip codes of 38116, and 38118. The applicant will conduct an enrollment lottery within seven days of the close of initial enrollment period up to a 30-day period. (p. 25-29, e43-47)

### Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide evidence that the addition of an additional area will ensure that a comparable number of educationally disadvantaged students will be recruitment/enrollment. (pg. 25)

**Reader's Score: 13**

## 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 indicates that multiple forms of data collection to drive instruction that include administering the TNReady tests, a criterion-based measure of proficiency to measure absolute achievement regarding state academic standards; the MAP, a national norm-referenced test to measure longitudinal growth of a cohort of students; STEP literacy assessments in K-3; externally created Achievement. The applicant provides a Logic Model for the proposed project purposed, which to determine the alignment of with the evaluation plan for the proposed grant project that includes outcome categories and outcomes for each objective. The applicant indicates that Objective 1 is to open five new schools serving 1,550 new students by 2020 and enroll 2,238 students by 2023. (pgs. 29-38, e47-e57)

**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: 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**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provided a comprehensive management plan that demonstrated the project could meet proposed objectives on time and within budget, and includes clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks. The chief academic officer will provide oversight to ensure consistency for curriculum, instructional model, assessment, coaching and professional development, and provide research and dissemination of best practices for serving the population of students for the proposed project. The applicant has provided a budget to align with the comprehensive management plan. (pgs. 43-58, e63-e78, Appendix B)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant failed to provide time commitment for the project director for the project. (pg. 47, 48)

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 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 provided thorough information that demonstrates that the key personnel that will provide project and financial oversight for the proposed project are qualified by education and experience to implement the tasks and effectively carry out the activities for the proposed project. The applicant provided details on the roles and responsibilities for key staff. The applicant provided a detailed table that provided task, milestones, person responsible, and timeline for the proposed project. In addition, the applicant provided resumes/curriculum vitae for the founder/chief executive director, chief financial officer, chief schools officer, chief instructional officer/chief academic officer, and dean of students/co-principal/head of school/chief schools officer/chief people officer along with an organizational chart. The applicant provides a list (with current employer and area of focus for each), bios, and resumes of FPCS Board. (e82-e93, e193-e207)

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant failed to provide time commitment for the project director for the project. (pg. 47, 48)

**Reader's Score: 8**

- 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 provides evidence that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant. The ability provides a thorough plan that provides evidence of the ability to sustain the operation of the replicated or expanded charter schools after the grant has ended. For example, the applicant provides a model that will ensure that schools receive federal education funds as allocated by formula, sustain long-term community and philanthropic partners (e.g. Charter School Growth Fund, Hyde Family Foundations) with letters of support provided in Appendix C. The applicant documents a thorough plan for school improvement that includes a school model, school leadership training, curriculum and assessment (e.g. STEP, MAP, and ACT testing), blended learning, core academic program, and firm college-ready bar. (Pgs. 48-60, e67-e78)

**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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf)).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant did not respond to this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not respond to this priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/07/2017 09:36 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/06/2017 08:41 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Freedom Preparatory Academy, Inc. (U282M170044)

**Reader #2:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	37
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	23
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	9
<b>Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel</b>		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	19
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	88
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	0
<b>School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts</b>		
1. CPP 2	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	5
<b>Total</b>	108	93

# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Charter Management Organization - 1: 84.282M

Reader #2: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Freedom Preparatory Academy, Inc. (U282M170044)

## 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: 37

#### 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 applicant has demonstrated success in increasing academic achievement, for all students and for each of the subgroups, attending the charter schools the applicant operates. For example, the middle school posts state achievement data in math (55.2%) and science (62%) higher than the state (54%, 54%) (p6). There is also evidence of performance above the state level on end-of-course tests in high school. Performance is above the district and state in English I and II, and Algebra I. Growth data in English I and II, Biology and chemistry for schools with high African American student populations is also indicative of growth

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide current performance data for subgroups beyond African American and economically disadvantaged. For example, the absence of a focused data discussion regarding recent performance of students with disabilities (SWD), English Language Learners (ELL) or other subgroups for each grade range (elementary/middle/high) weakens this section of the narrative (p19-20, 24). Given the population is 3.2% Hispanic and 9.7% SWD, the achievement of other subgroups on local assessments may have strengthened this section (p1, 19, 23).

