

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 07/11/2016 03:54 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** InspireNOLA Charter Schools (U282M160023)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	50
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	10
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	7
<b>Quality of the Management Plan &amp; Personnel</b>		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
<b>Quality of Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	8
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	4
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>99</b>

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: InspireNOLA Charter Schools (U282M160023)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 50

#### Sub Question

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

#### Strengths:

The CMO's existing campuses have maintained high performance scores on district metrics for the past three years. These metrics and subsequent grades are based on state assessment and ACT results, as well as graduation rates and rigor. Equally impressive are the improvements in these scores over time compared to the stagnant scores of the district. The applicant has also provided national comparison data from a CREDO study from 2014-15 (pages 28-29). InspireNOLA's schools are on par with district performance as per the report cards in Appendix F, but are showing gains over previous years, which is a promising trend.

#### Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 20

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

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant provides substantial data for the past three years on pages 30-33 that demonstrates results across all subgroups of students; these results consistently surpass district, city and state results, all while serving a population of greater disadvantage than those previously mentioned. They have made definitive progress in closing the achievement gap for their students.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

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

**Strengths:**

There is significant evidence provided around attendance, retention, graduation rates and college enrollment from the applicant and compared to the state (where available) on pages 33-37 to show that this CMO is helping students attain better outcomes than the state as a whole.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The CMO not only serves a comparable, if not higher need population in some instances than the district, but also clearly outlines a variety of programs created to meet the diverse needs of these disadvantaged students. In the case of OPSB, InspireNOLA's results are on par with a district with a significant number of selective enrollment seats (page 40). That is an incredible accomplishment of the impact of public charter education. InspireNOLA discusses an array of possible locations for turnaround/takeover schools within their current service area, which would indicate their understanding of the populations served within these communities and at the schools that could come under their management (pages 20-21).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.**

### **Strengths:**

InspireNOLA provides a chart which outlines a timeline for growth over the requested grant period, along with SMART goals that track progress by year (pages 46-49) to demonstrate an understanding of the milestones involved in successfully preparing for and opening new schools.

### **Weaknesses:**

More detail around financial management practices, central office supports, leadership development, and acknowledgement of best practices learned from a takeover would reinforce the applicant's proper preparation for a project of this magnitude.

**Reader's Score: 7**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

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

**Reader's Score: 17**

### **Sub Question**

1. **The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (4 points).**

### **Strengths:**

InspireNOLA has outlined a timeline, milestones and responsibilities in a way that demonstrates better understanding of opening new schools.

### **Weaknesses:**

However, their plan does not acknowledge unique challenges and situations associated with turnaround models. Given that turnaround often requires distinct strategies and approaches to an existing community of students and families, it would be good to hear more about the CMO's planned approach.

**Reader's Score: 3**

2. **The business plan for improving, sustaining, and ensuring the quality and performance of charter schools created or substantially expanded under these grants beyond the initial period of Federal funding in areas including, but not limited to, facilities, financial management, central office,**

**Sub Question**

**student academic achievement, governance, oversight, and human resources of the charter schools (4 points).**

**Strengths:**

The organization chart in Appendix H, couple with the description of network departments and services on pages 52-56 demonstrates that InspireNOLA has the infrastructure in place to support significant CMO growth.

**Weaknesses:**

None identified.

**Reader's Score: 4**

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

**Strengths:**

InspireNOLA has strong support from local and national funders, partners and stakeholder through 10 letters of support for their application and subsequent growth. Based on the narrative and appendices provided, including clean annual audits and budget projections, the organization exhibits sound financial practices.

**Weaknesses:**

However they do not include full, multi-year financial projections laying out the thinking and financial planning around expansion.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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

**Strengths:**

The CMO has a strong record to date that hasn't required them to utilize or maintain a closing plan. In their response, the applicant speaks more to the remediation efforts that would go into effect to support a struggling school in effort to avoid a closure. While this approach is preferred in the hope of getting a school back on track, it does not provide a clear plan of action in the face of a worst case scenario.

