

**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: NACA Inspired Schools Network (U282M160022)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	38
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	10
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	18
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	10
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Total	108	93

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: NACA Inspired Schools Network (U282M160022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 38

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The applicant highlights many accolades on page 33 that the organization has received for its progress in closing the achievement gap. As per the state reports cards on school performance on pages 122-123, NACA has consistently ranked in the top 10 (out of 34-36 schools) for the past three years across all subgroups on academic growth.

Weaknesses:

NISN provides a number of years' worth of data disaggregated by subgroup from state tests, but there is a lot to interpret and this data set doesn't provide comparables to the district and state.

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

(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 narrative includes charts on pages 37 to 39 that aggregate data for all students over 2011-2014 showing measurable gains in closing the achievement gap with state level results. The 2015 PARCC results on page 39 make a clear comparison of how NACA students are achieving at the same level as all New Mexico students and Native students at NACA are greatly outperforming their New Mexico peers.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful to eliminate any doubt of the applicant's progress in closing the achievement gap over the past three years for all subgroups to see data broken out for these populations. Not enough data was provided to fully make the case

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:

NACA goes above and beyond in a responsive way to fully address the needs of the very specific demographic they serve through a thoughtful wellness program (pages 22-24) that addresses holistic wellness on four front including physical and social wellness. The encourage dual credit course work with a 71% participation rate and credits offered free of charge to students (page 34). The application shows attendance and graduation rates that exceed the district and low drop-out rates. Further they provide a variety of supports to make college access possible for their largely first generation college students (pages40-41) and are seeing high college enrollment and readiness results in response.

Weaknesses:

However the applicant didn't speak to college persistence rates for their graduates.

Reader's Score: 14

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 clearly outlines disadvantaged populations in the proposed expansion communities, which by demographics alone, demonstrates opportunity and need of high quality schools. Many of these communities, including one reservation (page 43) have a large number of Native American students. The application details expansion work underway in each of the three proposed states and in some places has already identified a school in need of a turnaround.

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:

NISN began exploring a growth strategy in 2011, and will support from the Kellogg Foundation was able to evaluate the ability of the NACA model to effectively scale (page 48). The resulting findings are driving NISN's current plan and elements of these discoveries are evident in this project proposal. The applicant presents a timeline and goals, objectives and outcomes to drive progress around growth (pages 53-54).

Weaknesses:

Goals contain some flexibility and ambiguity and could be a bit SMARTer to provide a clear path forward.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides detailed narrative around the Fellows program and the critical role they play in launching any new NISN school, including explanations of the inputs and criteria to determine site selection. ON pages 57-58 NISN details what it means to be part of their network of schools and the benefits that are included. Much of the success of any campus rides on the caliber and competency of its leader, however Fellows will receive significant supports from NISN every step of the way to ensure their success according to the plan outlined on pages 61-62. The application includes a work plan with key activities, timelines, milestones and responsibilities tied to specific indications or teams.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The organization has a variety of resources and teams in place at the local (RSO) and national levels to deliver direct oversight and support to NISN schools. They are working with consultant for support around both evaluation and resource development (pages 62-64).

Weaknesses:

While the work plan in the previous section (pages 58-60) is a good start, given the multi-state growth that is the next big endeavor for NISN, it would be good to learn even more about the plans in place to manage numerous schools across three states with distinct and different legal and educational requirements.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

NISN describes policies, safeguards and procedures (GAAP) along with oversight from the Board and finance committee (pages 64-65). They have letters of support from a variety of stakeholders, including district and state education departments, the Tribal Education Department's National Assembly, and some national funders who actively support the growth of quality charter models.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides a sample middle/high school budget template and P & L statement for the network in Appendix G. While these are important documents, the applicant acknowledges that they don't yet have a multiyear strategic plan and supporting financial model, but are working with Bellwether on these crucial documents as part of their planned work.

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:

As per Article XIII in NACA's charter contract, schools closures will be conducted according to applicable state law (page 283). NISN outlines how they will monitor the performance of schools to deploy supports and ensure that none become eligible for closure. If the school fails to improve performance or cooperate with NISN to do so, they will be dismissed from the network and referred to the local authorizer to lead a turnaround or closure plan (page 67).

Sub Question

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:

Leadership includes notable representation from an array of Native American tribes showing that the leadership of NISN truly understands the experiences and cultural heritage of their students. Overall the team brings many years of experience in the public and private sectors and well as a good deal of experience in public education to their work (pages 68 - 71).

