

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

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mater Academy Inc (S282M200013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Applicant and Adequacy Resources</b>		
1. Applicant and Resources	40	31
<b>Significance of Contribution in Assisting Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	20	17
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Evaluation	30	22
<b>Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan</b>		
1. Personnel/Management	10	6
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	76
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>CPP 3: High School Students</b>		
1. High School Students	2	2
<b>CPP4: Serve Native American Students</b>		
1. Native American Students	4	0
<b>CPP5: Reopening Poor-Performing Schools</b>		
1. Reopening Schools	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	2
<b>Total</b>	108	78

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 CMO - 2: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Mater Academy Inc (S282M200013)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Applicant and Adequacy Resources

#### 1. 1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant and Adequacy of Resources

In determining the quality of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 31

#### Sub

1. a. The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments, 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 served by other public schools in the State.

#### Strengths:

Comprehensive data provided in the application document that Mater perform better than their neighboring schools, districts, and state averages. This information presented showed increasing student achievement and attainment for all students and subgroups. (page e211-250) The applicant surpasses national trends for disadvantaged students in their high school.

Among the 8 Hybrid Networks identified by Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), Mater is the second-highest performer. They perform higher than the district with no correlation between poverty (%FRPL) and school performance. (page e24)

The applicant acknowledges attendance is linked to performance and had high daily attendance rates in both Florida and Nevada with 2018-2019 97.07% and 94.38% in 2017-2018. (page e45) Mobility and Retention rates for Florida was 11.24% in 2018-2019 and 12% in 2017-2018. No comparable data was available for Nevada. (page e252-253)

The information submitted also demonstrates high graduation rates with non-completion rates being significantly lower. The graduation rates for 2018-2019 of 97.72% compared to the state's 86.1% and 85.4% for MDCPS. The adjusted cohort graduation rate for 2017-2018 ELL students are 94.9% in comparison to 75% for the State of Florida and 75.9% for MDCPS. (page e254) Data detailing graduation rates by ethnicity demonstrated that the students exceeded both the state and local level (page e48)

The applicant has a 98% graduation rate exceeding Florida's 85%. 15% of their seniors earn Associate in Art degrees (AA's) while attending Mater. Over 36% earned college credits using Mater's Dual Enrollment program. (page e20) In 2019 90% of Mater's graduates matriculated to college after high school. 60% have either graduated

**Sub**

or are persistent in college compared 9% of students in similar networks.

**Weaknesses:**

The application includes only data from one fiscal school year 2018-2019 therefore unable to review trending to determine if they are closing the achievement gap in math and English. (Page e211-253)

**Reader's Score: 8**

- 2. b. The extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; or have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's audited financial reports demonstrate that Mater has never been cited for non-compliance with statutory or regulatory requirements. (page e272-273) No affiliations have been revoked or terminated including voluntarily in their 21 years of operation. (page e52)

As indicated in their financial findings the applicant has not had any of their schools close during their 21 years of operation. (page e272-273)

**Weaknesses:**

The application has conflicting as it pertains to the number of schools in the organization. Early parts of the narrative for competitive preference priority 2 references 28 schools. (page e26) Two other places in the application note 29 and 24 schools in the organization. (page e52 and page e205-209)

**Reader's Score: 8**

- 3. c. The extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management or student safety, or have otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter.**

**Strengths:**

The audited financial reports indicate that the applicant's schools are fully in compliance with State and Federal statutes and regulations. (page e272-273) They have an exceptional record of financial and operational management. In 2018-19 the schools had a consolidated annual surplus equating 4% of revenue. (page e53)

10.8% of operating funding is received from federal sources including 3.3% from Title 1 with the remainder 89.2% coming from state and local sources. (page e262-267) The financials indicate that private funding sources are minimal.

**Weaknesses:**

The application was missing a form 990. The 2019 audit had a finding; during the year ended June 30, 2019, the Organization did not have CSP funds disallowed from pass-through entities. However, one pass-through entity disallowed approximately [REDACTED] of other federal funds during the same period. (page e278) This was not clarified in their narrative.

**Reader's Score: 7**

Sub

**4. d. The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant's financials demonstrate a history of strong financial performance. The growth was partially supported during the past 21 years by annual contributions made by the schools. These funds amount to 1% of funds to the network and provides start-up loans and recoverable grants. (page e55) Average growth of 10% is because of responsible stewardship and reliance on state and local funds form Title 1, Title II, and IDEA federal program as documented in the financials.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant has current success with its model starting in 1997 growing to serving 28 schools in Florida and Nevada. This project seeks to open 38 schools with part of the project expanding grade level offered in existing locations increasing their enrollment by approximately 20,000 students. (page e16) This five-year strategy includes new target markets in Arizona, Michigan, and Texas which is aggressive. (page e286-292) There are no letters of engagement in the new target markets.

The current financial model isn't strong enough to ensure the project's success after Federal funding ends. They need to engage additional private and philanthropic funding for the project to be successful.

Reader's Score: 8

**Selection Criteria - Significance of Contribution in Assisting Students**

**1. 2. Significance of Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

**The Secretary considers the significance of contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students for the proposed project. In determining 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, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 17

Sub

**1. 1. The extent to which charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with disabilities and English learners, at rates comparable to surrounding public schools or, in the case of virtual charter schools, at rates comparable to public schools in the State.**

**Strengths:**

Data provided in the application by subgroups gives comprehensive detail and confirms that they serve a student population that 78% economically disadvantaged with 89% of them being minorities. (page e57-58) This is higher when compared to state and district enrollment patterns. Most of the schools serve children of recent immigrants in high need communities with children often being the only English speakers in the household. (page e20)

The applicant has a network that leverages its professional and personnel resources to best support and expand its educational programs.

