

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2022 02:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (S282T220022)

Reader #1: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 30 | 25 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Quality of Project Design | 40 | 34 |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 20 | 11 |
| Quality of Project Personnel | | |
| 1. Project Personnel | 10 | 9 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 79 |
| Total | 100 | 79 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - National Dissemination Panel - 7: 84.282T

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (S282T220022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 25

Sub

1. The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear description of the challenges for charter school leaders which includes data on the number of new leaders (at 54% over past 5 years, p. 5) and a statewide survey of charter school board members which indicated more than half are new (at 53%).

The narrative describes the intent to create and disseminate a model to address students of color, English language learners, low income and those who are disproportionately underserved (p. 7). The narrative specifically addresses those in freestanding charter schools and/or with inexperienced school leadership.

Weaknesses:

The proposed program will only address those schools in Massachusetts and not nationally. It would benefit the program if they presented nationally and provided more information on how this might be used in charters across the U.S.

Reader's Score: 12

2. The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

Strengths:

The narrative describes a history of surveying schools to determine the needs of charter school leaders and board member and provide training, consultancy, coaching, and mentoring which they will use in their plan for a 3-year leadership cohort. The MCPSA has a history of working with and providing services to schools and indicate they have a 99-100% satisfaction rate (p.8).

The program will provide intensive support for the first year and then decreasing support for years 2 and 3 of the program. Some elements that they have discovered in their surveys include lack of communication regarding annual goals, monitoring progress and school leadership evaluation, which if addressed may lead to a higher degree of fidelity in the individual school or program.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The narrative would benefit from a description of how they will address diverse leadership and provide a description of how they will use prior successes to improve capacity.

Reader's Score: 13

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

Strengths:

The applicant supports their rationale with research on the impact of positive group dynamics on governing boards and the impact on student achievement (p.12). This includes the elimination of negative conflict types and increase in trust which supports delivery of the four project objectives and the performance measures provided in the supporting materials as evidenced through the logic model (p.4).

Weaknesses:

While the proposed project has included substantive research to support their rationale, however, there is more current and timely research in the area of trust in organizations that might benefit their program (such as Kosonen, 2022; Conway-Turner, et al.; and Huseyin, 2018). Much of the stated research is relatively dated upon which this part of the narrative is based.

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The proposed program goals of improving effectiveness and retention of new and diverse charter leaders, improving the quality of board governance and supporting charter schools have transition plans along with educator voice, are stated and they are supported by project objectives and measures (p.23).

The narrative is supported by a logic model that includes the resources, activities, outputs, long and short-term outcomes (which include measurables such as percentage of leaders who report participation in the program has made them more effective, p. 4).

Weaknesses:

The development of the curriculum in September, 2023 is not fully explained since the narrative describes having some material now (such as the leadership transition handbook and existing curriculum and materials), and how this might impact the development of materials for school board leaders should be detailed (Logic Model, p. 4).

Sub

Reader's Score: 9

3. The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

The applicant describes the proposed project as exceptional since it is a statewide approach and provide support to all charter schools in Massachusetts. The integration of best practices in leadership and trust with school board governance supports the program. The narrative describes the existing connection that the applicant organization has with charter school leaders and board members that the narrative describes as only reaching a fraction of the charter leaders in the state (p.21).

Additionally, the program will provide dual support to both leadership and governance which they describe as lacking in many programs that service charter school leadership. Including the voice of educators in the process further strengthens this program (p. 30).

Weaknesses:

The proposed project would benefit their narrative with a more in depth description of what evidence is already in use for current programs that are exceptional or tied with planned items that will make them exceptional (p. 21). For example, specific numbers of how their programs have impacted the success or retention of leadership personnel or any measures that are tied to outcomes which combine the leadership/governance component that the narrative describes as impacting their program and increasing their ability to strengthen student learning (p. 23).

Reader's Score: 8

4. The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

The proposed program has a dissemination plan (p.7) by audience with methods and outputs to support the process (pp. 25-26). The narrative includes presenting at educational conferences, speaking and blogging to reach stakeholders. The applicant will work with other organizations, including the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and Education Board Partners to reach those who might be interested.

Outputs and deliverables are provided in the Table on pages 37 and 26 (multi-pronged approach to dissemination).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 11

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant supports their management plan with a timeline with annual activities, the objective number and lead personnel and the month of delivery or implementation (pp. 31-32).