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:

NISN has contracted with an outside organization to conduct an independent evaluation outlined in pages 71 to 73. They will assist with data collection across the NISN schools and are supporting the development of tools to track performance and guide organizational improvement. The Scorecard will also provide valuable data that will be useful for CSP reporting.

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, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's (OESE's) December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>). Applicants in all States should review OESE's January 28, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transitionsy1617-dcl.pdf>, for information on interventions required in 2016-2017.

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant's schools are clearly designed to serve Native American students and demonstrates a real understanding of this population and the specific tribal breakdowns in the three states they plan to operate in (pages 26-28). The student body is 94% Native American with students from 60 tribes.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

Within the lens of Native American populations, NACA serves students representing 60 different tribes, is open to students of all ethnicities (and presumably 6% of students served are of non-Native American descent). Further they serve a comparable number of SPED student and a greater number of FRL students than the district and state. NISN also serves a fair number of ELL students given the language needs of the target population. Further they serve students from both urban and rural communities (pages 27-30). Replication will likely position NISN to serve a significant number of Latino students in the Gadsden Public School district (page 30).

Weaknesses:

The applicant may not appear diverse in the traditional sense, but they serve a very nuanced population with students from a wide range of experiences.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Status: Submitted

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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: NACA Inspired Schools Network (U282M160022)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	45
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	8
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	13
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	9
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	3
Total	108	92

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: NACA Inspired Schools Network (U282M160022)

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.

Strengths:

NACA's subgroup and overall growth from year over year for three years is evident (NACA Ranking Relative to Schools with Similar Demographics graph p.18), and especially impressive relative to 36 similar schools in the state. The 2013-2015 Report Card Performance Comparison with Peer Schools (Appendix F) shows substantial improvement by 2015, especially in student growth across all students and in subgroups.

Weaknesses:

As similar school data and state report card grades are functions of student attainment scores, and the raw statewide grade-level data over that period is also available in the Appendix F, the applicant chooses not to highlight the statewide testing student attainment data itself or provide a table for review.

Reader's Score: 16

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

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

The NACA SBA Reading Levels Versus State Levels 6th to 8th Grade and NACA SBA Math Levels Versus State Levels 6th to 8th Grade tables (p. 21) show substantial cohort gains over the period SY11-12 to SY 13-14 relative to the state, effectively closing gap. For example, in reading, NACA 6th graders have 28% of students performing at proficient or above in SY11-12 relative to 46% at the state level. By SY13-14, that cohort of students in 8th grade has 55% of students performing at proficient or above relative to the state's 57%. The gap nearly closes altogether.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

NACA's attendance rates have grown from 93% to 99% over 2013 through 2015 period, consistent in subgroup data as well. On-time graduation rates have grown consistently over the same period and also outperform the district by 22% points. Adjust cohort graduation rate is more than 29% higher than state rate for Native American students. 100% of graduates are accepted to college and 83% enroll, more than 4 times the national average for Native Americans – especially impressive given 75% of the student body come from homes where parents have not pursued college.

Weaknesses:

Applicant students do not outperform state averages (p.38).

Reader's Score: 14

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 chart on p. 27 clearly demonstrates that communities identified for NACA replication have high economically disadvantaged and student with disabilities demographics.

Weaknesses:

The English language learner (ELL) student populations in some proposed areas (Shawnee, OK; Fort Defiance, AZ; Fort Apache Reservation, AZ) are notably low; these areas are largely serving Native Americans. The Applicant does not adequately present or address the outcomes for students requiring special education.

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:

Educational Leader/ Teacher Training model is comprehensive and the purposeful development of GENAC in partnership with CNM Community College is innovative.

Appendix H materials including Course Catalogue and Descriptions, Teacher Professional Development Plan for 2015-16, Sample Lesson Plan (UBD) and Advisory and Wellness Program Highlight are evidence of a comprehensive academic program that meets standards – common core aligned - and exceeds expectations in the area of Indigenous studies.

Goals, Outcomes and objectives (beginning on p.37) are clear and measurable.

Work plan beginning on p.42 is comprehensive and well developed in the context of the proposed fellowship program.

Weaknesses:

While cultural relevance, holistic wellness and community transformation are highlighted and Understanding By Design framework is referenced multiple times, the applicant hasn't spoken to teaching strategy coaching / evaluation framework (like a Danielson model).