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not include data for students with disabilities and English learners as it pertains to the percentage of students served.

**Reader's Score: 9**

- 2. The quality of the plan to ensure that the charter schools the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit, enroll, and effectively serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with disabilities and English learners.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant plans to follow their existing strategy and is committed to serving each subgroup. The engagement and recruitment programs are inclusive. They will assist students with transportation and continue to utilize a wide array of data to perform assessments and develop learner profiles. There are a diverse set of intervention and enrichment opportunities for each student. (page e59-61)

The application stresses compliance in accordance with applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities. This includes the provision of special education instruction and related services. This includes but not limited to American with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEA"), Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. (page e62-63)

The applicant's rigorous curriculum is successful and the schools were among the first in the nation accredited system-wide by Advanced ED STEM designations. This enables them to replicate while maintaining quality educational programs. (page e20)

**Weaknesses:**

The engagement strategy does not include activities pertaining to students with disabilities and English learners in each of the new target markets.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan**

- 3. Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan for the Proposed Project**

**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 following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 22**

Sub

- 1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The application details a conceptual framework that emphasizes both data collection methods that are both quantitative and qualitative and research models. They will contract an independent evaluator to design and conduct studies of all schools collecting quantitative data as part of their expansion efforts. (page e64) This includes the collection of both formal and information which will drive best business practices.

The existing schools have been accredited. The district accreditation allows all Mater schools to be accredited upon inception. (page e65) This is beneficial to the new project.

The application notes that data will drive engagement with the special needs community along with assessment data to develop learner profiles for each student so that there's a clear understanding of the baseline performance level and learning targets. (page e59)

**Weaknesses:**

The conceptual framework does not include sufficient research documenting activities in the new potential markets.

**Reader's Score: 4**

- 2. 2. 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 project, as described in the applicant's logic model, and that will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the grant period.**

**Strengths:**

The application details the two core purposes of the evaluation plan. First, to research and understand whether the support for new and existing schools are effective and second evaluate whether school model adaptations are implemented with fidelity. (page e69) Mater is a seasoned veteran implementer of CSP grant projects. They have experience developing evaluation teams that focus on performance, budgets, and recruitment.

**Weaknesses:**

The application includes a dissemination plan but logic model is insufficient. The model does not include inputs, activities, and milestones. (page e66-68) The project scope includes increasing 38 schools in five new target markets and this information is an essential part of the planning process.

**Reader's Score: 6**

- 3. 3. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

**Strengths:**

The application details goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project. Mater's existing structure and experience has included creating sustainable evaluation models by conducting in-house evaluative systems. The organization relies on access to real-time and actionable recommendations. (page e48-50)

**Weaknesses:**

The application doesn't include clear action steps within the goals and objectives that are realistic as they enter new target markets. For an example lack of demographic information that would be able to successfully replicate the existing model.

Sub

Reader's Score: 4

4. 4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has documented history of success within their current target markets utilizing their current design. This includes external evaluation and accreditation by AdvanceEd, now known as Cognia. (page e65) This demonstrates that they follow established evidence-based criteria. This includes incorporating lessons learned activities and intake on going feedback as part of their improvement processes. Proposed design will be effective in the current markets where replication can be successful. The application included a list of opportunity zones for expansion. (page e307-310)

The scope of the project includes both new and expanding schools. The application includes a launch timeline. (page e292)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not include milestones in their launch timeline. (page e292) This would include established indicators or benchmarks to determine the status of the project. Without this information it isn't clear how performance is going to be measured.

Reader's Score: 8

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan**

**1. 4. Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan**

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

In addition, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 6

Sub

1. 1. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

**Strengths:**

The qualifications of the project personnel and their track record is impressive. (page e70-76) The team has demonstrated the ability to successfully expand the educational models in Florida. There are letters of support from the City of Hialeah Gardens, State Senator Manny Diaz, Doral College, and the Kern Family Foundation showing support for the project. (page e97-102)



**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not include a project director or team with activities structured around project activities.

Resume for, National Director of Special Education and Student Support is missing from the documentation. The position is critical in the expansion project and their background was not available for review.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has procedures and strategies in-place to effectively ensure feedback and continuous improvements in the operation of the proposed project in existing target markets. This organization is data-driven and their strategy includes identifying areas of strength and their underlying practice for lessons learned and identifying challenges developing action steps for remediation. (page e63-64)

**Weaknesses:**

The application is missing a logic model therefore it's difficult to understand the project activities. Additional detail is absent as it pertains to ensuring the collection of data, using real-time data and feedback guiding continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

Information is insufficient as to the collection and analysis of data and feedback. There is no mention of using real-time data.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP 3: High School Students**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: High School Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must propose to --

- a. Replicate or expand high-quality charter schools to serve high school students, including educationally disadvantaged students;
- b. Prepare students, including educationally disadvantaged students, in those schools for enrollment in postsecondary education institutions through activities such as, but not limited to, accelerated learning programs (including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and programs, dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high schools), college counseling, career and technical education programs, career counseling, internships, work-based learning programs (such as apprenticeships), assisting students in the college admissions and financial aid application processes, and preparing students to take standardized college admissions tests;
- c. Provide support for students, including educationally disadvantaged students, who graduate from those schools and enroll in postsecondary education institutions in persisting in, and attaining a degree or certificate from, such institutions, through activities such as, but not limited to, mentorships, ongoing assistance with the financial aid application process, and

establishing or strengthening peer support systems for such students attending the same institution; and

d. Propose one or more project-specific performance measures, including aligned leading indicators or other interim milestones, that will provide valid and reliable information about the applicant's progress in preparing students, including educationally disadvantaged students, for enrollment in postsecondary education institutions and in supporting those students in persisting in and attaining a degree or certificate from such institutions. An applicant addressing this priority and receiving a CMO grant must provide data that are responsive to the measure(s), including performance targets, in its annual performance reports to the Department.