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 shows steady performance among educationally disadvantaged students. In high school, students in this subgroup, along with African American, Hispanic and Native American students in high school were proficient at higher rates than both the district and the state in Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, English I/II and

**Sub Question**

Geometry. Attendance rates at the school (98.2%) is higher than the state rate (95.4%) and retention rates were above 70%. (p21) The applicant provides 2013-14 data to demonstrate performance among students with disabilities across all schools. In 2013-14, 33.3% SWD students scored proficient or advanced compared to 31% in the District, and 28.5% in the State. (p23-24)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states that students with disabilities (SWD) scoring proficient or advanced in math and English/Language Arts (ELA) has exceeded district and state performance, but ELA SWD data is not clearly discussed (p24, 59).

**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 school is in good standing academically. FPCS has received passing scores on the district overall Operational Scorecard and noted that its recent audits have not revealed material weaknesses or significant deficiencies (p22). The applicant also affirms that the school has not identified any issues with school safety or statutory/regulatory compliance.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score: 15**

**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**

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

Current enrollment rates of educationally disadvantaged students are clearly noted and similar to local neighborhood schools. For example, FPCS serves 9.7% SWD compared to 10.2%-20.6% at local schools. Similar data is also noted for African American students who enroll at FCPS (96.8%) at rates similar to local schools (99% -98.5%). A similar trend is evident when examining the number of ELL students served by the CMO (<1%), compared to the neighborhood schools (from <1% - 1.6%). (p23)

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion and priority. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria and priorities.

### Weaknesses:

None noted

**Reader's Score: 10**

## 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 intends to continue recruiting students from its current focus area (zip code 38109) and from two additional target areas (p25, 29). The applicant's vision for expansion includes direct outreach to and recruitment of high-need students that reflect current demographics (e.g., 90% students who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch, 10% students who receive special education services). New schools will also be located in southwest Memphis, which is 90% economically disadvantaged and, in 2009, contained 60% of the district's failing schools (p24).

### Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a target area for new school recruitment to ensure enrollment numbers are reached (38118), but does not provide detail about the target area. Given the school already recruits from the other two zip codes noted (38109, 38116), the degree to which this additional area will support the recruitment/enrollment of educationally disadvantaged students is unclear (p25).

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion and priority. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria and priorities.

**Reader's Score: 13**

## 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 provides components of its evaluation plan. The intent to focus on organizational growth; academic performance; and financial health, non-academic operations, and sustainability. Evaluation team members are clearly

noted with intended duties and reporting (p30-31). Goals included in the management plan are objective aligned with targeted outcomes. Outcomes are aligned with objectives in the applicant's logic model.

**Weaknesses:**

The goals for years 2-5 for state reading and math rates are not clearly written. For example, the interpretation of the time frame (i.e., within three years) could apply to the end of year 1, year 2 or year 3 (p35). Also, it is unclear how the school will determine the proficiency rate for 25% of all schools in the state. Moreover, the goal for attendance (95%) is beneath the current trend data (98.2%) (p21, 36).

**Reader's Score:** 9

**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:** 19

**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 proposed management plan is clearly detailed to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget. Responsibilities and deadlines are aligned with major activities and reflect the overall design of project and school development (p31-39).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted

**Reader's Score:** 5

- 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 project director is qualified for the position. For example, she currently serves as the CEO and founded the network. She is an attorney and has worked with school leaders and created school/community partnerships (p47). Support from the Board Chair will also likely facilitate project management.

## Sub Question

### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not fully detail the percent effort the project director will commit to this project. Given the duties of project director are in addition to current duties as CEO, clarity regarding the amount of time available to lead this project may have provided clarity (p47-48).