**Weaknesses:**

InspireNOLA identifies four key actions that would be taken in the event of a school closure (pages 59-60), but does not have a clear plan in place with designated roles and responsibilities.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

**Strengths:**

InspireNOLA's personnel bring a breadth of experience in education, business, organizational growth and financial management on top of a strong understanding of Louisiana's school system (pages 60-64). Further they have included job descriptions in their application for positions that will be added in response to growth, indicating an understanding of the need for a thoughtful staffing plan.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score:** 6

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Evaluation**

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

**Strengths:**

As outlined in the instructional model on page 26, the InspireNOLA schools administer formative interim assessments every 6-8 weeks, which provide a a wealth of current data to instructors and schools leaders. To provide this regular data indicates that the CMO has some established data systems and evaluation procedures in place to regularly put these results in the hands of the people who can drive the most change - if they can do that, they should have little issue gathering and reporting on the progress of this grant. Figures C.2 and D.1 also highlight project goals, objectives and opportunities for evaluation, indicating the framework is present. Further it sounds at though Bellwether will provide some support around grant evaluation and progress on broader growth goals. This will yield insights into innovative and effective best practices across InspireNOLA's schools (page 69).

**Weaknesses:**

InspireNOLA failed to comprehensively speak to the ongoing evaluation required to move day to day progress forward, while also necessary for CSP reporting. Instead they devoted their narrative to an explanation of an external evaluation, while though helpful in demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of the organization, will not satisfy data collection and monitoring required for the grant.

**Reader's Score:** 8

**Priority Questions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**To meet this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that its proposed replication or expansion of one or more high-quality charter schools (as defined in this notice) will occur in partnership with, and will be designed to assist, one or more LEAs in implementing academic or structural interventions to serve students attending schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, closure, or**

restructuring under section 1116 of the ESEA, and as described in the notice of final requirements for School Improvement Grants, published in the Federal Register on October 28, 2010 (75 FR 66363).

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

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

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

**Note:** As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and nine other Federal agencies to support comprehensive revitalization efforts in 20 high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. Each application for Replication and Expansion grant funds that is accompanied by a Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD Form 50153), signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization of a Promise Zone designated by HUD or USDA supporting the application, will meet this priority. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to [www.hud.gov/promisezones](http://www.hud.gov/promisezones). The certification form is available at [https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD\\_Form\\_50153.pdf](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf).

**Strengths:**

Given its record of success, local leaders and community members chose InspireNOLA to takeover the failing Wilson Charter School, demonstrating strong confidence in their model (page 21). Further the school already has approval from their authorizer to open four schools in the coming years, which again enforces the competency of their model as determined by their authorizing agency (page 19).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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



would ensure that those approaches are permissible under current law.

**Strengths:**

Regardless of New Orleans centralized application process, InspireNOLA works to promote the school widely to ensure access for diverse populations (pages 22-23). Additionally, InspireNOLA's most recent takeover has served to noticeably diversify the overall student population of this CMO by increasing the number of free and reduced lunch and ELL students served. Subsequent takeovers could continue to move the needle on a more diverse group of students.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

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**Status:**             Submitted  
**Last Updated:**    07/11/2016 03:54 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/05/2016 11:47 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** InspireNOLA Charter Schools (U282M160023)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	39
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	8
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan &amp; Personnel</b>		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	10
<b>Quality of Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	4
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>81</b>

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: InspireNOLA Charter Schools (U282M160023)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 39

#### Sub Question

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

#### Strengths:

The applicant founded two charter schools—Harte and Karr—in 2013 (p.24). In addition, the applicant took over one of the most low-performing schools in the state—Wilson—in 2015. Therefore, only two schools have the required three year track record. Both achieved an “A” on the Louisiana Department of Education School Performance Score in 2015, an indicator of quality based on state assessment results and, in the case of high schools, ACT scores and graduation rates (p.27). Though the schools scored a “B” in 2013, they have both shown consistent improvement. The applicant cites the CREDO study of charter school outcomes as further evidence of achieving significantly better outcomes than regional or national averages. Further, the applicant provides evidence that positive outcomes are equitably achieved across educationally disadvantaged groups (p.30).

