

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

Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Louisiana Department of Education (S282A230003)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	29
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	14
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	31
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	12
Sub Total	100	86
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	3
Sub Total	3	3

Total

110

96

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - State Entities - 1: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Louisiana Department of Education (S282A230003)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale;

Strengths:

The application includes relevant Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) (pp.11-12), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (p.12), and journal article evidence in support of the Louisiana Public Charter Schools Program (LPCSP) project design, as well as local longitudinal support efforts (i.e., Reimagine Schools Initiative p.15). The applicant makes a solid case that the proposed project activities will “work to cultivate pipelines of charter school developers” (p.15), which will have greater impact than solely focusing on establishing schools. LDOE’s program will develop deeper charter school capabilities for the state at large, beyond the New Orleans area.

Weaknesses:

The applicant’s expansion efforts include rural areas, but the applicant did not provide data regarding rural Louisiana schools as part of the project rationale. The applicant could strengthen the proposal and the proposed work by adding detail regarding subgrantee application weighting or prioritization of new charters designed to serve students from struggling schools, rural schools, and areas with limited school choice.

Reader's Score: 4

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 project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; and

Strengths:

The applicant includes objectives that are measurable and feature performance measures that will ensure annual reporting, qualitative (i.e., PM 1.1, PM 2.8, , PM 3.1-3.5), and quantitative (i.e., PM 1.4, PM 2.1-2.7) data (pp.16-18). The objectives and measures align well with the logic model, and the measures are tenable, straightforward, and appropriate given the challenges that the proposed project is designed to ameliorate. The objectives and measures are carefully linked; the applicant ensures that project initiatives are held accountable by including performance measures that explicitly link participation in these activities (i.e., the Excellence in Authorizing Fellowship) with expectations of subgrantee success (PM 3.5, p.18).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entity program

Strengths:

The applicant notes the high ambition of the proposed work citing specific data regarding Objective 1 and "growth...stagnat[ion]" of charter schools across the state and Objective 2 and enrolling and meeting the needs of "educationally disadvantaged students." Objective 3 focuses on "enhance[ing] the quality of charter school authorizing across Louisiana" by "grounding all Louisiana authorizers in national best practices" and "encourage[ing] collaboration between local authorizers and the LDOE". (pp.18-21) Concomitantly, the LDOE intends to maintain flexibility, differentiate subgrantee application processes, balance ambition with the realities facing students and educators in these communities, and work to 'level the playing field' in terms of subgrantee awards.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand and need, and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants

Strengths:

The applicant provides ample data demonstrating the need for charter school growth in rural areas and sufficient explanation for both the number and distribution of the subgrantee awards (7 pages, pp. 21-28). LDOE's intention to hire additional staff members to aid recruitment and capacity-building efforts across the state is well-reasoned and realistic, given the lack of charter growth heretofore in areas beyond New Orleans. The state is well-positioned to expand charter schools from a legislative standpoint, since the state recognizes multiple criteria for charter school creation, and clearly supports charter authorizers through multiple state laws, further ensuring adaptability of current practice to other areas of the state.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides an insufficient explanation regarding the "up to [REDACTED] amount (confined to one 8-line paragraph on p.28). Additional information regarding subgrantee award applicant budget building as well as clarification regarding how residual funds would be used should subgrantees request less than the maximum amount allowed, would strengthen the application and the proposed project. Further detail regarding how LDOE plans to transfer (current practice) in urban settings to (intended future practice) in small and rural settings, would have strengthened this area of the application as well.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program and improve education results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a well-developed plan for awarding subgrants that includes baseline requirements or “thresholds” for applicants in the areas of school quality, authorizer approval, and including certified teachers in application authoring. These stipulations help to ensure grounded, realistic charter proposals, anchored by educational best practices that target the needs of the communities that they intend to serve. The applicant also provides detail on “publicizing the availability of subgrants”, the “subgrant application process”, and the “application review” process (pp.28-38). The applicant offers differentiated applications for schools serving incarcerated youth, students at-risk of dropping out, educationally disadvantaged youth, and new and extant charter operators. The inclusion of capacity interviews in the subgrantee review process ensures that a cross-section of school and administrative staff have the opportunity to represent and discuss the vision for the proposed charter school. During the review process, equity of access has been addressed by providing support to peer reviewers to ensure equal access to the peer review opportunity.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not provide a scoring rubric, weighting insights, or scales to indicate the differences between subgrantees receiving funding, and those not receiving funding. Without some evidence of these tools, the fidelity of the application and approval process is difficult to discern.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan**1. The State entity's plan to--**