Reader's Score: 9

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: 13

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

A two-year fellowship program framework accounts for much of the management plan; the fellowship timeline and relative milestones are embedded in the program plan and outcomes. Fellowship learning strands (p.40) and outcomes (Appendix H) are comprehensive and centered on community respect and responsiveness. Fellows observe, participate in PD, form design teams, link community interests to design, build community relationships and plan school launch in year one; Schools launch with NISN assistance in year two and performance metric data becomes a focus. Schools are part of the NISN and supported through an MOU which appears to serve as the mechanism for accountability to the model. Central and regional support offices will support the regional endeavor. Quadmetrics system (also referenced in Appendix H) appears to be a good central data management system for multi-regional coordination. Network Support Office has an articulated four-point framework for supporting Fellows and new school launches; Regional Support Office will “reinforce locally.”

Weaknesses:

Work plans are comprehensive in topic and delineate responsibility and broad timelines; activities are high level and not broken down into manageable pieces with specific timelines. The model of RSO reinforcing locally the support of the NSO doesn't adequately divide responsibility and make clear the level of autonomies that exist in each region and/or school via the Fellow in each replication project.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The NSO has seven areas of responsibility as organization grows: 1. Org leadership and strategy; 2. Development and partnership; 3. Fellowship design and management; 4. School start-up assistance; 5. Academic supports; 6. Operations supports; 7. Governance and performance management. The NISN establishes and holds schools accountable to a performance management plan in the context of a signed four-year contract with NISN. The annual evaluation of progress has six areas of focus and corresponding metrics.

Weaknesses:

Onus appears to be overwhelmingly upon Fellow and local school community to secure and maintain facilities, handle human resource functions (source, recruit, hire and onboard), and handle financial management functions; The latter two functions have limited support in the first 3-4 years of operation, but the applicant doesn't define these supports necessarily. (p.47)

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).**

Sub Question

Strengths:

The NISN has established financial policies and procedures for regional Executive Directors. Start-up losses for schools and regions are covered in part through philanthropy. Some commitments have been made by Foundations to cover start up operational loss. Over time, NISN expects schools to reach financial sustainability based on public revenue received by federal and state sources. A management fee structure will account for NSO services. NISN contracted Bellwether Ed Partners to develop a five-year strategic plan and sustainability model for the network and each school. Budget Narrative includes list of foundation and community partners that support project.

Weaknesses:

Appendix G doesn't make clear the relationship between philanthropic sourced revenue and the school budget model. Also unclear is whether the management fee is part of the expenses (and just called out at bottom of page 160) in which case the school/ regional offices are sustainable by 2021.

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 plan is focused on deploying supporting for school improvement – mostly from NSO – in the event that underperformance becomes a concern in annual review process.

Weaknesses:

School closure is not specifically addressed in any depth.

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:

The NISN NSO staff is seemingly highly qualified given the evidence supplied by applicant in p.52-55: Executive Director, Finance Director, COO, Director of School Development and Eval, Fellowship Director and Ed Team Leader, Director of Professional Development and Curriculum and Instruction, Data Analysis Director, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Indigenous Ed Manager, NACA Head of School and Mentor Leader.

Weaknesses:

These same pages spend little to no time on Fellow profile or qualifications, and much of the work seems to be with this role.

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:

NISN has contracted with Quadrant Metrics to design and deliver an independent evaluation. Quadrant developed a cloud-based assessment tool to collect quantitative and qualitative data at NISN sites and facilitate report generation. NISN is itself developing a scorecard with common metrics related to national and state proficiency measures as well as Native education specific health and wellness metrics.

Weaknesses:

Internal analysis of Quality of Fellows is planned, although applicant doesn't describe evaluation or provide questions for research.

Reader's Score: 9

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note: As a participant in the Administration's Promise Zones Initiative, the Department is cooperating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA),

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

Strengths:

The Applicant asks to be considered for Competitive preference Priority 1A: Supporting High Needs Students. NACA's student body is 94% Native American, 82% low-income, and representing 60 federally recognized tribes. The NACA-Inspired Schools Network emerged in 2014 in response to demand for replication of the NACA model, launching a three year pilot, with the mission to transform Indigenous education by engaging communities, building networked schools of academic excellence and cultural relevance, and serving Native American students from early learning to adulthood. NISN plans to support the creation of 7 schools in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Arizona. The NISN model will serve students across urban, rural and reservation areas across all three states.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