**Reader's Score:** 9

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's plan to rely on traditional school revenue and community/philanthropic support is reasonable to ensure sustained operations. Support from local foundations, Charter School Growth Fund and community/civic organizations demonstrates support beyond per-pupil funding (p49). Also, the schools will use instructional models currently implemented in newly developed schools. This replication should facilitate school onboarding and minimize hindrances related to new school opening.

### Weaknesses:

None 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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf)).

### Strengths:

The applicant does not address this priority.

### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address this priority.

**Reader's Score:** 0

### 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 flexibility<sup>1</sup> 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](http://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:**

The applicant addresses part one of this priority by providing data on the turnaround school, Westwood Elementary School, it assumed control over in 2013. The applicant provides evidence of academic gains in math and reading for grades K-5. The prior priority school realized math percentile growth from 43rd percentile to 94th percentile and from 52nd percentile to 54th percentile in one year's MAP data (p4). In the absence of state test data for grades 3-5, MAP data provided a valid local assessment of student progress (p2-5). The applicant addresses part two of this priority by using the CMO's Westwood Elementary model with another underperforming school. Although the school is not named in the application, the applicant intends to exempt currently enrolled students from the lottery.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

Reader's Score: 5

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 07/06/2017 08:41 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/10/2017 03:46 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Freedom Preparatory Academy, Inc. (U282M170044)

**Reader #3:** \*\*\*\*\*

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	37
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	18
<b>Quality of the Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	7
<b>Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel</b>		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	16
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	78
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	0
<b>School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts</b>		
1. CPP 2	5	5
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	5
<b>Total</b>	108	83



# Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Charter Management Organization - 1: 84.282M

Reader #3: \*\*\*\*\*

Applicant: Freedom Preparatory Academy, Inc. (U282M170044)

## 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: 37

#### 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 application demonstrates that FPA increases academic achievement for economically disadvantaged students, of which group a very high percentage (91% per page 6) are served. The proposal does an excellent job of providing multiple data tables of different grade levels and assessments for Economically Disadvantaged students.

#### Weaknesses:

They did not provide academic subgroup data for students with disabilities or English Learners (p. 39).

Reader's Score: 10

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 provides comparative data for economically disadvantaged students and African American students, in comparison to the state. The performance comparison between the economically disadvantaged students at FPA compared to the state and neighborhood were very clear and strong. Scatterplot charts and the narrative (starting page e31) described that the performance of the African American students at the school was within the top 10% of the state. The application also describes that the school is the highest performing open enrollment school in the neighborhood. (p 26-27)

#### Weaknesses:

No academic performance data were provided for students with disabilities. Also, the comparative data for African American students was only provided as a scatterplot, and thus in relative terms. No concrete numbers were described in the narrative, and the chart was hard to read. These charts began on page e31, and the narrative is on e31. Moreover, the comparisons were only made to schools that served a 90%+ demographic which is not a full state comparison and likely skewed data.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 12

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 schools have not been closed. Plage e41 provides that, "there have been no material weaknesses nor significant deficiencies identified in our control environment. In addition to our audits, FPCS has received passing scores on our most recent district Operational Scorecard. Since inception, FPCS has also not identified any compliance issues within its schools in the areas of student safety, financial management, or statutory or regulatory compliance." Current sponsor/authorizer agreements were provided started at e104.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

**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: 18

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:**

Page e19 provides demographics for the students served at FPCS, the neighborhood, and the state. FPCS serves a higher percentage of African American students and a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students. FCPS serves a lower but reasonably comparable number of students with disabilities.

**Weaknesses:**

Page e19 provides demographics for the students served at FPCS, the neighborhood, and the state. FCPS serves less than one percent of English Learners; whereas the district serves 8.3% and the state shows 4.6%.

This application was thoroughly discussed with respect to each selection criterion and priority. My scores reflect my professional assessment of the application with respect to those criteria and priorities .

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.**

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

Page e43 describes the plans for enrollment. The schools are going to be located in areas that have been historically underserved and have high percentages of economically disadvantaged. Pages e44 and e45 describe the likelihood of economic hardship for students who live in the targeted zip codes.