Reader's Score: 31

Sub**1. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;****Strengths:**

The applicant provides a well-developed monitoring plan that details how CSP subgrant monitoring dovetails with extant state monitoring systems (pp.38-40). Pre-opening checklists, on-site visits within nine weeks of opening, and annual visits ensure feet on the ground to verify that charters start on and continue down a path to success.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide detail regarding monitoring timelines beyond the management plan outline level. Additional information on “as-needed” school visits (bottom of p. 39) would help clarify this potentially important monitoring component. LDOE could further strengthen the application by providing job descriptions for monitoring staff planned for hire post-award. These staff members would play an important role in the success of the LPCSP. Additional insights into the expected skills and experiences of these individuals would help to clarify the vision for their assignments.

Reader's Score: 8

2. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies;

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant discusses how state data systems (i.e., the state's EdLink and JCampus, or EdLink and PowerSchool) are aligned and synced to ensure that schools do not receive duplicative requests for information, both as they complete subgrantee applications and post-award, as a part of monitoring. The applicant also notes that timelines for applications and monitoring have been adjusted based on feedback from existing charter schools (pp.40-42). The applicant shows a substantial attention to detail and professionalism by demonstrating respect for administrators and educators by taking steps to ensure efficient data management systems.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

3. Provide technical assistance and support for--

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State;**

Strengths:

The applicant states that technical assistance will begin with pre-award onboarding and continue throughout the duration of funding, with subgrantees receiving access to statewide support systems designed to deliver support across a wide variety of management and instructional topics (pp.42-49). The Louisiana Authorizer Toolkit is an innovative solution to ensure that authorizers have access to solid examples of efficacious policy to help guide local policymaking, financial checklists, contracts guidance, etc. (p.48) to build on extant state experience and knowledge. Communities of practice will help ensure peer-to-peer communications and sharing. Also, attendance at national conferences will help to ensure access to cutting edge practice and grounded approaches to problem solving (p.49).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

4. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State; and

Strengths:

The applicant notes that an annual webinar, public hearings, and the annual Parent & Family Engagement (PAFE) surveys will be used to solicit input from parents and community members at existing and prospective schools (pp. 50-51). Subgrantees will be required to document both support and opposition to the charter school and submit these as part of the selection process, as well as to improve the schools as they move forward. Documenting opposition is a particularly useful endeavor, since keeping concerns on the table for resolution as the programs mature is critical to building and sustaining community support.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not provided a clear timeline for public input activities or clear steps regarding how the collected comments and data from these activities will be used to improve schools. It is unclear what role, if any, will be provided for community and advocacy groups in the subgrantee application process or the post-award monitoring systems.

Sub

Reader's Score: 3

5. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law.

Strengths:

The applicant cites state laws concerned with charter schools to document the state's commitment to charter flexibility. The applicant notes that the state has adopted a "an alternative authorizing framework for schools with innovative models designed to serve the state's highest-need students" (pp.51-52). Differentiation at the application phase is indicative of the state's recognition that communities have differing needs and concerns and will therefore require differing solutions and approaches. Addressing these legislatively ensures that authorizers and subgrantees continue to innovate and collaborate with communities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 12

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 management plan includes brief descriptions of each proposed staff member and cites staff resumes available in Appendix B, a management plan outline, and an external technical assistance provider--the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) (pp.52-57). Currently included staff demonstrate sufficient experience, training, and skills to assist in administering the grant should the award be received. The management plan clearly delineates organization-level responsibilities.