The narrative describes the COO at .10FTE as providing the operational and financial leadership to ensure project deliverables are done on time and under budget. The narrative states that the Senior Director of Capacity Building Network (at 1.00FTE) has experience in managing grant initiatives and supporting initiatives. They will provide the day-to-day program support and have weekly meetings to coordinate work. Not all programs have the same personnel so these were used to support the proposed project (p. 29).

Weaknesses:

The proposed project has a timeline (p. 31) that includes activities, objectives, and month, but not the year. A more comprehensive timeline would benefit the narrative and support accomplishing program tasks.

While program staff are listed, an organizational chart of the program would help to show how management decisions will be arrived at and how personnel will work together. (none included).

Reader's Score: 8

2. **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The narrative provides the objectives, deliverables and line item budget totals for this section of the proposal. The applicant describes the intent to build on and strengthen the 3 year program.

Weaknesses:

While the narrative has listed their program staff, they do not provide enough information about how the various subcontractors will work together with the program or provide any MOA/MOU that indicate how they can support cost effectiveness for the proposed program. The contractual component is very high at \$ [REDACTED] and it is not clear what those organizations will bring to the program other than staff members.

The program narrative provides a listing of the objectives, budget items and deliverables, but none are itemized and there is no explanation of how the costs are reasonable and should be broken down by activities. For example, the narrative outputs for objective 1 include the deliverable of high-quality curriculum, yet there is existing curriculum and manuals, with no explanation of how the new material will be higher quality or integrate the older material. The budget line items above the table with objectives do not mention the curriculum or tie it to a category (p. 35).

Reader's Score: 3

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 9

Sub

- 1. 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant has included their GEPA (Attachment) and identified the two barriers they are intent to overcome including accessibility for individuals with disabilities and ensuring that working mothers have access (p. 37).

The narrative details the intent to schedule items around the needs of the mother and will ensure that their facilities are ADA compliant, and services are provided to those who need them.

The applicant has included narrative that they will provide support to those in charter leaderships in whichever state serves populations of students that are in need.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

- 2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.**

Strengths:

The project lead has a master's degree in Business and relevant experience as the executive director of the MCPSA since 2017 and other administrative positions in charter schools supporting strategic planning and finance. The project director has the relevant qualification, training, and experience to lead this program.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

Project personnel include multiple individuals with charter school administrative experience, all have master's degrees, or a JD and one has an educational degree. The narrative includes the time commitment for program staff, with the Executive Director at .15FTE, Chief of Policy at .40FTE and COO at .10 FTE.

Weaknesses:

The proposed project personnel that are listed as key personnel (p. 39) are not all supported with resumes and experience of the proposal making it difficult to determine if they have sufficient qualifications for the project. Three listed program staff do not have attached resumes or time commitments for supporting the program, yet are listed as key personnel. Providing more information or their resumes might help to support the proposal (pp. 40-41 and Resume Attachment).

Sub

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2022 02:31 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2022 02:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (S282T220022)

Reader #2: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 30 | 22 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Quality of Project Design | 40 | 36 |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 20 | 17 |
| Quality of Project Personnel | | |
| 1. Project Personnel | 10 | 8 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 83 |
| Total | 100 | 83 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - National Dissemination Panel - 7: 84.282T

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (S282T220022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 22

Sub

1. The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant makes a somewhat compelling case significance of its proposed project to build the capacity of school leaders and board member, with a focus on those leading freestanding schools that are not a part of a larger network. First, the applicant clearly states the unique challenges for those running freestanding schools (including 85% of MA charters) particularly fewer resources and networks, but of which limit the support for leaders (e21). Next, the applicant notes that in addition to facing unique challenges, over half of the charter leaders in Massachusetts, the home state of the applicants, are new to their position, and two-thirds of charter school board members (a key source of school leaders support) are serving on a board for the first time (e21). Together, these point to a concerning lack of experience within charter leadership of the state, which the applicant plans to address in its programming thus hopefully increasing the proportion of effective school leaders as outlined in Absolute Priority 2.

The applicant notes that existing programs don't address this need in a way that is useful to its specific circumstances, by providing job-embedded training that's focused on both school leadership and governance and jointly address the capacity of school leaders and board members, all of which the proposed project plans to do (e22).

Beyond the work in Massachusetts, the applicant plans to export this model to charter support organizations around the country (e41-43), with the goal of having four other states adopt their model by the end of the grant period (e19). This will have a positive impact on the national significance of the project.