**Note:** For purposes of this priority, postsecondary education institutions include institutions of higher education, as defined in section 8101(29) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA), and one-year training programs that meet the requirements of section 101(b)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA).

**Strengths:**

- (a) The applicant proposes to replicate and expand their existing model for schools to service high school students. Data provided in the application by subgroups gives comprehensive detail and confirms that they serve a student population that 78% economically disadvantaged with 89% of them being minorities. (page e57-58)
- (b) The applicant partners with local community colleges and universities to develop dual enrollments. Their strategies include strategies that prepare students for collegiate settings. 15% of their seniors earn Associate in Art degrees (AA's) while attending Mater. Over 36% earned college credits using Mater's Dual Enrollment program. (page e20) In 2019 90% of Mater's graduates matriculated to college after high school.
- (c) The applicant has College Assistance Program ("CAP") to assist students and parents with scholarship applications, financial aid and standardized testing. (page e30) This educational pathway begins at the primary level and continues through high school.
- (d) The applicant has proposed one or more project specific performance measure that continue to be aligned leading indicators.

**Weaknesses:**

There were no weaknesses.

**Reader's Score:** 2

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4: Serve Native American Students**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Opening a New Charter School or Replicating or Expanding a High-quality Charter School to Serve Native American Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must --

**a. Propose to open a new charter school, or replicate or expand a high-quality charter school, that—**

- 1. Utilizes targeted outreach and recruitment in order to serve a high proportion of Native American students, consistent with nondiscrimination requirements contained in the U.S. Constitution and Federal civil rights laws;
- 2. Has a mission and focus that will address the unique educational needs of Native American students, such as through the use of instructional programs and teaching methods that reflect and preserve Native American language, culture, and history; and
- 3. Has or will have a governing board with a substantial percentage of members who are

members of Indian Tribes or Native American organizations located within the area to be served by the new, replicated, or expanded charter school;

b. Submit a letter of support from at least one Indian Tribe or Native American organization located within the area to be served by the new, replicated, or expanded charter school; and

c. Meaningfully collaborate with the Indian Tribe(s) or Native American organization(s) from which the applicant has received a letter of support in a timely, active, and ongoing manner with respect to the development and implementation of the educational program at the charter school.

**Strengths:**

The application did not specifically address this competitive preference priority.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not specifically address this competitive preference priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5: Reopening Poor-Performing Schools**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Reopening Academically Poor-Performing Schools as Charter Schools.**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must --

a. Demonstrate past success working with one or more academically poor-performing public schools or schools that previously were designated as persistently lowest-achieving schools or priority schools under the former School Improvement Grant program or in States that exercised ESEA flexibility, respectively, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and

b. Propose to use grant funds under this program to restart one or more academically poor-performing public schools as charter schools during the project period by—

1. Replicating one or more high-quality charter schools based on a successful charter school model for which the applicant has provided evidence of success; and

2. Targeting a demographically similar student population in the replicated charter schools as was served by the academically poor-performing public schools

**Strengths:**

The application did not specifically address this competitive preference priority.

**Weaknesses:**

The application did not specifically address this competitive preference priority.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 02/12/2020 04:40 PM



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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mater Academy Inc (S282M200013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Applicant and Adequacy Resources</b>		
1. Applicant and Resources	40	31
<b>Significance of Contribution in Assisting Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	20	19
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Evaluation	30	17
<b>Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan</b>		
1. Personnel/Management	10	6
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	73
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>CPP 3: High School Students</b>		
1. High School Students	2	2
<b>CPP4: Serve Native American Students</b>		
1. Native American Students	4	0
<b>CPP5: Reopening Poor-Performing Schools</b>		
1. Reopening Schools	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	2
<b>Total</b>	108	75

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 CMO - 2: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Mater Academy Inc (S282M200013)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Applicant and Adequacy Resources

#### 1. 1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant and Adequacy of Resources

In determining the quality of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 31

#### Sub

1. a. The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments, 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 served by other public schools in the State.

#### Strengths:

The applicant provides two years of annual student performance results on statewide assessments (Appendix F), including attendance and retention rates, and also compares the applicant's schools to local school districts and neighborhood schools (pp. 16- 19). For example In Osceola County Public Schools, Mater schools performed better than the district by 18 points in Reading, 19 points in Math, 7 points in science, and 10 points in social studies (p. 18).

The data is inclusive of all subgroups across schools managed by the CMO to clearly indicate academic achievement (Appendix F). The average academic achievement results show that the applicant's schools, in general, have exceeded other public schools in the states that the CMO operates.

#### Weaknesses:

Although the average academic results reported by the applicant appear to be exemplary, an examination of academic achievement results for particular schools managed by the CMO, especially in mathematics, indicates achievement levels that are uneven and, in some cases, below statewide averages (Appendix F).

Reader's Score: 8

2. b. The extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; or have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation.