NACA's student body is 94% Native American and represents 60 tribes with distinct languages, cultures and traditions, exceeding the district's 5%. In 2015, NACA served 16.8% students with disabilities compared to the state's 15% and the district's 16%. It seems clear that NISN will serve demographics in each of its new locations, although specific data is not provided. NISN is planning to locate a school in the colonias of southeast New Mexico in the Gadsden Public School District where large populations of indigenous Mexican populations have settled and 91.3% of the population speaks Spanish in the home.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/12/2016 11:03 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: NACA Inspired Schools Network (U282M160022)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	50	43
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	10	8
Quality of the Project Design		
1. Project Design	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	15
Quality of Project Evaluation		
1. Project Evaluation	10	4
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Supporting High-Need Students		
1. CPP 1	5	5
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 2	3	0
Total	108	84

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: NACA Inspired Schools Network (U282M160022)

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: 43

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The applicant clearly demonstrates improved academic rankings over time compared to similar schools (31). Data and analysis provided by the applicant indicates dramatically better results for native American students, in particular (34).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide for special education students, making it impossible to evaluate whether it has significantly increase achievement/attainment for all students. Furthermore, the applicant does not yet compare favorably to state averages, although it is making considerable progress in increasing achievement towards those levels over time (37-38).

Reader's Score: 16

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

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

Strengths:

According to data demonstrating year-over-year proficiency gains compared to state and subgroup averages, the applicant is considerably narrowing historic gaps (36).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Some gaps within the applicant's schools still persist. Data, in particular data for students receiving special education services, is incomplete.

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:

The applicant offers opportunities, such as dual enrollment, at rates that exceed those of other nearby public schools and state averages. In general, data trends indicate that the applicant's existing performance is producing gains that are quickly approaching state averages (39-41).

Weaknesses:

Applicant does not yet compare favorably to the state in academic achievement. Existing data may be evidence that the applicant's performance meets or exceeds state averages when compared to other similar students or similar schools in the state, but those particular analyses are not provided (39-41).

Reader's Score: 14

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 demonstrates prior success improving educational achievement for traditionally disadvantaged students; in particular, on page 38, data show that Native American students served by the applicant significantly outperform Native American students enrolled in other programs.

Weaknesses:

The applicant omits plans for providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities or with IEPs (43).

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design

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

Strengths:

On page e48, the applicant provides objectives that are clear and measurable, and includes detail on plans for community outreach that will include representatives of local Native American/American Indian communities, as well as B demographic targets.

Weaknesses:

The plan's objectives could be clearer and more fully developed/realized for an expansion of this scope/size.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan & Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1.

Strengths:

The management plan is clear, and provides individual point people assigned to specific tasks as well as clear and realistic timelines (58-60).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Expansion across states require some tighter planning and clarity around what particular tasks regional and local support and operations teams will perform (61).

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The applicant's business plan, which begins on page 62, includes comprehensive and specific plans for local and network support to ensure success of the program replication and expansion, including a Fellowship model where Fellows work to identify and evaluate community needs and service gaps which will be addressed to support student success.

Weaknesses:

None noted

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The budget appears to adequately support the proposed project (65). The applicants provide evidence of support from a relatively broad base of partners and supporters.

Weaknesses:

The budget documentation is generally clear, although the projections do not clearly specify how staffing and resources will be divided between the school-based teams and the network-based teams, in particular the Fellows that play a leadership role in the proposed program.

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:

A brief overview of a closure plan is included in the application narrative (67).

Weaknesses:

The closure plan could be more completely realized, in particular around what would be needed to ensure seamless transitions for students enrolled in the schools.

Sub Question

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:

The applicant's existing leadership team clearly has significant experience and quality in managing large-scale projects such as this proposed expansion (68).

Weaknesses:

The program plan substantially relies upon a leadership Fellow. This Fellow role is not described clearly in this section. Given the level of importance, a comprehensive description of personnel and qualifications should include this role in addition to network/executive leadership.

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:

The applicant has a contract with external evaluator with methods connected to proposed outcomes (71).

Weaknesses:

The plan for external evaluation mostly aligns with the management plan for this particular program expansion, but a more comprehensive plan that includes timetables and specific metrics would ensure greater quality of the proposed evaluation.

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a project that fulfills the priority of improving academic outcomes for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes (26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

- (a) Promote student diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, or avoid racial isolation;
- (b) Serve students with disabilities at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these

students are served in public schools in the surrounding area; and

(c) Serve English learners at a rate that is at least comparable to the rate at which these students are served in public schools in the surrounding area.

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

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

Strengths:

None noted.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide evidence that it has designed a school that seeks to serve diverse populations, including creating a student body designed to avoid racial isolation (27). The applicant does not provide data indicating a track record of serving ELL and SPED rates that are comparable to schools students would otherwise attend.

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/12/2016 11:03 AM