

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/29/2017 02:04 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University Prep Inc. (U282M170003)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	33
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	22
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	19
Sub Total	100	83
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 1	3	0
School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Sub Total	8	5
Total	108	88

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: University Prep Inc. (U282M170003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 33

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant's school, University Prep – Arapahoe Street, ranked 6th out of 166 Denver Public Schools on the 2016 School Performance Framework. (e27) This campus has 81.6% students receiving free and reduced lunch but still ranked as the 4th elementary school out of 89 schools in Denver Public Schools. (e27) In 2015-2016 in ELA and Math Arapahoe Street outperformed the state by 10%, the city by more than 15% and the local community by more than 30%. (e27) The applicants schools have clearly increased academic achievement for the vast majority of their students over time. (e27)

Weaknesses:

There is not enough academic achievement data provided about the applicant's second school.

Reader's Score: 12

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

Strengths:

5th grade students at Arapahoe Street outperformed the state average in ELA and Math. (e32) In 2015-2016 in ELA and Math Arapahoe Street outperformed the state by 10%. (e27) The Education Equality Index named Arapahoe Street as one of ten schools in Denver with small or no achievement gaps. (e31) Arapahoe Street's attendance and retention rates both exceed the community average. (e53)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide enough data from their other school.

Reader's Score: 11

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

University Prep's first school was renewed for four years after the initial two-year authorization. Their second school was granted a five-year charter when it was first opened. (e32) The applicant has had no compliance or management issues. (e32)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not specifically address financial management or school safety. (e32)

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant serves minority students at higher rates than the surrounding public schools. (e33) They also serve free and reduced lunch students at levels similar or above compared to surrounding public schools. (e33) The Arapahoe school serves a comparable number of students with disabilities. (e33) The Steele campus serves significantly more ELL students than the local community. (e33)

Weaknesses:

The Steele campus has a 4 percentage point gap in terms of students with disabilities it serves. The Arapahoe campus has a 20 percentage point gap in terms of ELL students it serves. (e33)

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The applicant is committed to maintaining at least 70% students who receive free or reduced lunch on its campuses. (e34) They currently employ one full time Community Engagement staff member and is in the process of hiring a second. (e34) The staff and volunteers have knocked on every door of rising kindergarten students in their district since 2010. Additionally, three pieces of direct mail in English and Spanish is sent to all families. The applicant hosts at least six open houses and provides daily tours to interested families. They run bilingual ads on social media targeted to the communities they serve. The applicant has ongoing relationships with local preschools

Sub Question

and community organizations. (e34) All prospective students and families receive the same information regardless of their background. (e34) The applicant plans to open turnaround schools that are already serving educationally disadvantaged students. (e35)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the alignment of the evaluation plan to the logic model for the proposed grant project and the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the proposed grant project articulated in the applicant's response to application requirement (c) and will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the performance period.**

Strengths:

The applicant's evaluation plan is closely aligned to the logic model through specific objectives, performance targets and methods and timelines for data collection. (e36-38 and e54) They plan to partner with an outside evaluator who will collect both quantitative and qualitative data. (e37-44) The applicant has a plan to analyze data with the guidance of the outside evaluator on a yearly basis during a full day session each January. (e45)

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not identified their specific external evaluator. This is an important piece of their evaluation plan and should already be complete. (e45)

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The management plan includes objectives, lists which staff are responsible and detailed milestones and timelines. The timelines include four or five years of milestones. (e46) The plan includes being within budget and fully functional without start up financial support by 2021. (e47) At least two staff members are focused on each objective in the plan. (e46-47)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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

Strengths:

The applicant's staff have direct experience in opening the current two schools they are operating. (e47) They also have previous experience managing grants to start both of those schools. (e49) Other staff have experience as part of a founding team of another area charter school. (e49)

Weaknesses:

This project is slightly larger than the previous projects this team has had success with. (e47-49)

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

The grant funds are being used almost entirely in the "prep" years to develop human capital and this is a process the applicant has had success with before. (e49) Once the schools are launched and running the grant funds are not needed. (e49) Many of the initial costs will not carry forward after the first two years of the turnaround. (e50) Additionally, the home office staff is intentionally robust during years 1 and 2 and when the new schools are fully operational they will be able to take over the coverage of those costs increasing sustainability. (e50)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant does not address this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts**1. This priority is for applicants that both:**

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

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

For purposes of this priority, academically poor-performing public schools may include, but are not limited to, persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined in this notice and the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program under Title I of the ESEA (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>); and priority schools in States that exercised flexibility¹ under the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility," at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>).