**Sub**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly states that no charter school has closed or been revoked by an authorizer for academic, financial mismanagement or noncompliance reasons. The applicant also asserts that no affiliations have been revoked or terminated, including voluntarily (p. e52). This includes 26 charter schools in Florida, and 3 charter schools in Nevada.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

- 3. c. The extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management or student safety, or have otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly states, with evidence referenced with financial audit disclosure, that it has had no significant financial issues. The applicant retains the services of an outside Educational Service and Support provider for bookkeeping and accounting in order to maintain financial accountability (p. 36)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not provide a summary of their current financial position that aligns with their form 990, nor did it provide a multi-year budget that would demonstrate sound financial planning. The applicant, also, did not address the issue of student safety.

**Reader's Score: 5**

- 4. d. The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant describes their history of successfully launching new schools without grant fund based on a combination of their financial stewardship and sufficient fiscal reserves (pp. 35-36). The applicant also claims that their sound fiscal governance has enabled them never to rely on philanthropy for operations (p.37).

The level of support for new schools has also depended on their own financial grant program which is funded by having their schools make annual contributions, which amount to less than 1% of funding to a network-wide fund that provides start-up loans and recoverable grants (p. 37).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide a multi-year financial and operating model for the proposed new schools and it did not provide documentation of commitments from other entities for continued support.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - Significance of Contribution in Assisting Students**

- 1. 2. Significance of Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

The Secretary considers the significance of contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students for the proposed project. In determining 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, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 19

Sub

1. The extent to which charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with disabilities and English learners, at rates comparable to surrounding public schools or, in the case of virtual charter schools, at rates comparable to public schools in the State.

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides significant data of the percentage of student that are educationally disadvantaged, particularly English Learners, across and within schools (pp. 38-40; Appendix F). The applicant also provides academic data, attendance and retention and Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates (ACGR) (Appendix F) to demonstrated high success outcomes when compared to state and/or surrounding public schools.

The applicant also explains how their curriculum and school environment addresses the needs of its students (p. 40).

The applicant gives an adequate explanation to understand the lower percentages of the students with disabilities compared to the surrounding schools (p. 39).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The quality of the plan to ensure that the charter schools the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit, enroll, and effectively serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with disabilities and English learners.

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides an adequate plan to recruit, enroll, and effectively serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with and English Learners (pp. 40-45). Activities are identified and include widespread media coverage, social media, information sessions in schools throughout the targeted neighborhoods, visits to churches, and community-centered events (p. 45). In fact, the enrollment policies specifically target educationally underserved students through a variety of information and marketing strategies (p.45) and the applicant does discuss how they will ensure services are provided for all students in need (pp. 43-45).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide sufficient information to target market students with disabilities.

Reader's Score: 9



## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan

### 1. 3. Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan for the Proposed Project

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 following factors:

Reader's Score: 17

Sub

#### 1. 1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

##### Strengths:

The conceptual framework presented involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data, an external evaluation and accreditation through an agency (p. 46). The research model is described as a mixed research methodology for reporting results in order to consider different variables each state uses with its school evaluation formula (p. 46).

##### Weaknesses:

The applicant presents a conceptual framework in which the theory of action is not clear and is not clearly linked to the literature. There is no discussion, for example, what theory of action is used by the accrediting agency (p. 47) and by independent assessments (p. 46).

Reader's Score: 3

#### 2. 2. 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 project, as described in the applicant's logic model, and that will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the grant period.

##### Strengths:

Objective performance measures are identified relative to enrollment growth, student academic achievement on both course exams and state assessments, the percentage of students who matriculate and graduate from college, and the degree to which the organizational expansion is sustainable without private funding (pp. 48-50). Each of these objectives has specific desired outcomes, baseline data and data collection sources.

##### Weaknesses:

A description of the logic model is missing from the narrative and, consequently, it is difficult to understand a clear and comprehensive listing of inputs, activities, outputs, and short and long-term results of the project. Similarly, the applicant does not disclose the logic model used by the external evaluation and accreditation, which would be relevant to the evaluation design.

Reader's Score: 5

#### 3. 3. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

Sub

**Strengths:**

Each of the stated objectives has desired outcomes which are clearly identified and measurable (pp. 48-50). The objectives related to quantitative analysis are realistic and relevant. For example, each of the five objectives specified: 1. Enrollment Growth; 2. Student Academic Achievement; 3. Students rates of matriculation and graduation from College; 4. Positive student and staff culture across the organization, and 5. Organizational expansion with public funds without a reliance on private funding, have quantitative performance measures.

**Weaknesses:**

Goals linked to a logic model are not addressed in order to determine that the evaluation design will produce high-quality data by the end of the project. The applicant does indicate the two-fold aim of the evaluation plan but does not state them as project goals (p. 51).

**Reader's Score:** 3

4. **4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.**

**Strengths:**

One aim of the project design is to evaluate model adaptations successfully (p. 51). The applicant cites their seasoned staff to form organizational teams to replicate project activities and strategies with fidelity (p. 51). Their internal evaluation team is proposed to be useful to make ongoing access to real-time and actionable recommendations.

**Weaknesses:**

The design for project implementation does not include specific plans for documenting evidence and lessons learned beyond the formal evaluation. It is unclear how data will be used in the decision to replicate high quality schools and the applicant does not present a plan for disseminating results or for sharing lessons learned.

**Reader's Score:** 6

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan**

**1. 4. Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan**

**The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

**In addition, the Secretary considers:**

**Reader's Score:** 6

Sub

**Sub**

**1. 1. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant lists key personnel and provides a summary of their qualifications, including skills and experience relevant to the operation and management of schools (pp. 52-58). For example, The Chief Academic Officer has considerable experience at all K-12 levels, including college settings, is well credentialed and is the recipient of many awards and distinctions (p. e72).