Weaknesses:

The management plan lacks sufficient detail to discern specific project milestones, explicit responsibilities beyond the organizational level, and deadlines beyond season and year (pp.54-57). The supplies line in Table 2 of the Budget Narrative is zeroed out across all five years, but contains a total of \$ [REDACTED]. Little information is available regarding prospective hires for the new grant-related positions responsible for recruitment and monitoring.

Reader's Score: 7

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

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant describes the groups and individuals responsible for collecting and receiving project data used for continuous improvement as well as the role this information will play in improvement efforts (pp.58-59). The Management Council, which includes “representatives from each relevant LDOE office” meeting monthly, should prove an effective and innovative strategy to ensure that LDOE’s resources and expertise are focused in support of the grant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

3. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The applicant provides documentation on roles and responsibilities for key personnel that is commensurate with the project’s ambitious objectives (p.59).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

a. Allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency (LEA) to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the State ; or

b. In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the State has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Note: In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing the appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

Please specify whether they meet (a) or (b) and clearly explain why in the strengths.

(0 or 1 points)

Strengths:

The applicant states that both the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and local public-school boards may authorize charters (p.1. and p.3), thereby meeting this competitive priority under condition “A”.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant cites state law that requires charter school per pupil funding "equal to or no less than" that received by the school's district. The applicant also notes that funding release dates, minimum foundation program (MFP) tables, and EDGAR equitable funding requirements are coordinated and maintained by the LDOE Finance Office (pp.3-4).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides data-based evidence of gains made by New Orleans Public Schools following the district's adoption of the Recovery School District all charter model. These gains far outpace the state's gains over the same period (pp.4-7).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a State that provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) Funding for facilities
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition
- c) Access to public facilities

- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant notes that this competitive priority is met in four ways, including fair market value leases or purchases of vacant school facilities, etc. (p.7).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

(up to 3 points)

Strengths:

The applicant provides multiple examples of state laws, support frameworks and standards, and programming evidencing the state's charter school foci on serving at-risk students (pp.7-11).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 3

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Louisiana Department of Education (S282A230003)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	29
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	14
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	31
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	10
Sub Total	100	84
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	2
Sub Total	3	2

Total

110

93

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - State Entities - 1: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Louisiana Department of Education (S282A230003)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale;

Strengths:

Louisiana has access to a substantial research base of evidence generated by an extensive set of Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) reports focusing on the urban charter environment in Louisiana. The research documents the development of the state's charter environment over a thirteen-year period, providing a strong longitudinal analysis of the impact of charter schools on improving student achievement. (e11-12)

The logic model supports the focus on building a state-wide approach to the CSP implementation, utilizing already-developed strategies in authorizing, accountability, and technical assistance (e15) by matching the current interventions to increase the numbers of students with access to a charter option and increasing the achievement of economically-disadvantaged students.

The logic model provides long-term objectives that involve specific types of charter schools defined in state regulations. (e15)

Weaknesses:

The research base for rural charter development in Louisiana did not include any Louisiana data (e11-12) but relied on only national research. Since Louisiana has implemented a CSP initiative, data and outcomes would have strengthened their new application.

From the logic model, it was unclear how the focus would be established for increasing rural district involvement. The logic model provides long-term objectives that involve specific types of charter schools, but this will not assure an increase in rural development. (e14) The logic model does focus on existing structures like the Charter Board Governance Program and the Authorizer Fellowship but does not include any new approaches that are specifically defined to address rural capacity.