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

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

Strengths:

Strengths: The applicant has taken over the lowest performing school in Denver Public Schools (166 out of 166). (e23) The most recent assessment cycle showed that 81% of Kindergarten students were on track to be reading at or above grade level, average students growth is on track to be 1.32 years in reading and 4th and 5th grade students are on track to grow 1.5 years in reading by the end of the year. (e24) Achievement network test data shows 2nd through 5th grade math performing at the 59th percentile in the nation, 4th and 5th grade ELA performing at the 65th percentile nationally and 2nd to 5th grade ELA performing at the 55th percentile nationally. (e25) The applicant plans to take on four turnaround schools and is the only charter network in Denver currently taking on this work. (e25)

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not yet been granted permission to do additional turnaround work though they have already applied. (e26)

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University Prep Inc. (U282M170003)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	35
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	22
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	19
Sub Total	100	85
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 1	3	0
School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Sub Total	8	5
Total	108	90

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: University Prep Inc. (U282M170003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 35

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The flagship school has implemented the University Prep education model. On page e26, the applicant begins to outline the academic success that the Arapahoe Street charter school has achieved. Results from the flagship school (page e27) are as follows: school is ranked 9th out of the 166 Denver Public Schools on the district's accountability framework; school is a Distinguished ranking, which is the highest rating earned, and the only elementary school have this honor; ranks fourth of the 89th elementary schools.

University Prep has demonstrated advancing academic growth for its students. On page e29 , growth scores are reported by the respective grade. Fourth and fifth grades students' growth outpaced their similar school colleagues in English +15% (4th grade) and +27% (5th grade), and in Math +5% (4th grade) and +33%. Over the same period, students in 4th and 5th grade exceeded students in their similar school cluster. University Prep's English and math 4th/5th grade proficiency scores exceed their similar school comparison (+19% in English and +23% in Math). (page 29)

Over the last two-years, the flagship school has been assessed against the state-mandated (CMAS) which is aligned to the CCSS. In 2016, per the CMAS, the academic gap between University Prep's first class of fifth graders (economically disadvantaged) and their White, non-economically disadvantaged peers was either small or did not exist at all. (page e 31)

The network has reported early academic indicators that predict success at Steele. The following are the assessment and the performance results: (pages e24 – e25)

- 81% of students in kindergarten on tracking to read at or above grade level (STEP)
- Students in kindergarten to fifth grades are forecasted achieve over a year's growth (1.32) during the school year.
- Students in fourth and fifth grade are projected to grow more 1.5 years in reading at the end of the school year.

However, data from predictive assessments were provided for the new turnaround school that opened in 2016.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

While the flagship school has data to validate its educational model, the new turnaround school opened in 2016. That said, although data from predictive assessments were provided, at the time of the application's submission, the applicant could not provide academic results in state-mandate assessment.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

Page e30: When compared to low-income students (i.e., schools serving population of 60% or greater FRL), students from University Prep (A Street campus) have the city's highest proficiency scores. Further, student graduating from 8th grades are more proficient than their community, city, and state peers. (page e31).

Arapahoe Street charter school received growth indicators via Median Growth Percentile (MGP), which compares the school to others in the state. Assessment results are as follows: In 2015-16, University Prep students outperformed their community (+30%), city (+15%), and state (+10%) peers in both math and English on the CMAS. (page e27 & e28).