**Weaknesses:**

Key personnel that would be directly responsible for grant implementation, including the designated project director are not provided. There is also no indication to explain why key project personnel are essential for the success of the project.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**2. 2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant mentions previous successful experience with Charter School Program grants and also describes evaluation team's efforts to understand how to successfully replicate high performing schools (p. 51).

For example, the evaluative teams are designed to develop a sustainable evaluation model by conducting in-house evaluative systems (p.51). These systems provide the internal evaluation team with access to real-time and actionable recommendations for continuous improvements in the operation of the proposed project.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant provides insufficient information about their plan to collect, analyze and use data for feedback, continuous improvement and the successful replication of high-quality schools, which is fundamental for the proposed funded project. It is unclear whether the applicant will actually use any real time data for course correction purposes in this project.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP 3: High School Students**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: High School Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must propose to --

- a. Replicate or expand high-quality charter schools to serve high school students, including educationally disadvantaged students;
- b. Prepare students, including educationally disadvantaged students, in those schools for enrollment in postsecondary education institutions through activities such as, but not limited to, accelerated learning programs (including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and programs, dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early

college high schools), college counseling, career and technical education programs, career counseling, internships, work-based learning programs (such as apprenticeships), assisting students in the college admissions and financial aid application processes, and preparing students to take standardized college admissions tests;

c. Provide support for students, including educationally disadvantaged students, who graduate from those schools and enroll in postsecondary education institutions in persisting in, and attaining a degree or certificate from, such institutions, through activities such as, but not limited to, mentorships, ongoing assistance with the financial aid application process, and establishing or strengthening peer support systems for such students attending the same institution; and

d. Propose one or more project-specific performance measures, including aligned leading indicators or other interim milestones, that will provide valid and reliable information about the applicant's progress in preparing students, including educationally disadvantaged students, for enrollment in postsecondary education institutions and in supporting those students in persisting in and attaining a degree or certificate from such institutions. An applicant addressing this priority and receiving a CMO grant must provide data that are responsive to the measure(s), including performance targets, in its annual performance reports to the Department.

**Note:** For purposes of this priority, postsecondary education institutions include institutions of higher education, as defined in section 8101(29) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA), and one-year training programs that meet the requirements of section 101(b)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA).

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides details that, on average, its high schools serve largely Hispanic and African-American students (p. 9). The curriculum emphasizes college transition with dual enrollment and advance placement courses partnered with local higher education institutions (p. 10). The applicant indicates a number of support services to enroll in postsecondary education by providing test preparation, mentorship, and ongoing assistance with the financial aid process (pp. 11-12).

The applicant submits multiple data indicators of the applicants' progress in preparing students, including educationally disadvantaged students for enrolling and persisting in postsecondary institutions (pp. 11-12; Appendix F).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4: Serve Native American Students**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Opening a New Charter School or Replicating or Expanding a High-quality Charter School to Serve Native American Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must --

a. Propose to open a new charter school, or replicate or expand a high-quality charter school, that—

1. Utilizes targeted outreach and recruitment in order to serve a high proportion of Native American students, consistent with nondiscrimination requirements contained in the U.S. Constitution and Federal civil rights laws;
2. Has a mission and focus that will address the unique educational needs of Native

American students, such as through the use of instructional programs and teaching methods that reflect and preserve Native American language, culture, and history; and

3. Has or will have a governing board with a substantial percentage of members who are members of Indian Tribes or Native American organizations located within the area to be served by the new, replicated, or expanded charter school;

b. Submit a letter of support from at least one Indian Tribe or Native American organization located within the area to be served by the new, replicated, or expanded charter school; and

c. Meaningfully collaborate with the Indian Tribe(s) or Native American organization(s) from which the applicant has received a letter of support in a timely, active, and ongoing manner with respect to the development and implementation of the educational program at the charter school.

**Strengths:**

Applicant did not address the question.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant did not address the question.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5: Reopening Poor-Performing Schools**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Reopening Academically Poor-Performing Schools as Charter Schools.**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must --

a. Demonstrate past success working with one or more academically poor-performing public schools or schools that previously were designated as persistently lowest-achieving schools or priority schools under the former School Improvement Grant program or in States that exercised ESEA flexibility, respectively, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and

b. Propose to use grant funds under this program to restart one or more academically poor-performing public schools as charter schools during the project period by—

1. Replicating one or more high-quality charter schools based on a successful charter school model for which the applicant has provided evidence of success; and

2. Targeting a demographically similar student population in the replicated charter schools as was served by the academically poor-performing public schools

**Strengths:**

Applicant did not address the question.

**Weaknesses:**

Applicant did not address the question.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 02/12/2020 04:40 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 02/12/2020 04:40 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Mater Academy Inc (S282M200013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of the Applicant and Adequacy Resources</b>		
1. Applicant and Resources	40	33
<b>Significance of Contribution in Assisting Students</b>		
1. Disadvantaged Students	20	18
<b>Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan</b>		
1. Project Design/Evaluation	30	22
<b>Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan</b>		
1. Personnel/Management	10	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	81
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>CPP 3: High School Students</b>		
1. High School Students	2	2
<b>CPP4: Serve Native American Students</b>		
1. Native American Students	4	0
<b>CPP5: Reopening Poor-Performing Schools</b>		
1. Reopening Schools	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	2
<b>Total</b>	108	83

# Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - FY20 CMO - 2: 84.282M

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

Applicant: Mater Academy Inc (S282M200013)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Applicant and Adequacy Resources

#### 1. 1. Quality of the Eligible Applicant and Adequacy of Resources

In determining the quality of the eligible applicant, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 33

#### Sub

1. a. The extent to which the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments, 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 served by other public schools in the State.