Reader's Score: 4

Sub

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 project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; and

Strengths:

Specific, measurable outcomes are tied to the percentage of applicants and subgrant recipients establishing schools across four defined school categories that focus on areas of identified need. (e17)

Objective 2, focusing on improving outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, is rigorous, and establishes high expectations that focus on academic achievement. (e17)

Examining existing authorizer strategies, including the Community of Practice, and the Louisiana Authorizer Toolkit-- the applicant provides measurable outcomes that support using these tools to enhance charter development. (e18)

Weaknesses:

Establishing only three Objective Performance Measures that focus on access, academic improvement, and authorization, with only one measure being reported annually, seems insufficient to measure the outcomes. Especially since two of the areas are implementing existing strategies. (e18)

None of the performance measures focus specifically on rural charter growth. (e16-18)

Reader's Score: 4

3. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entity program

Strengths:

The performance objectives are clearly defined and measurable. They focus on building charter access, increasing student academic outcomes, and utilizing authorizing practices. (e17-18)

Utilizing grant funding to enhance the current staff at LDOE to provide services that assist in the recruitment of new operators as well as the expansion to multiple application cycles annually, are the implementation strategies that should support an increase in applications. (e19)

In the area of authorization, the plan is to operationalize and implement the previously established set of authorizing standards and principles to support an increase in charter applications. (e20)

Weaknesses:

Louisiana's recent experience across the charter sector, with a trend of fewer charter applications and lower academic outcomes, is true across the nation. This proposal does not identify new innovative strategies to address these evidenced declines. The approach is strengthening existing initiatives (i.e., the authorizing strand) by incentivizing participation. There was a lack of new innovative approaches that would be designed and added to the current portfolio to enhance the involvement of operators. (e19)

LDOE has provided an implementation design that supports existing practices and does not clearly define new innovations, enhancements of current practices, or specific actions to address performance deficits. For example, objective 2, focusing on improving outcomes for educationally -disadvantaged students, is rigorous but is based on

Sub

existing data systems that are collected annually as part of accountability monitoring. It does not include new strategies around the use of data, or a well-defined expansion of technical assistance for schools that do not meet these benchmarks annually. (e17, e20)

Reader's Score: 4

4. The extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand and need, and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants

Strengths:

LDOE presents a compelling, data-rich analysis of the current charter environment in their state by providing trend data on the historical development, saturation in urban areas, and the legislative mandates with the Recovery School District (RSD) funding support. These three developments have had a major impact on the demand and need within the state. (e21-28)

LDOE has provided a thoughtful analysis of the growth opportunities in their state's charter sector. Their use of data analysis to define specific locales where school options are needed provides evidence of their extensive planning and identification of charter growth opportunities. (e21)

The data analysis focused on establishing districts--with current schools identified across their four need categories. The comprehensive data set allowed for the number of schools in the state category, traditional schools, and current charters. This data design allows for easy analysis of saturation by charters, the number of existing opportunities, and where the most need is--based on the lowest accountability category. It is adaptable over time and lends itself to considering the absence of charters, the "seeding" of new charters with an expansion strategy of expanding to additional sites over the five years of the grant, and where saturation could be an issue. (e22-27)

The comprehensive analysis on rural charter growth was research-based (e23-24) and supported by Louisiana-specific data (e24), which identified a significant need to address the needs of the 200,000 Louisiana rural students. The research identified significant opportunities, based on disaggregated data, within the 17 districts that are 100% rural and have either zero or one charter option, (e24) and within the areas with no-cost choice seat availability. (e25-27) The analysis provided strategic growth priorities that can be used with the grant-funded recruitment plan. (e16)

The projected number of subgrant awards per grant year is well-supported by the current evidence provided. The small number of charters in year 1 allows for a longer runway for developing new sites for charter growth. LDOE supports this rollout plan with its commitment to having the Executive Director of New School Strategy provide direct outreach to 50 charter entities representing local and national organizations. (e16)

Compared to traditional schools, the documented progress of economically-disadvantaged students in charters serves as an incentive for the expansion of charters into high-poverty areas that have not historically had that option. The presentation of this data enhances the LDOE initiative to identify and grow charter schools in underserved areas of the state. (e27-28)

Weaknesses:

The proposal would have been strengthened with specific growth targets identified by the categories identified in the analysis of sites for charter development. (e21-26)

The goal of opening, expanding, or replicating 25 schools with 5,000 students (e13) is not a rigorous outcome,

Sub

based on the extensive research and history of charter schools in this state, the recruitment plan (e17), and the budget request.