Weaknesses:

State assessment results are not available for the newly opened turnaround school. (page e24) This is a significant weakness; because the applicant only has a small number of schools in its CMO, it is challenging to assess its performance under this criterion without data for this school.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

Arapahoe Street was approved June 2010, and opened August 2011 with a two-year charter. The charter was renewed in 2013 for four-years. The applicant confirms no significant compliance and management concerns. Additionally, there are no concerns with student safety. Steele approved in June 2015, opened in August 2016 with a five-year charter. Again, the applicant reports no concerns with the Steel campus regarding non-compliance. (page e32)

Overall, the network has not faced revocation due to non-compliance. No financial, operational, academic, and school safety issues have been identified in the proposal. (page e32 & e54)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The network serves a student population that is similar to the community. For example, minorities represent 92% of the community. Minority students at University Prep's Arapahoe Street campus represent 94% of the school's enrolled students. At Steele Street, minorities are 97% of the student body. (pages e32 – e33) When compared to the community average (87%), 82% of the students at Arapahoe Street receive free and reduced lunch. Eight-nine percent of the students at Steele participate in the free and reduced lunch program. At 71%, Steele enrolls more English Language Learners than the community (40%) and Arapahoe (20%). (page e33).

Weaknesses:

Both campuses enroll fewer diverse learners. (community average 12%, Arapahoe: 11%, Steele 8%) (page e33) Further, the Arapahoe Street campus educates fewer ELL students than nine of the thirteen surrounding public schools, which includes the Steele campus. (page e33). Arapahoe Street also enrolls fewer free and reduced lunch students than ten of the thirteen comparison schools. (page e33).

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

Schools participate in the districts common enrollment process. (detailed on pages e33 & e34) The network's goal is to enroll students who are economically disadvantaged (i.e., at least 70% free and reduced lunch) (Page e34). Currently the network employs one full-time community engagement position and plans to hire another. Other recruiting initiatives include but are not limited: knocking on doors; open houses, advertising (social media, print), attending kindergarten transition meetings, and community festivals. Parents from existing schools are asked to participate in monthly council meetings and academic workshops. (page e34-35).

The applicants also solicit feedback from families of targeted communities. The feedback is used to finalize the

Sub Question

application.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the alignment of the evaluation plan to the logic model for the proposed grant project and the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the proposed grant project articulated in the applicant's response to application requirement (c) and will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the performance period.**

Strengths:

University Prep describes the project objectives on page e26. The project objectives are clear, reasonable, and aligned to the details included in the logic model. The goals are as follows: #1) Expand turnaround school (Steele) to serve 134 additional students; #2) Open two new turnaround school with enrollment of 425 each; and #3) Incubate the third turnaround school with a forecasted enrollment of 425 students.

Performance measures focus on staff, operations, culture, and academics (page 37). The proposal includes, metrics, timelines, and method/tool that will be used to examine the organizations progress to the goals. Targets, data collected, baseline information, deliverables, etc. are adequately described on pages e38 through e44 in the proposal.

Weaknesses:

Applicant will consult with a third-party organization, a turnaround subject matter expert, to measure the project objective. The founder and CEO of that organization is now a University Prep board member. It seems that it would be a conflict of interest for the organization to contract with this organization. At the time the proposal was drafted, the third-party evaluator was yet to be determined. (page 38).

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 19

Sub Question

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The management plan identified to execute against the plan are subject matter experts, and appear to be solid personnel to carry out the plan. Several members on the executive leadership team have been with the school for years. Each administrator's skill set is aligned to the objective in which s/he are jointly responsible for completing. (pages e47 to e49). The budget narrative (pages e340 to e359) specifies how funds will be spent during each year of the grant period.

Weaknesses:

While the table on pages e46 and e47 identifies the objective, responsibility, milestones, and timeline for the tasks during the grant period, the table lack key information. For example, the assigned administrator's roles and responsibilities are not clear defined. Each objective has at least two (in one case five) individuals assigned to complete the task. That said, it is not clear which administrator is truly accountable for the task. If the applicant included multiple individuals because there are a number of tasks to be completed for each objective, then the additional duties should have been clearly detailed in the table.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The proposal includes the qualifications for the individuals listed in the management plan. The executive director is the founder of the program. He also participated in Building Excellent Schools Fellowship prior to opening the flagship campus as the Head of Schools. The leadership team (directors of external affairs, curriculum and instruction, finance, and talent) as well as principals report to the executive director. (e47-48)

The director of External Affairs has experience with public relations and marketing. The director of external affairs also has experience with fund development, communications, enrollment, and engagement. The following positions report to the director of external affairs: community engagement associate, special projects associate, and a fund development associate. (e48)

The director of curriculum and instruction (page e48) started as a second-grade literacy coach and was promoted to the Dean of Literacy position. This director oversees all of teaching and learning, and academic deans, which include the special education and English Language Development.