### Weaknesses:

The enrollment plan provided starting on e43 seems to assume that the schools will be able to enroll students of aligning demographics simply by locating in the zip codes, which has been shown to not be accurate. Additionally, the enrollment plan does not specifically address African American students, students with disabilities, or English Learners.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## 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:

Page 29 describes the evaluation plan, which focuses on categories of performance targets in organizational growth, academic performance, financial health, non-academic operations, and sustainability. There is an external team that will lead the evaluation (p 29), and there are clear targets. Surveys and interviews are mentioned, but are planned to be used and will provide good qualitative data. (p31).

### Weaknesses:

The evaluation plan does not provide for interim checks and is limited to lagging, summative indicators. It is limited to an annual review. (p 29). The interviews are only planned for "key organizational partners and external parties" but there is no description of who that includes. Parent feedback is not mentioned.

**Reader's Score: 7**

## 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: 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**

### Strengths:

Beginning on page e55, the proposal provides a table of key deliverables and timelines and who is responsible for each. There is a strong organizational chart for the central office team to bring expertise in areas that include a CEO, Chief People Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operations Officer, CFO, Chief Schools Officer. (e40). A

## Sub Question

detailed administrative structure is also provided for high school and elementary models.

### Weaknesses:

The board is described to work closely with Central Office to provide reinforcement, but this is challenging from a governance and organizational perspective in case the staff receive different direction from CEO compared to the Board or if they are put into a conflict. (p. e57). The high schools and elementary schools have a lot of administrators given the strong central office. This risks being "top heavy" and may leads to confusion on lines of accountability and responsibility.

**Reader's Score:** 4

## 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 project director, CEO, and other personnel at both central office have appropriate academic backgrounds and practical experiences for the proposed project. Their roles are described on page e58 and their biographical sketches begin on e65.

### Weaknesses:

The org chart provided in Appendix B looks reasonably clear, but the description of roles and who determines professional development is unclear. Role definition is important for accountability. An example is that on page e62, the application describes that the model will be decentralized and individual buildings will determine professional development and internal training. Yet, on page e61, the application describes "Formal means of facilitating collaboration among staff will include regional professional development for specific staff cohorts and PD needs as determined by the CSO (with input from heads of schools)." And, the table on page e57 describes professional development for heads of schools, teachers, and support staff as being responsibility of the CSO and CPO. These shared roles confuse role definition and will lead to unclear accountability for staff evaluation and performance expectations.

**Reader's Score:** 7

## 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 application provides a detailed analysis of how it will use per-student funding, federal funding, and long-term community and philanthropic partners to sustain the necessary funding after the grant has ended. (p. e66 -67)

### Weaknesses:

None

**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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf)).

**Strengths:**

The applicant did not respond to this priority.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not respond to this priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**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 flexibility<sup>1</sup> 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](http://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:**

FPCS will continue to partner with the Tennessee Achievement School District to turnaround chronically underperforming schools. (p. e23). As described on page 20, "The Tennessee Achievement School District (ASD) is a state-wide school district to which

the lowest performing schools (priority schools) in the state can be moved, with the goal of increasing student achievement in those schools. Specifically, the ASD aims to move the bottom five percent of schools in Tennessee to the top 25 percent by 2018 by two methods: (1) Direct run charter schools; (2) Authorizing high-performing local and national charters to turnaround priority schools... Instead of

following the original growth plan of adding two grades per year, Freedom Prep partnered with the Shelby County School district, in the best interest of all children and families, and decided to assume operation of all remaining grades (2-5) at Westwood Elementary in the Fall of 2015. All

students currently attending and zoned to Westwood Elementary were and are currently exempt from our enrollment lottery. This decision ensured that all students at Westwood Elementary would have access to a high quality public education that prepares them for college. Although we do not have state test results yet, FPCS has shown promising early academic results on the MAP exam and our reading assessment, STEP.” Current ASD agreements were provided starting on page e150.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

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