Weaknesses:

While the applicant notes that there are a number of freestanding charter schools across the country, which are attended by 1.9 million students (e23), the narrative focuses almost exclusively on the local state context (even mentioning its plans to include very state-specific content (e22), suggesting a potentially limited significance to the project beyond Massachusetts.

Reader's Score: 11

2. The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide,

Sub

improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

Strengths:

The applicant's narrative provides a strong case that the proposed project will improve the capacity of its target population of school leaders and charter board members through its outline of its proposed activities and its demonstrated responsiveness to the specific needs of its target audience.

The programming for school leaders includes a series of interactive and hands-on session, as well as on-going coaching and mentorship opportunities, and supports for an additional two years following the initial programming (e24). These show the applicant's commitment to both providing high-quality programming and ensuring that its provided guidance is effectively implemented.

The applicant provides relevant highlights of its ability to be responsive to the needs of its target population—both those identified by charter leaders themselves and those identified by the applicant. For instance, the added additional supports for two years beyond the initial programming at the request of the participants (e24). The applicant also directly used survey results on governance practices to inform its session with school leaders (e25).

The applicant's own expertise to identify a problem with transitions to new school leaders to develop a plan to work to provide board members with additional capacity to address this issue (e25-26) also shows the applicant's ability to be responsive to their target audience's needs and will likely positively impact the capacity of program participants.

The applicant also describes how it will work to disseminate and share its support model with a national audience through sharing their model at relevant national conferences as well as engaging in tailored outreach in states with similarly high proportions of freestanding charter schools who may be more likely to be interested in adopting their model (e42).

Weaknesses:

The applicant could have provided more specifics on its past successes as an indication of future success. For instance, while it notes its high member satisfaction rate (e23), this seems largely disconnected to the specific type of work proposed in this application. The applicant also could have provided more specific information on the various aspects of the programming (especially in years 2 and 3) and could have given more precise insight into the ability of proposed project to make a demonstrable impact.

The applicant provides details of its existing activities for its school leader programming, but it provides few details, beyond its anecdote about transition planning (e25-26), on how specifically it would be supporting charter board members, which makes it difficult to determine if the applicant's programming will effectively increase the capacity of this target audience and thus adequately address Absolute Priority 2.

The applicant includes project objectives outline a focus on school leaders of schools with above average populations of students from low-income families (e17), but the narrative doesn't provide any information about how these specific school leaders would be targeted or supported by the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 11

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 36

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

Strengths:

The applicant provides an overview of the external research that provides support for its logic model of supporting and building the capacity and working relationships among school leaders and board members (e27-28), including links to improved student outcomes, providing strong support for their model.

The applicant also clearly demonstrates its rationale for the proposed project via its logic model (e19). The logic model is easy to follow and understand and includes clear through lines from resources and activities through to its outcomes. For instance, the applicant's plan to both hire a director of governance and develop a board specific curriculum is least partially based on its 2021 statewide survey (e26), and then plans to gradually get boards to adopt behaviors in the curriculum (e29).

The applicant also clearly spells out the state-level need for the support services planned for the proposed project, noting for instance that only 25% of charter boards had transition plans in place in 2021 (e26), despite the inevitability of change in school leadership and evidence of failed transitions in the state (e25), which highlights a clear need identified by the applicant, thus provide a strong rationale for the project. The applicant also clearly outlines the lack of experience of both charter leaders and board members (e20-21).

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that the research presented in its narrative is directly connected to the applicant's logical model (e28), but doesn't actually spell out this connection either in its narrative or in the logic model itself (e19).

Reader's Score: 9

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

Strengths:

The applicant's planned goals, objectives, and outcomes demonstrate a strong coherence and are specific and measurable, suggesting a clear ability for the applicant and the Department to hold the applicant accountable to the specific metrics outlined in the application. More specifically, every single project objective has at least three specific associated metrics (e29-30), and these metrics also have accompanying base-line data provided (or explanations when they aren't included) as well as specific and clear goals for each year (e31-36). The applicant also provides narrative explanations of how the metrics are directly related to the project objectives.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

3. The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

The applicant makes a strong case that its proposed project is an exceptional approach to building the capacity of charter leaders and charter board members by focusing its joint focus on school leaders and board members, and comprehensive content.