Reader's Score: 17

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program and improve education results for students.

Strengths:

One significant area of improvement defined during the proposal development is a comprehensive review of the application process (e32-38) that includes an eligibility review before the invitation to apply for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approval. (e38) One of the major changes in the grant process is using competitive preference points based on priorities, including serving rural areas, Academically Unacceptable Schools (AUS), 'D' or 'F' campuses, areas of limited choice, and inclusion of innovative pathways. Establishing competitive preferences is a significant enhancement to ensure grantees address the areas of need identified by the LDOE. (e33)

LDOE's application peer review process and procedures are well-developed and documented. It incorporates best practices (e37) of establishing inter-rater reliability training, stipends for service, and the incorporation of a Capacity Interview, which allows the peer review team to have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, which is a new addition to the application process. (e36)

LDOE utilized the proposal development process to review current practices and identify areas needing revision in the application process and with state regulations. The first area of improvement is based on addressing specific procedures that have impacted the application approval process. The proposal removes the requirement of having approval from BESE for expansion to new grade levels, and growing enrollment beyond 120%, supporting growth and replication. This state requirement has impeded the growth of charter schools. With funding, this proposal will allow flexibility to address that issue, support growth (beyond 120%), and provide options for new grade-level additions. (e29)

Another innovation is establishing differentiated charter applications for new, versus existing, operators. This procedure change has defined the components necessary to meet the state regulations and will eliminate duplicative requirements to streamline the process. Differentiated applications will enhance the likelihood of successful charters submitting replication proposals. (e29-30)

LDOE examined and enhanced its publicity of the CSP grant opportunity--utilizing partnerships and the regular state-wide educational communication systems. LDOE will integrate announcements into the application, as well as offer virtual training and technical assistance to support the specifics of the CSP grant process. (e31)

Weaknesses:

The application process--with specific benchmarks that must be met before being invited to prepare a proposal--has criteria included that might limit the number of out-of-state, national, or new CMOs from applying for the CSP grant. (e32-33)

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 31

Sub

1. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;

Strengths:

LDOE has established specific procedural requirements for the staff monitoring the grants and subgrantees. The staff training based on job assignments is designed to ensure monitoring accuracy. Subgrantees have a set of monitoring, reporting, and technical assistance requirements that the grantees are required to meet.

LDOE provided specific examples of subgrantee data reporting and frequent monitoring visits, including pre-opening task lists, during the first nine weeks of operation and annual visits. LDOE provides the monitoring, fiscal, and data plans and documents in the appendix.

Weaknesses:

The established system of monitoring results in high-stakes outcomes. Actions listed as outcomes include posting notices of monitoring results on the school website. LDOE did not provide adequate details regarding the monitoring process and the specified criteria that are examined. It was difficult to assess how the defined sanctions could lead to suspension or termination of the grant. (e40) .

Reader's Score: 8

2. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies;

Strengths:

LDOE's leadership in assuring high-quality outcomes from the CSP grant was evidenced by their grants management procedures and data system, which have components that minimize duplication of effort and streamline seamless data acquisition from state sources via EdLink, the state's student and employee data system. Technical assistance is provided monthly to ensure user effectiveness for data access and review.