The director of Finance (page e49) has expertise in areas such as financial management, human resources, and school operations. And, the director of talent oversees all human resource specific functions.

The team has experience opening, managing, and expanding schools.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant plans to use the grant to fund its start-up expenses (page e50). The organization's approach start-up is incubating personnel. This means that a significant number of the staff will learn the instructional and cultural expectations before the school opens. The applicant describes that time period as the 'incubation year 0'. Once the school has opened, staffing expenses become part of the general expenses are funded by per-pupil dollars. (pages 49 to e50). The remainder of the funds will be spent building out the school (i.e., technology, furniture, etc.) The expenses aligned to infrastructure are larger in the initial years of the school. On page e49 of the proposal, the applicant implies that the organization's forecasts (from page e215 to page e236) conclude that the organization will be funded sufficiently to run after the grant has ended.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted

Reader's Score: 5

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

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

Strengths:

Currently, University Prep's network serves 585 students of which 85% receive free and reduced lunch. The network participates in the Denver Public School SchoolChoice process which allows parents to rank school by personal preference. (page e17)

Weaknesses:

The criterion for this section requests the applicant to provide evidence that the organization intentionally focuses on recruiting and retaining racially and socially diverse student bodies. While the organization is part of the district-wide enrollment process, University Prep's recruiting efforts are intentionally focused to appeal to a student population that is academically and economically disadvantaged. As outlined in page e34 of the proposal, the network seeks to operate schools that have a student population of, at least, 70% free and reduced lunch. This indicator traditionally affirms that target population is generally low income and are identify as minorities. That said, recruiting efforts are not focused on intentionally recruiting and retaining a racially and socioeconomically diverse student body.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts

1. This priority is for applicants that both:

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

(b) Propose to use CMO funds to restart as a charter school one or more academically poor-performing public

has provided evidence of success, and to do so by targeting a similar student population in the replicated charter school as was served by the academically poor-performing public school. In accordance with section 4310(2)(B) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, students who are enrolled in the academically poor-performing public school at the time of restart are exempt from the charter school's lottery.

For purposes of this priority, academically poor-performing public schools may include, but are not limited to, persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined in this notice and the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program under Title I of the ESEA (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>); and priority schools in States that exercised flexibility¹ under the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility," at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>).

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

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

Strengths:

The application provides details that affirm University Preparatory Schools turnaround efforts. As explained, University Preparatory Schools oversees two charters, Arapahoe Street (2011) and Steele Street (2016). The latter is a turnaround model. The Pioneer Charter School relinquished its charter. University Prep applied and was granted approval to take over the failing charter school. University Prep took over Pioneer in 2015. (page e22).

The network is the district's only turnaround management organization. (page e25)

Weaknesses:

Turnaround school has not been opened long enough to receive results from the state-mandated assessment. (page e 24)

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 07/07/2017 01:46 PM

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: University Prep Inc. (U282M170003)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Eligible Applicant		
1. Quality of Applicant	45	36
Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students		
1. Disadvantaged Students	25	22
Quality of the Evaluation Plan		
1. Evaluation Plan	10	9
Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel		
1. Management Plan/Personnel	20	17
Sub Total	100	84
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
Promoting Diversity		
1. CPP 1	3	0
School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts		
1. CPP 2	5	5
Sub Total	8	5
Total	108	89

Technical Review Form

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

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: University Prep Inc. (U282M170003)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Eligible Applicant

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

Reader's Score: 36

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The applicant has demonstrated great success in providing a high quality academic program for the students that attend the Arapahoe Street Charter School as evidenced by the charter school's results on the CMAS (state assessment) from the 2015-2016 school year achieving higher results within all comparison groups by 10.4% in math and 8.6% in ELA. Information presented indicates that students, on the average, outscored the neighborhood schools, the Denver Public School district (DPS) and the state of Colorado on both ELA and Math across all demographics. Additionally, a comparison done by the DPS that compares each school to a group of similar schools, according to demographics, indicates that the applicant had higher academic achievement in both 4th and 5th grade ELA and Math proficiency. Pg. e28-e30

Student growth scores for the Arapahoe Street Charter School during the 2015-2016 school year are much higher than the comparison group. The DPS compared all schools that served populations with more than 60% of students that qualified for free or reduced lunch. Arapahoe is the only school whose students scored both above average growth (75 MGP) and achievement (above 50% proficient) in ELA and math. Pg. e30-e31

Weaknesses:

While the applicant has demonstrated with the Arapahoe Street Charter School that the model has been successful in raising academic achievement and growth among the student population, the turnaround school, Steele Street Charter School, does not have achievement or growth data that would indicate the turnaround aspect of the model is effective.