#### Strengths:

The applicant provided extensive disaggregated student data specific to academic achievement results for school years 2018 and 2019 (pgs. e16, e17, e20, e22, e24, and e209-e251). Some highlights include: In 2019, 90% of Mater Academy's graduates matriculated to college after high school (pg. e16); Mater Academy graduates college completion rate is 65% compared to a national average of 9% for low-income and first-generation students (pg. e17); A third of Mater Academy high school students are in taking college credits (pg. e20); Mater Academy had a 98% graduation rate in 2018 (pg. e20); Over 15% of Mater Academy seniors earned associate degrees while attending high school (pg. e20); Nearly 86% of Mater Academy graduates attend post-secondary institutions (pg. e20); The Center for Research on Educational Outcomes' (CREDO) study of hybrid charter schools rank Mater Academy as the second highest performer (pg. e22) and Mater Academy school results on state assessments show no correlation between school test results and poverty level (pg. e24). Applicant offers comparison of Mater Academy's student achievement data with other public schools in the state.

#### Weaknesses:

Applicant shows student growth between 2018 and 2019 but no other years of data is provided making it difficult to determine the impact of student growth over time, including narrowing of the achievement gap (pgs. e209-e251).

Reader's Score: 8

2. b. The extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; or have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation.



**Sub**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy operates 28 charter schools in Florida and Nevada (23 in Miami-Dade County, 3 in central Florida, and 2 in Nevada) (pg. e26). Each school has a charter contract for 5 to 15 years between Mater Academy and the Authorizer (pg. e26). No schools have closed and no charters have been revoked for any reason (pg. e52). Mater Academy has never been cited for non-compliance and has had no affiliations revoked or terminated (pg. e52).

**Weaknesses:**

The narrative regarding the number and locations of schools operated by Mater Academy does not match the list of schools provided in other areas of the application and in the Appendices (pgs. e26, e52, e204-e209).

**Reader's Score: 9**

**3. c. The extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management or student safety, or have otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school's charter.**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy indicated it has an exceptional record of financial and operational management (pg. e52). The organization has a consolidated annual surplus equating to 4% of revenue without private funding (pgs. e52-e53). Thirteen Mater Academy schools in Florida have been designated as High Performing Charters (pgs. e53, e287-e290).

In addition, two Mater Academy principals have been awarded the Florida Tax Watch Principal Leadership Award (pg. e53). Management responded to all findings in the 2019 audit and has a plan to resolve them (pgs. located between e271 and e273).

Mater Academy provided multi-year budgets for a 600 student elementary school, 450 student middle school, and 1,000 student high school (pgs. e262-e267). All budgets show a net positive end of year balance and, in most instances, it increases from year to year.

**Weaknesses:**

Included financial audit from 2019 shows a few findings and questioned costs, including excess net cash in the food service account and lack of proper documentation for procurement procedures affiliated with the Public Charter School Grant Program Planning Design & Implementation (pgs. located between e271 and e273). Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, not provided. As such, it was not possible to compare the financial information with Form 990.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**4. d. The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy has supported prior growth over the past 21 years by having schools make annual contributions of less than 1% of funding to a network-wide fund that provides start-up loans and recoverable grants to new Mater Academy schools (pgs. e55-e56). Applicant provided a detailed summary of how they will support new and expanded charter schools after the grant ends, including a 5-year budget that shows improved reserves almost every year (pgs. e262-e267).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

Mater Academy did not indicate if the 1% network-wide fund can support the addition of 38 new schools over five years and in three new states (i.e., Texas, Arizona, and Michigan), given the increased cost of building and operating new schools (pg. e16-e17).

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Significance of Contribution in Assisting Students**

**1. 2. Significance of Contribution in Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

**The Secretary considers the significance of contribution in assisting educationally disadvantaged students for the proposed project. In determining 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, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Sub**

**1. 1. The extent to which charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with disabilities and English learners, at rates comparable to surrounding public schools or, in the case of virtual charter schools, at rates comparable to public schools in the State.**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy student population includes 78% economically disadvantaged, 16% English Learners, and 5.4% students with disabilities (pg. e56). A breakdown of enrollment by school and percentage of students in each demographic group was provided (pg. e293). A comparison of enrollment between all Mater Academy schools (aggregate) and the state, district, and Mater Academy by location is included (pgs. e57-e58). Mater Academy addressed its low percentage of students with disabilities (pg. e57). Mater Academy provided detailed and disaggregated academic and Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate data (pgs. e211-e251, e254-e255, e256, e258-e259, e260).

**Weaknesses:**

Mater Academy did not provide disaggregated attendance and retention rates for students with disabilities and English Learners (pgs. e252-e253).

**Reader's Score: 9**

**2. 2. The quality of the plan to ensure that the charter schools the applicant proposes to replicate or expand will recruit, enroll, and effectively serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly students with disabilities and English learners.**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy recruitment and enrollment policies include reaching potential students and families through widespread media coverage, community-based activities, information sessions in schools throughout target neighborhoods, and social media (pg. e59). Mater Academy effectively serves students who are educationally disadvantaged through differentiated instruction, computer-based interventions, parent/teacher/school support conferences, tutoring, flexible scheduling, summer school/virtual school and social-emotional counseling (pgs. e60-e61).

Sub

**Weaknesses:**

Mater Academy did not include enrollment targets for educationally disadvantaged students (i.e., students with disabilities) (pg. e66). In addition, there was no information specific to student or community demographics for the newly proposed markets (i.e., Texas, Arizona, and Michigan), making it difficult to ascertain how Mater Academy will target educationally disadvantaged students.