The applicant provides a compelling case that providing direct support for both charter leaders and board members

Sub

is critical for strong governance but that this is not a common model for capacity building (e37), suggesting the applicant's program is an exceptional approach to addressing Absolute Priority 2 of increasing the proportion of effective and diverse educators. Additionally, it notes that its strong relationship with both groups make it an ideal candidate to offer this support.

The applicant makes a clear case for its comprehensive curriculum, by highlighting the various specific gaps in experience of school leaders and board member based on their trajectory that brought them to their charter leadership position (e37-38) as well as the more general curriculum from national guidance documents which lack the state and/or sector specific data leaders needs to make decisions in their roles (e38).

Weaknesses:

The applicant also makes the case that its role as a statewide organization make the applicant well suited to provide a wide reach (e36), but it provides little evidence that existing programs in the state couldn't do the same thing or provide any specific activities that would ensure widespread participation in their program.

The applicant notes that it has intentionally included content that empowers educator voice. While this is important, the applicant provides no evidence that this is a unique approach not used by other programs offering similar services, this aspect of programming is barely mentioned anywhere else in the application and thus appears not to be an integral component of the project design.

Reader's Score: 7

4. The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

Overall, the applicant provides a compelling case that its planned activities will result in the dissemination of information of its project to encourage replication. Perhaps most importantly, the applicant has included a specific performance metric that 4 organizations with statewide reach will adopt their model (e19). Simply having this as a discrete grant goal will help ensure the dissemination beyond Massachusetts will be a key part of the grant activities.

The applicant has developed a multi-prong approach to encouraging the replication of its model, which will likely help it be successful. It plans to build wide and shallow national awareness via large conferences and other events as well as blogs to help build general awareness (e41) which can help build the national cache needed to get organization to recognize and consider adopting the applicant's model.

Beyond this general approach, though, the applicant has developed a targeted approach that involves more specific outreach to organizations most likely to interested and able to adopt this model, as well as hosting its own events designed to provide more information and support for specific organizations that has shown interest (e42-43). This very intentional, active approach will help ensure that the applicant achieves its goal of having its model replicated in multiple states over the course of the grant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of

resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 17

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provides strong evidence that the applicant's management plan will allow the applicant to achieve its planned objectives over the course of the grant. The applicant states that the project director of the grant has experience both is administering federal grants and in the specific activities required under this grant (e44), while also outlining her project-specific responsibilities. The applicant also provides specific information about other relevant staff, their grant-specific roles and the percent of their time that will be spent on grant-related activities.

The applicant provides an extensive chart of the activities required to accomplish its proposed project, along with which staff members will be responsible for each activity and when each activity needs to be accomplished to keep the project on track. This level of detail in its project timeline will be a critical piece of accountability to ensure the completion of all proposed grant activities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

Overall, the applicant's budget appears to be reasonable in relation to the described project, with the majority of costs going to cover the salaries of key personnel based on the percentage of time they will be devoting to the project (e77) and reasonable travel costs going to activities clearly outlined earlier in the application (e40-43). The applicant also includes reasonable COLA increases to staff each year over the three years of the grant and provides clear calculations for benefits (e77). The applicant provides further evidence of how the costs will be allocated across grant activities by providing separate budget charts (e50-52).

Weaknesses:

While the cost associated with the various contracted services outlined in the budget chart (e78-79) seem reasonable given the scope of the project, the applicant failed to mention that they planned to contract out these services anywhere else in the application, making it difficult to fully gauge the reasonableness of these costs.

Though the applicant breaks down the costs of the project by grant activity (e50-52), these budgets are not subsequently broken down by year, so it's impossible to fully reconcile these costs with the year-by-year budget included in the appendix (e77-79). Additionally, the accompanying budget narratives (e50-52) doesn't provide any justifications or explanations of costs but instead simply restates the deliverables and outcomes, thus providing no additional insight into the reasonableness of the project costs.

Reader's Score: 7

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

1. 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.

Strengths:

The applicant provides some strong evidence that it encourages applications from members of traditionally underrepresented groups. Specifically, it notes that it has hired a consultant that "specializes in outreach to members of underrepresented groups" to conduct the search for the Director of Governance position related to this grant, as well as plans to post the position on job boards and association websites used by underrepresented groups (e53).

The beginning of the application also includes a detailed description of how the applicant plans to reduce barriers to participation for individuals with physical disabilities and women (e7-8).