LDOE's detailed review of their procedures and processes, which was part of the development of this proposal, also resulted in critical changes in operations, like the modification of the timeline approved by BESE, that allows for a full planning year based on a realignment of the grants cycle. The School System Support Calendar has included charter notifications, allowing for seamless delivery of deadlines and information.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. Provide technical assistance and support for--

Sub

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State;**

Strengths:

LDOE's technical assistance components are aligned to support each component of the grant process, specifically focusing on assisting eligible applicants in grant acquisition. Communication strategies are systematically designed to allow for the recording of all training and targeted technical assistance (TA) around programmatic and fiscal components, with the distribution of videos and slide presentations posted on the department's website. TA does not end there but is a built-in component of the monitoring and documentation of grant operations. (e42-43)

The role of four other LDOE departmental divisions is actively involved and responsible for providing information and technical assistance to supplement the CSP subgrantee's knowledge of state-wide initiatives and opportunities, to enhance their service delivery. (e43-44)

The long history of authorizing support with its partnership with NACSA, is highlighted as one of three performance measurements of the grant. There are specified comprehensive outcomes to sustain the progress in assuring coverage for all areas of the state via Authorizing 101 (e46), expansion of the number of authorizers who have participated in the Fellows opportunity (e47), development of a set of Principles & Standards, and an Authorizer Toolkit (e 48). These outcomes will be supported by a competitive micro-grant process and funding to support participation in the NACSA's annual conference. (e49)

LDOE did present a new initiative that will be implemented by creating a Charter Board Governance Program. It is designed to have three distinct pathways focusing on systematic quarterly engagement, implementation of training modules, and board support--with the completion of a needs assessment and strategic board retreats. (e45-46)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 10

- 4. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State; and**

Strengths:

LDOE approaches input from parents and other community members with a dual focus on existing and prospective charters, enhancing the type of data collected and the systematic data collection over time. (e50-51)

There are multiple data collection activities, including the involvement of the Office of School Choice, in securing parental input via webinar format that provides information that is shared with local authorizers and LDOE staff. (e50) LDOE presented multiple examples of other data sources from public hearings mandated by statute, the annual Parent & Family Engagement (PAFE) surveys, evidence included in BESE charter applications, and CSP-required public hearings. (e50-51)

Weaknesses:

The voice of community members was not well defined. There were no specific indicators of access to community-based input based on systematic data collection. (e50-51) There was no evidence of the involvement of advocacy groups representing parents, community members, or students or their involvement in the implementation and operation of charter schools in the state.

Sub

Reader's Score: 3

5. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law.

Strengths:

Louisiana's charter laws are incredibly supportive of the development of charter opportunities. The flexibility addressed operational, instructional, and budgetary autonomy, based on specific legislation that provides exemptions. (e51) LDOE provided the specific legislative citations and described the flexibility, in great detail, provided to charter schools.

The legislation is comprehensive providing governance, budget, employment, and policy exemptions. LDOE must ensure charters have flexibility. LDOE provided an example of the alternative authorizing framework developed recently to support charters that serve high-need, at-risk students, as an example of flexibility. (e52)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

Reader's Score: 10

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 staffing of the grant is entirely by employees of the Louisiana Department of Education (e 53-54), and the resumes for four staff were provided in Appendix B. (e1-13) Three new staff positions are allocated to support the current staff with differentiated duties.

There is an interdepartmental Management Council that meets monthly to ensure project compliance with the grant requirements. (e52)

There was a listing of organizational partners included in the management plan as responsible parties, and all three of those organizations provided letters of support, giving validity to their roles. (e54-55 & Appendix C)

The proposal included a management plan which consisted of a listing of forty-one descriptors of activities to be managed and accomplished during the five-year grant cycle. (e55-57)

Sub

Weaknesses:

It would have been helpful for the job descriptions for the three new staff positions that are to be added to implement the grant had been included in the appendix along with the resumes of current staff. Their combined work focuses on the new strategies of the proposal which is not clearly defined compared to the previous outcomes. A justification and list of tasks for these positions would have strengthened the proposal.