#### Weaknesses:

The data also shows that proficiency has decreased at almost every grade level, student subgroup, and subject. Though it seems likely this is the result of changes to the state’s assessment system with the introduction of Common Core, the applicant provides no explanation nor provides alternative data to demonstrate consistent growth outside of state assessment results. Though the applicant presents compelling evidence of the quality of the two schools for which it has data, it fails to provide detailed, disaggregated comparisons or indicators of growth: inclusion of specific assessment tools, graduation rates, ACT scores etc (broken down by ethnicity, education program, and language proficiency) would have been useful to determine a true representation of how well the criteria is met. Student outcomes included in the Appendices (p.352) include proficiency levels by subgroup, but only for a single year.

Reader's Score: 13

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

**Sub Question**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides data that illustrates that there have not been significant achievement gaps among subgroups over the past three years: an average 4.7 percentage point difference between African American and Latino student proficiency; an average 5.3 percentage point difference between the proficiency of students receiving special education and the general population (p.30).

**Weaknesses:**

However, additional data provided in the appendices (p.190) shows that the success highlighted earlier, while real and significant, is most striking when presented in aggregated and averaged results. There are several significant discrepancies when outcomes are viewed at grade level. For instance, the ELA proficiency of African American fifth graders at Harte Elementary in 2015 was 63% compared to 100% among Latino students. Without acknowledging these gaps in the narrative (even to explain it may be due to enrollment being predominantly African American), the applicant is unable to articulate how they will work to close them.

**Reader's Score: 11**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides evidence that student proficiency exceeds regional and state averages in every subject (pgs. 32-37). For example, in 2014-15, 81% of students served by the applicant achieved proficiency on PARCC assessments in math and English, compared with 58% across the state. This is supported by further data found in the appendices (p.179) that shows student subgroups outperforming district and state averages.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

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

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

**disabilities and English learners, in mastering State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides compelling evidence (p.40) that in 2014 and 2015, educationally disadvantaged students outperform the local and state averages. In addition, the applicant provides an overview of the educational and operational model, including parent and community engagement, which supports such achievements.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not reference state academic standards or mention whether or not students, though clearly outperforming district norms, are actually achieving those standards. Though the applicant provides a general overview of student demographics in the broad regions in which it intends to grow, no specific or differentiated details of the specific communities and their residents are provided.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant proposes to take over five low-performing PK-8 elementary schools: three in New Orleans and two in Baton Rouge—thereby doubling the number of students served to 5,030 by the 2019-20 school year. Objectives are clear and measurable: increasing enrollment, increasing attendance and retention, increasing literacy proficiency, staff recruitment and satisfaction, and achieving financial sustainability (p.47).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel**

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

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub Question**

**Sub Question**

- 1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (4 points).**

**Strengths:**

All objectives are directly tied to project-level and GPRA goals and are accompanied by a timeline of school opening activities (p.49).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not describe the process of taking over a low-performing school nor any community outreach that may be required to ensure the support of parents and advocates. Nor is there mention of assessing the scale, scope, and quality of any inherited resources within the school facility or the process of developing partnerships with local municipal and community leaders.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

Each department's role in the ongoing operation of the organization and, by extension, the growth plan, are articulated. The applicant mentions the presence of a CFO, Director of Finance, and Executive Director of Strategy and Advancement (p.53) tasked with securing the "necessary financial resources" to be financially sustainable.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not directly discuss the process of taking over existing schools and the need for pro-active community engagement that will be required. Nor is there a discussion of any required scaling of personnel to enact five turnarounds in such a short period of time. No mention is made of how any infrastructure investments will be paid for after federal grant funds have expired.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a very high-level five-year financial plan (p.56) and mentions historical fundraising success. The applicant provides assurance that the schools will be sustainable after the grant period through meeting student enrollment targets and focusing any additional revenue on supplemental programming rather than core operating costs.