**Reader's Score: 9**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan**

**1. 3. Quality of the Project Design and Evaluation Plan for the Proposed Project**

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 following factors:

**Reader's Score: 22**

Sub

**1. 1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy presented a comprehensive conceptual framework with three main actions: (1) identify areas of strength and their underlying practices to leverage these practices across the school and CMO as applicable, (2) identify areas of challenge and their possible causes, to develop action steps for remediation and allocate resources as necessary, and (3) determine goals, actions, and measures for the CMO, individual schools, and students (pg. e64). The plan includes data collection, mixed method research, external evaluation and accreditation, and a dissemination plan (pgs. ee64-e66).

**Weaknesses:**

Mater Academy's conceptual framework was not appropriately documented with relevant literature and evidence.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**2. 2. 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 project, as described in the applicant's logic model, and that will produce quantitative and qualitative data by the end of the grant period.**

**Strengths:**

The logic model provided by Mater Academy is clear and includes objectives, outcomes, baseline data, and the method of data collection (pgs. e66-e69). Mater Academy's Board, school leaders, operational staff, and teachers collect, analyze, and review data to inform improvement efforts of the organization, individual school, classroom, and student level (pg. e63).

Mater Academy proposes to contract with an independent evaluator to design and conduct a study of all network schools to collect quantitative data on: (1) the instructional impacts on student achievement; (2) college readiness and alumni graduation rates; and (3) similarities and differences between network schools in both result and practices by grade level (pgs. e64-e65).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

The logic model does not include inputs, specific activities, or quantitative targets or milestones for all educationally disadvantaged subgroups. For example, objective 2, student academic proficiency, does not address expectations for students with disabilities specific to state-administered reading and mathematics tests, yet it addresses English learners and low-income students (pgs. e66-e67). In addition, it does not provide the expectation for year 1 of the grant versus the final outcome in year 5.

An additional issue includes a misalignment of objective 2.7 and the described baseline data, narrative, and data collection method (pg. e67). Finally, the outcomes for objectives 4.1 and 4.2 are lower than current performance and there is no narrative regarding this decision (pgs. e67-e68).

**Reader's Score: 6**

**3. 3. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.**

**Strengths:**

All goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly identified (pgs. e66-e69). Each desired outcome is specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic for the grant period, and there is evidence throughout the application to support these goals. An example of this is outcome 2.3, which indicates 60% of English Learners will score proficient on state administered reading and mathematics tests (pg. e66). SY2018 performance shows English Learners had an average score of 59.11% in mathematics and 46.95% in reading (pgs. e249, e246).

**Weaknesses:**

Some desired outcomes are lower than current student performance. For example, outcome 2.1, 8th grade proficiency on state end of course exams, indicates that 100% of students were proficient in reading the prior year (baseline data) and the desired outcome is to maintain a proficiency rate of 95% or higher annually through the grant period (pg. e66). There was no explanation for the decision to set the target rate lower than the current rate.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**4. 4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.**

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy's application identifies how data will be collected and analyzed by school leaders, operational staff, and teachers, and used in a continuous improvement cycle for schools and the CMO (pgs. e69-e70, e64). Having teachers involved in the collection and analysis of data helps ensure they receive information about the effectiveness of the approaches or strategies used in their classrooms. Mater Academy also indicated how it will distribute a final report outlining best practices (pg. e66).

The applicant indicated it will also use its previous experience as a CSP grantee and discussed how its already changed its organizational practices based on CSP grant evaluations (pg. e69).

**Weaknesses:**

Mater Academy proposes to contract with an independent evaluator to design and conduct a study of all network schools to collect quantitative data (pgs. e64-e65). However, lack of alignment between the scope of the work for the external evaluator and the five grant objectives identified in the logic model make it challenging to determine if the evaluation of the project will result in information to guide replication of project activities or strategies (pgs. e64-

Sub

e65, e66-e68).

Reader's Score: 8

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan

### 1. 4. Quality of Project Personnel and Management Plan

The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

In addition, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

#### 1. 1. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

##### Strengths:

Based on the project objectives of (1) student enrollment, (2) student academic proficiency, (3) college matriculation and graduation, (4) positive student and staff culture, and (5) financial soundness, the assumed qualifications for key personnel include knowledge of the target communities; knowledge of state assessments; knowledge of local colleges and postsecondary student support; school culture, professional development, behavior management and expectations, and staff recruiting, observation, and evaluation; and budgeting and financial best practices (pgs. e66-e68). Most of the proposed key personnel have these qualifications, training, and experience needed for the opening, operation, and management of charter schools as proposed in this project, including the management of previous grants (pgs. e70-e76, e79-e95).

##### Weaknesses:

A resume for the National Director of Special Education and Student Support is missing (pgs. e79-e95). In addition, there was not a description of the qualifications for the new school principals, who are assumed to be integral to data collection and analyses for this grant.

Reader's Score: 4

#### 2. 2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

##### Strengths:

Mater Academy's application identifies how data will be collected and analyzed and used in a continuous improvement cycle for schools and the CMO (pgs. e69-e70, e64). This is evidenced by the applicant's plan to provide school specific, disaggregated by demographic data to each school (pg. e65). The school-level data will be used to drive mid-year changes in instruction and intervention strategies.

Mater Academy also indicated all of its schools have been accredited under AdvancED's Corporate Systems accreditation and it has another external review in SY2021 (pg. e65). These reviews require school improvement efforts to be documented and evidenced in policies, practices, and continuous improvement cycles (pg. e65).