Weaknesses:

While the applicant plans to use a consultant to find diverse candidates for its Director of Governance position, neither the explanation of the job search (e53) nor its Section 427 statement (e7-8) include any explicit statements about race or income. Given the strong racial and income-based inequities in the education, this appears to be a glaring omission.

The applicant did not include any information about the diversity of its current staff, which would have provided important information about the applicant's commitment to diversity.

Reader's Score: 2

2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

Strengths:

The applicant's Project Director has extensive training and experience that make her well qualified to lead the proposed project. The applicant notes through both the narrative and the attached resume (e53, e66-67) that she has "extensive experience designing and implementing professional development programs," (e53) which is essential the scope of the project. She also has specific experience working directly with school leaders and staff, which will be critical for successfully implementing the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provides sufficient evidence that the other key project personnel have the necessary skills, training, and experiences to support the proposed project. Each of the applicant's described staff members have over a decade of experience relevant to their roles in the project, with the school-related staff also have direct experience working with charter school leaders and/or board members (e54-55). The descriptions of the key consultant personnel also indicate extensive experience with charter school leaders or board members (e55-56). Two of the external personnel also having previous experience working directly with the applicant, which will likely aid in their ability to successfully support the proposed project.

Weaknesses:

The applicant notes that they will be hiring a Director of Governance position to manage much of the proposed project (e45), but the applicant does not include any information about the qualifications that will be looking for in this position either in their narrative or as an attached job description or posting. This makes it difficult to determine the relevant training and experience of this key project position.

Reader's Score: **2**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 09/12/2022 02:31 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2022 02:31 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (S282T220022)

Reader #3: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Significance | | |
| 1. Significance | 30 | 22 |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Quality of Project Design | 40 | 35 |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 20 | 18 |
| Quality of Project Personnel | | |
| 1. Project Personnel | 10 | 10 |
| Sub Total | 100 | 85 |
| Total | 100 | 85 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - National Dissemination Panel - 7: 84.282T

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (S282T220022)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Significance

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 22

Sub

1. The national significance of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant stated, "The outputs produced from this project will be shared with other statewide charter school support organizations that are interested in strengthening charter school leaders statewide and with individual charter schools and networks that can benefit from these resources." (E18) This information will have an impact on the rest of the national charter schools.

The applicant stated, "This project is nationally relevant to the 1.9 million students in freestanding charter public schools." (E23) The dissemination of this work can provide helpful information to charter school leaders that will help shape the framework for learning at schools.

The applicant stated, "presenting at key education conferences (e.g., National Alliance conferences, Policy Innovators in Education conferences, etc.), speaking on panels, and publishing blog posts that describe this work and its impact." (E41) The national significance is achieved through these actions and will contribute to the rest of the national charter school efforts.

Weaknesses:

The applicant stated, "The Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) is applying for a grant under Absolute Priority 2 -- Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning in order to create a statewide system of support for all charter school leaders in Massachusetts" (E13) This grant has more of a statewide impact. A plan to expand to other states was not evident in this application. The application would have been strengthened to have a detailed plan of outreach to charter schools across the nation.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

Sub

Strengths:

The application stated, "Refine and strengthen a 3 year program to provide support for new Massachusetts charter school leaders, with a focus on serving school leaders whose low income student population is above the state average." (E28) The 3 year plan is a good start to help new charter school leaders build local capacity.

The application stated, "Create leadership transition planning supports to dramatically increase the number of charter schools with leadership transition plans in place." (E29) Transition of leaders is where a lot of historical information is lost. If you have a plan then the information is not lost as easily in the transition.

Weaknesses:

The application did not completely address the Absolute Priority 2 -- Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning in order to create a statewide system of support for all charter school leaders in Massachusetts. The application does not clearly address "expanding high-poverty school districts' capacity to hire, support, and retain an effective and diverse educator workforce, through providing opportunities for educators to be involved in the design and implementation of local and district wide initiatives that advance systemic changes." The program application did not have a detailed plan of the expansion of the district capacity to hire. The application could have been more explicit on how they can increase the district's capacity to hire. The answering of the question of resources (financial and human) is how they could've shown more detail. The magnitude of the weakness is not large enough to deduct more points.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 35

Sub

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).**

Strengths:

The applicant stated, "build a project leadership team that oversees the day-to-day management of this grant in order to ensure that the project objectives are achieved on time and under budget." (E44) The execution of this project will depend on the leadership and management of the daily operations. This will ensure that the project will be completed.