Reader's Score: 11

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

Sub Question

Strengths:

As evidenced by the information provided in the narrative relative to Arapahoe Street Charter School, it is obvious that the school academic program is successful with educationally disadvantaged students. Overall academic growth and achievement for this population far exceeds the 70 schools in the DPS with comparable FRL eligibility placing the charter school in the 95th percentile of all schools in the city of Denver. Additionally, overall academic performance with educationally disadvantaged students exceeds that of the state average for both ELA and math. Pg. e27, e30-e31

According to the narrative, Steele Street Charter School opened in 2016 and retained 66.4% of the students that attended the previous school. Additionally, Arapahoe Street Charter School has a student retention rate of 77% compared to the community average of 73%. Pg. e23 and e53

Weaknesses:

While the applicant has provided a summary of the second in house assessment data for Steele Street Charter School it does not have state data in which to compare academic results making a judgment of the effectiveness of the academic model difficult. Pg. e24

The applicant does not provide any state data relative to student retention rates, making it difficult to determine if the charter schools are retaining a larger percentage of students as compared to the state.

Reader's Score: 11

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

Strengths:

University Prep has been under contract with the Denver Public Schools to operate a charter school since 2010. The original contract was for two years, which was renewed in 2013 for four additional years. The contract is up for renewal in fall of 2017. According to the narrative, there have been no issues of noncompliance during this term. Pg. e32

The contract with Denver Public Schools for the turnaround school, Steele Street Charter School, was approved in June 2015 for an August 2016 opening.

As reported on pages e278 – e279, the auditor found the financial statements presented fairly the financial position of the entity.

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

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not address student safety.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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

Reader's Score: 22

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

According to the narrative, the charter school operated by the applicant services students in a community where the average percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL) is 87.4%. The rate of students eligible for FRL is 81.6% at Arapahoe Street Charter School and is 89.4% at Steele Street Charter School, so this is comparable. Pg. e32 – e33.

Weaknesses:

The percentage of special needs population (10.9% and 7.5%) is lower than the community (11.5% average) making a comparison of academic progress difficult with this group of students. The same is true of the percent of ELL students. There is a large population at Steele Street Charter School, but there is no data to compare whether or not the students are learning faster than their peers due to the fact that the charter school is new. Pg. e33

Additionally, the ELL population at Arapahoe Street Charter School (20.3%) is half that of the community (40.36%) making a comparison of academic progress challenging. Pg. e33

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The narrative states it will participate in the SchoolChoice process through the Denver Public (DPS). Through this process applicants will be prioritized based on several criteria. This process does not allow the school to recruit students, per se, but the applicant has a robust program to engage the community and make themselves known to prospective families. From the time the applicant has been awarded a charter contract, the Community Engagement staff member begins the outreach into the community, talking to parents at school events, knocking on doors of all prospective kindergarten students, and mailing information to families in the zip codes close to the charter school. Because of the demographic of the community, 87% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch, a vast majority of the families contacted are educationally disadvantaged making the enrollment of these students much more likely. Pg. e33-e35

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Evaluation Plan

- 1. In determining the quality of the evaluation plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the alignment of the evaluation plan to the logic model for the proposed grant project and the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the proposed grant project articulated in the applicant's response to application requirement (c) and will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the performance period.**

Strengths:

The narrative contains a well-defined set of performance measures that are based on the four guiding objectives of the applicant. Included in the application is a table that outlines the performance targets, data collected, baseline data, and methods/instruments used to collect the data as well as a specific timeline for each task. These performance targets are aligned to the mission of the charter school and follow the Logic model as provided. Pg. e37-e45

Data to be collected is very explicit and will provide the applicant with information that can be used to adjust the replication model it is developing, as needed. pg. e37-e45

Along with the project staff that will be analyzing this data, the applicant will consult with a third party company that specializes in supporting school turnaround. This company will analyze all data points and work with the home office staff to determine where opportunities for improvement lie. This additional layer of assistance will help ensure that the project is progressing as intended by the applicant. Pg. e45

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not identified an external evaluator.