**Sub**

**Weaknesses:**

Although Mater Academy indicated it will collect data at the beginning, midpoint, and end of year, most of the data it intends to collect comes from annual measures, such as the Annual State Report, annual AP results, exit surveys, etc. (pgs. e66-e69). As such, it is not clear how Mater Academy will ensure feedback for continuous and mid-year improvement (pgs. e66-e68).

**Reader's Score:** 4

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP 3: High School Students**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3: High School Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must propose to --

- a. Replicate or expand high-quality charter schools to serve high school students, including educationally disadvantaged students;
- b. Prepare students, including educationally disadvantaged students, in those schools for enrollment in postsecondary education institutions through activities such as, but not limited to, accelerated learning programs (including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses and programs, dual or concurrent enrollment programs, and early college high schools), college counseling, career and technical education programs, career counseling, internships, work-based learning programs (such as apprenticeships), assisting students in the college admissions and financial aid application processes, and preparing students to take standardized college admissions tests;
- c. Provide support for students, including educationally disadvantaged students, who graduate from those schools and enroll in postsecondary education institutions in persisting in, and attaining a degree or certificate from, such institutions, through activities such as, but not limited to, mentorships, ongoing assistance with the financial aid application process, and establishing or strengthening peer support systems for such students attending the same institution; and
- d. Propose one or more project-specific performance measures, including aligned leading indicators or other interim milestones, that will provide valid and reliable information about the applicant's progress in preparing students, including educationally disadvantaged students, for enrollment in postsecondary education institutions and in supporting those students in persisting in and attaining a degree or certificate from such institutions. An applicant addressing this priority and receiving a CMO grant must provide data that are responsive to the measure(s), including performance targets, in its annual performance reports to the Department.

**Note:** For purposes of this priority, postsecondary education institutions include institutions of higher education, as defined in section 8101(29) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA), and one-year training programs that meet the requirements of section 101(b)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA).

**Strengths:**

Mater Academy provided ample evidence its five high schools are high-quality, including some appearing among the "Best in the Nation" according to U.S. News and World Reports Best High Schools in the Nation, Newsweek's Best High Schools in the Nation, Daily Beast Best High Schools in the Nation, and Washington Post Best High Schools in the Nation (pg. e26). In addition, the College Board designated Mater Academy a "Demonstration School" exemplifying a national example in college preparation and readiness (pg. e26). Mater Academy's high schools have eliminated the income achievement gap as evidenced by no correlation between income and state test results (pgs. e26-e27).

Mater Academy helps prepare its students for postsecondary education as evidenced by 33% of high school students participating in dual enrollment college program (pg. e20); its SAT and ACT preparation programs (pg. e30); and organized visits to colleges and universities where they connect students with Mater Academy graduates attending the institution (pgs. e30-e31).

Mater Academy helps prepare its students for postsecondary education as evidenced by its College Assistance Program where counselors inform students and parents of financial aid and standardized testing, and connect students to a community of Mater Academy alumni who mentor them (pg. e30); its SAT and ACT preparation programs (pg. e30); organized visits to colleges and universities where they connect students with Mater Academy graduates attending the institution (pgs. e30-e31); and 65% college graduation rate (pg. e17).

Mater Academy proposed four objectives tied to college attendance and graduation, including percentage of college acceptance (3.1), percentage of college matriculation rate (3.2), percentage of college graduation within six years of high school completion (3.3), and percentage of seniors completing their FAFSA applications (3.4) (pgs. e67-e68).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4: Serve Native American Students**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 4: Opening a New Charter School or Replicating or Expanding a High-quality Charter School to Serve Native American Students**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must --

**a. Propose to open a new charter school, or replicate or expand a high-quality charter school, that—**

**1. Utilizes targeted outreach and recruitment in order to serve a high proportion of Native American students, consistent with nondiscrimination requirements contained in the U.S. Constitution and Federal civil rights laws;**

**2. Has a mission and focus that will address the unique educational needs of Native American students, such as through the use of instructional programs and teaching methods that reflect and preserve Native American language, culture, and history; and**

**3. Has or will have a governing board with a substantial percentage of members who are members of Indian Tribes or Native American organizations located within the area to be served by the new, replicated, or expanded charter school;**

**b. Submit a letter of support from at least one Indian Tribe or Native American organization located within the area to be served by the new, replicated, or expanded charter school; and**

**c. Meaningfully collaborate with the Indian Tribe(s) or Native American organization(s) from which the applicant has received a letter of support in a timely, active, and ongoing manner with respect to the development and implementation of the educational program at the charter school.**

**Strengths:**

Not addressed in the application.

**Weaknesses:**

Not addressed in the application.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5: Reopening Poor-Performing Schools**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 5: Reopening Academically Poor-Performing Schools as Charter Schools.**

To receive points under this priority, an applicant must --

a. Demonstrate past success working with one or more academically poor-performing public schools or schools that previously were designated as persistently lowest-achieving schools or priority schools under the former School Improvement Grant program or in States that exercised ESEA flexibility, respectively, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and

b. Propose to use grant funds under this program to restart one or more academically poor-performing public schools as charter schools during the project period by—

1. Replicating one or more high-quality charter schools based on a successful charter school model for which the applicant has provided evidence of success; and

2. Targeting a demographically similar student population in the replicated charter schools as was served by the academically poor-performing public schools

**Strengths:**

Not addressed in the application.

**Weaknesses:**

Not addressed in the application.

**Reader's Score: 0**

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**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 02/12/2020 04:40 PM