The applicant stated, "Listed below are a number of key activities necessary for the completion of this project." (E46). The detailed project management plan will provide quality assurance.

The applicant stated, "High quality curriculum for all charter board members, including library of PD sessions available to all charters and CSOs." (E51) The curriculum will be a good resource for charter board members as board members are not always educated on how to be a board member.

The applicant stated their rationale, "the importance of school leaders on student achievement and teacher

Sub

retention is widely known. A 2021 research paper that synthesized the last 20 years of research on school leadership concluded that effective school leaders “have positive impacts on student achievement and attendance, as well as teacher satisfaction and retention.” (e28) The research and evidence of charter board practices impacts student achievement.

The applicant stated, “This research provides robust evidence in support of the board governance project component outlined in our logic model on page 4, both to improve the governance activities undertaken by all board members and also to work specifically on factors that can strengthen the relationship between the charter school leader and board.” (E28) The focus of board governance training and support will increase school efficiency and student achievement.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant achieved goals, objectives and outcomes that are specific and measurable. The detailed timeline and management plan will help complete all of the goals and objectives. The plan is stated in detail on pages e46-e49.

The plan was thorough in showing goals, objectives and outcomes that are measurable on pages e28-e36. Each objective is tied to at least one performance measure which makes it more effective at reaching all proposed project goals.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

3. The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

Strengths:

The project's detailed plan makes this approach very effective at accomplishing the priorities of the competition. The measurable goals and objectives of the proposal make it easier to follow and accomplish. The performance measures by objective and priority makes this application excellent. The baseline data used to drive and focus on priorities is exceptional.

Weaknesses:

The project is detailed but the approach is not necessarily exceptional. The proposal is detailed but very conventional. The use of different media and technology could have made the project more exceptional. The use of online resources could enhance the effectiveness of this project.

Sub

Reader's Score: 7

4. The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication.

Strengths:

The usage of current relationships with key stakeholders and outreach beyond the current relationships will help to broadly disseminate the information of the project as stated on pages e39-e43.

The applicant will host a two day vision and learning tour on page e42. This tour will engage and educate key stakeholders on the project and best practices. The "how to" guides will provide a broadly disseminated product that can be replicated.

Weaknesses:

The applicant stated, "Tailor outreach to target audience: Once a target audience is identified, we will work with partner organizations such as the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools and Education Board Partners to conduct outreach to specific individuals and organizations that could be a good fit and to invite them to learn more..."(e42). The target audience was earlier stated that it is charter support organizations. The plan to identify specific audiences is not as clear as it could be and the explanation of the target audience is contradictory.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan and adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

Reader's Score: 18

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant stated, "will convene weekly meetings of the project leadership team to coordinate the work, and will also conduct quarterly reviews of progress against the project goals." (E44) The weekly meetings will create accountability for making progress towards the goals of the project. The quarterly updates to the MCSPA Board of Directors will provide communication and adequate management of information.

The applicants management plan stated on pages e46-e49 create a table to achieve all of the activities, leads, timeline and objectives. The responsibilities are clearly defined and measurable within the timeline.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

- 2. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The costs seem reasonable as the personnel and contractors required relate to each objective and design. Each objective and output is directly related to the cost of each outcome. The outcome and activity was directly related to the budget amount in detail on pages (e50-e52).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not clearly define the roles and responsibilities of contractors. The contractor costs are expensive.

Reader's Score: 8

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:**

Reader's Score: 10

Sub

- 1. 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.**

Strengths:

The applicant stated, "MCPSA deeply values encouraging members of under-represented groups to apply for the Director of Governance position, which will directly work on this project. In fact, with non-CSP funding, MCPSA has hired a consultant that specializes in outreach to members of underrepresented groups to lead the search for this position and to conduct an anti-bias training for our staff." (E53) The values and actions of this applicant will help build inclusiveness and promote underrepresented groups.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

- 2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.**

Strengths:

The qualifications and experience of the project director is exactly what is needed. The applicants qualifications are stated on page e44. The project director "has experience managing complex new initiatives funded through federal grants." (E44). The experience of this project director will provide the leadership to accomplish all grant goals and objectives.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

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

Strengths:

The staff has a lot of useful experience and expertise to complete the project as described on pages (e53-56).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/12/2022 02:31 PM