Reader's Score: 9

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

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

Reader's Score: 17

Sub Question

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

Strengths:

The management plan as presented includes the overall project objectives, the individuals responsible for the implementation of each objective, and the timeline needed to complete the objective. The timelines are defined for each school that will be replicated using grant funding. Individuals responsible for objectives are listed by position along with their areas of responsibility throughout the organization. Pg. e46-e47

Sub Question

The budget as presented explains the personnel and infrastructure items that will be used to complete the objectives and open the schools on time, with staff and teachers that are prepared to take on the tasks for which they have been trained. The budget for each turnaround school is identical indicating the applicant has been thoughtful in developing what it believes will be a great training program for the new staff members. Pg. e77-e80, e215 – e219, and e340 – e340-e359

Weaknesses:

While the objectives follow those outlined for the grant project, the timeline and project tasks detailed in the management plan should have been more specific. The table is very broad in scope with no project tasks listed that will be needed to bring these schools to a successful opening. Pg. e46 – e47

There is no discussion regarding the percent of projected enrollment that will be needed to operate each of the turnaround charter schools.

Reader's Score: 3

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

Strengths:

The key personnel involved in this project have been working with the original charter school since the early years of the charter's organization and also have additional work experience and education that is relevant to their present position. Each of these key people, outside of the Executive Director/Founder, have worked their way up in the organization, learning the needed skills along the way. Individuals have been identified for inclusion in the incubator program that will allow them to gain skills that will ensure their ability to carry out their responsibilities. Pg. e47-e49

As the grant project moves forward, there will be individuals that have been trained to assume leadership and managing roles within the scope of the project. These trained individuals will help to ensure that each aspect of the proposed project is well managed and carried out in the manner consistent with the goals of the grant proposal. Pg. e47-e49

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The plan proposed by the applicant includes funding to train staff members that will launch the new schools. This training begins the year prior to the actual opening of the turnaround school. Once the school is operational, the employee costs will be absorbed into the school budget making the operational plan self-sustaining. Pg. e25 – 26, Appendix H

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

There is no discussion about how the applicant will handle the cost of school operations after the grant period if the enrollment falls below the targeted threshold.

Reader's Score: 4

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - Promoting Diversity

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant did not respond to this priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not respond to this priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - School Improvement through Turnaround Efforts

1. This priority is for applicants that both:

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

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

For purposes of this priority, academically poor-performing public schools may include, but are not limited to, persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined in this notice and the final requirements for the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program under Title I of the ESEA (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>); and priority schools in States that exercised flexibility¹ under the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (see the Department's June 7, 2012 guidance entitled, "ESEA Flexibility," at www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility, and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's December 18, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/transition-dcl.pdf>).

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

Footnote 1: As of August 1, 2016, States may no longer exercise flexibility, except in the limited circumstances where they implemented interventions previously in priority schools under the SIG program. For additional information related to ESEA flexibility and interventions in priority schools, see section B of the Department's June 29, 2016 guidance entitled, "Transitioning to the Every Student Succeeds Act – Frequently Asked

Strengths:

The applicant has demonstrated the ability to raise student achievement at the Arapahoe Campus. Over the past five years of operations, the charter school has outpaced all other elementary schools in the local community by learn the highest rating possible for the Denver Public School Performance Frame. Additionally, the students have outpaced both the neighborhood, city and state for both ELA and Math achievement. During the 15 – 16 state testing cycle the applicant had 45.9% of students that met or exceeded expectations(passing) on the state math exam compared to 14% passing rate of the neighborhood schools. ELA scores were similar with the applicant passing 49.4% of students vs. 14% of the students in neighborhood schools. Pg. e26 – e28

The narrative indicates that the CMO will use the grant funds to operate an incubator program to launch three additional K – 5th grade turnaround schools. Because of their successful experience to date with the Pioneer Charter School as a turnaround model, the applicant plans to use the same structure to begin the three turnaround charter schools. Pg. e17 and e22

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
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