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not appear to provide a multi-year financial model for the organization or the proposed growth plan. Though the applicant references having raised \$5.5MM in received and committed philanthropic funds, it does not explain what these funds will be used for or how they can supplement federal funds. Moreover, no written confirmation of the commitments can be found. Letters of support are included in the appendices, but they are not referenced in the project narrative and it's unclear if the signators will partner with the Applicant in the operation of the proposed new schools.

**Reader's Score: 1**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant describes a formal process, implemented in partnership with state agencies, for school closure that includes parental notification and assistance with student relocation (p. 59).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides details, including relevant training and experience, of all key personnel listed as leaders of the proposed growth plan. The CFO and CAO, in particular, appear to have significant experience in the K-12 arena (p.61).

**Weaknesses:**

However, the personnel listed vary in their level of experience in enacting successful whole-school transformation at scale, especially the CEO who does not appear to have held a leadership role before 2013 (p.60). Again, the omission of any dedicated personnel to oversee community outreach and communications is of concern (job descriptions for Community Relations Managers are included in the appendices but not mentioned in the narrative). Perhaps recognizing the lack of expertise, the Applicant proposes hiring a fulltime Project Director, but the job description describes a grant compliance position, not someone with the experience to oversee the takeover and turnaround of five persistently low-performing schools within four years. The narrative does not sufficiently articulate the required growth in human capital needed to enact the growth plan.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Evaluation**

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

**outcomes of the project.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant presents a well-considered evaluation plan to determine successful accomplishment of the stated goals and objectives (pgs.64-73). The plan combines qualitative data—survey results, curriculum choices, etc.—with more objective data illustrating changes in student and teacher retention and student proficiency over time. The study will include comparison schools and regional and state data. The evaluation has been designed, and will be conducted, by an experienced third-party research organization.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Priority Questions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Note:** Applicants in States that are exercising flexibility under the ESEA, as amended by NCLB, in the 2015-16 school year may partner with LEAs to serve students attending priority or focus schools (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility," at [www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility](http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility), and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's (OESE's) December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>). Applicants in all States should review OESE's January 28, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transitions1617-dcl.pdf>, for information on interventions required in 2016-2017.

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

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

**Note:** As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and nine other Federal agencies to support comprehensive revitalization efforts in 20 high-poverty



urban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. Each application for Replication and Expansion grant funds that is accompanied by a Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD Form 50153), signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization of a Promise Zone designated by HUD or USDA supporting the application, will meet this priority. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to [www.hud.gov/promisezones](http://www.hud.gov/promisezones). The certification form is available at [https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD\\_Form\\_50153.pdf](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf).

**Strengths:**

The applicant seeks consideration for Competitive Priority 1b School Improvement. The applicant currently operates three charter schools in New Orleans and is authorized to open four charter schools in Baton Rouge (p.19). The stated plan is to enact whole-school transformation of five low-performing charter schools in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Potential schools have already been identified: each is designated as a “priority” school and been transferred to the Recovery School District.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not break down minority enrollment in the narrative. Data in the appendices (pg.352) shows that Karr enrolls a 95% African American population, with 84% eligible for FRL, 8% receiving special education, and 10% English Learners. No similar data is provided for Wilson Elementary. The applicant does not provide demographic data for subgroups at comparable local schools, nor for the specific communities in which they are located, making it impossible to determine whether or not the Applicant is promoting student diversity or enrolling students with special educational needs at equal rates as other local schools.

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/05/2016 11:47 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/12/2016 11:20 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** InspireNOLA Charter Schools (U282M160023)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Eligible Applicant</b>		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	45
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	8
<b>Quality of the Project Design</b>		
1. Project Design	10	10
<b>Quality of the Management Plan &amp; Personnel</b>		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	14
<b>Quality of Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students</b>		
1. CPP 1	5	4
<b>Promoting Diversity</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>91</b>

# Technical Review Form

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

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

Applicant: InspireNOLA Charter Schools (U282M160023)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 45

#### Sub Question

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

#### Strengths:

Applicant notes external evaluators, including CREDO report, are evidence of high performance (28-29). Also, report card scores indicate successful track record in improving performance, including being the "highest performing open admissions charter network in New Orleans."

#### Weaknesses:

Data presentation could be more comprehensive to aid in consistency of performance over time (28). Some schools/campuses do not yet have academic outcomes, and so it is difficult to assess extent of comprehensive network-wide success.

Reader's Score: 17

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

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

#### Strengths:

Across almost all subgroups, the applicant's students perform above state averages, and have thus closed historic gaps in achievement (31).

**Sub Question**

**Weaknesses:**

When results are averaged, the applicant appears to have considerable strong performance. However, data in the appendix (which are not analyzed in the narrative) indicate significant discrepancies when looked at a grade level. Some gaps are not substantially addressed or explained in the narrative.

Some gaps remain (ELL students and students with disabilities, for example, continue to experience gaps in performance compared to other students).

**Reader's Score: 13**

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

**Strengths:**

Students in schools managed by the applicant compare favorably to state averages in performance, and in other indicators that are crucial to career and college readiness (32-37).

**Weaknesses:**

none noted

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

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

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant discusses locations of schools to be created and the student populations to be served (39-41).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not clearly specify any qualities or variation within communities it may serve during the proposed expansion. It also presents basic plans to provide a free and appropriate public education, but those plans are very general and could be strengthened with additional program detail.

Reader's Score: 8

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and attainable. Applicants proposing to open schools serving substantially different populations than those currently served by the model for which they have demonstrated evidence of success must address the attainability of outcomes given this difference.

##### Strengths:

The applicant clearly describes a growth plan and a set of goals and indicators that can be used to measure progress of the proposed expansion (48).

##### Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 14

##### Sub Question

1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (4 points).

##### Strengths:

The applicant includes timelines and milestones for managing the proposed expansion (50).

##### Weaknesses:

There are considerations regarding operational scaling, school takeover, and community outreach that are not discussed as a part of the management plan.

Reader's Score: 3

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

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

Applicant provides a clear description of how the expansion will be managed, including various areas of academic and operational management that are crucial to the success of the model (52-55).

**Weaknesses:**

The business plan provides a useful overview of network management and business/operational structure, but falls short of providing a business plan that is specific to this particular program expansion.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

Applicant has a track record of fundraising and produced a model that appears to sustain the proposed expansion (56).

**Weaknesses:**

Model is high level and only sometimes tied to strategic goals of this particular proposed expansion. The business model does not appear to be clearly and consistently developed across all schools.

**Reader's Score: 3**

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

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides a clear plan for managing closure that do not meet high standards of quality (59)

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score: 2**

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

**Strengths:**

Evidence to date suggests that these personnel are able to run a high performing network of schools. Biographies are included and applicants appear to have relevant experience (60).

**Weaknesses:**

Some aspects of growth/expansion not addressed in the staffing model. It is not clear that there is a dedicated person for community relationships, and the staffing plan as provided does not clearly and comprehensively support a proposed expansion of this size/scope at the pace proposed.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Evaluation

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

**Strengths:**

A comprehensive plan for evaluation is provided (65-73) and includes personnel, measures, and full scope.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Note:** As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and nine other Federal agencies to support comprehensive revitalization efforts in 20 high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. Each application for Replication and Expansion grant funds that is accompanied by a Certification of Consistency with Promise Zone Goals and Implementation (HUD Form 50153), signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization of a Promise Zone designated by HUD or USDA supporting the application, will meet this priority. To view the list of designated Promise Zones and lead organizations please go to [www.hud.gov/promisezones](http://www.hud.gov/promisezones). The certification form is available at [https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD\\_Form\\_50153.pdf](https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD_Form_50153.pdf).

**Strengths:**

The applicant proposes to support failing schools in Louisiana, meeting CP2 (19).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted.

**Reader's Score:** 4

**Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity**

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

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

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

**Strengths:**

None noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide an explicit focus on creating diverse schools and avoiding racial isolation. Rates of enrollment of special education and English language learning students do not compare with those of the surrounding public schools (21).

**Reader's Score:** 0

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 08/12/2016 11:20 AM