The management plan was provided but limited in scope, with only general dates in the timeline. Forty-one descriptors of activities did not provide sufficient details but merely reported actions/assignments. (e55-57)

The management plan did not identify a staff person responsible for any activities. Instead, it used acronyms for departments at LDOE or partner organizations defined as the responsible parties. The management plan did not adequately define the activities. There was a lack of specificity, with no milestones listed that included measurable outcomes delineated in the written proposal. Most of the dates included were quarterly, listed annually, and ongoing, without further clarification of a specific (due date or activity timeline). (e55-57)

Reader's Score: 6

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

Strengths:

The LDOE described the interdepartmental Management Council team that listed participating departmental representatives. There is a defined structure for the Council, with the project director serving as the chair of the Council. He establishes the agenda, prepares documents to communicate data from the field, and shares change in implementation and programmatic modifications with the Council. The purpose of the meetings was defined in terms of general elements that would be discussed, with the outcome of assuring coordination of upcoming deadlines. (e58)

The grant management structure includes formal internal feedback at specific intervals to coincide with the Annual Performance Review. (e58)

While there was no mention of a process to ensure the examination of continuous improvement as a focus of the Management Council, the Management plan does have one indicator that indicates in Winter 2024/25 annually, there would be an activity to determine continuous improvement needs by the Office of School Choice. (e57)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 3

3. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

Strengths:

The time commitments of the new staff positions that are to be hired with grant funds include three positions Executive Director of New School Strategy and Director of New School Strategy & Support (75%FTE then 100% years 2-5), and the Director of Charter Accountability (50% FTE to be hired in year 3) will provide support for the initiative. (e59)

Sub

Weaknesses:

The project director's position has a limited time commitment of only 20% to oversee the entire grant initiative, which is not sufficient to fully meet the needs of this proposed project. All four staff members assigned to the grant have less than 50% FTE time commitments. Combined with all four project team members' time commitments, it is just 1.45% FTE. The duties defined in this proposal need support and supervision to ensure success. (e59)

Table 8 is a reference to document the adequacy of the staff assignments. Still, that table does not list any of their positions, only mentioning the Office of School Choice (OSC) or the LDOE, and thus lacks the specificity needed to fully evaluate the time commitment adequacy. (e54-57)

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

- a. Allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency (LEA) to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the State ; or**
- b. In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the State has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.**

Note: In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing the appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

Please specify whether they meet (a) or (b) and clearly explain why in the strengths.

(0 or 1 points)

Strengths:

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) provided the specific legislative act that establishes the authorization process for all charter schools in the state. (e1) It identifies that the power of authorization lies with the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and local school boards.

Evidence of involvement in establishing a high-quality authorizing process is highlighted by the long-standing partnership with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA). Authorizing in Louisiana has been impacted by NACSA's expertise and leadership, resulting in the creation of a written charter authorizing plan, a fellowship program designed to provide systematic training on best authorizing practices and procedures, with the outcome of the establishment of a structured authorizing community of practice. (e1-2)

One specific outcome was data that documented the involvement in the authorizing community of practice, with the representation of current authorizers responsible for more than 95% of all charter students in the state. (e2)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

Louisiana has a strong state statute defining the equitable distribution of tax dollars, assuring per-pupil funding equal to the amount the local school district receives in local and state funding. (e3)

The support for new charters with a defined policy on preliminary allocations, based on enrollment statistics, further supports the charter schools with available funding to meet the requirements of a new school. Provisions for federal funding distribution are the responsibility of LDOE. To assure an equitable distribution, the LDOE has provisions for federal funding that consider the unique needs of charter startups. (e4)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

LDOE presented three compelling sets of longitudinal evidence of the dramatic growth in school improvement indicators, with the comparison of 2005 to 2022 data sets in New Orleans (61% failing compared to 17%) compared to the state (13% failing compared to 10%) based on failure rates of "F" on the state letter grade system,(e5) graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. (e6)

LDOE provided specificity regarding identifying charter schools' "best practices" with the Reimagine School Systems Initiative. (e15) This is evidence that the LDOE provided opportunities for the charters to share with the failing schools the best practices at the Louisiana Teacher Leader Summit and actively facilitate the learning opportunities around specific strategies and innovations that would address the needs of their students. (e15-16)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a State that provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) Funding for facilities
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition
- c) Access to public facilities
- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

LDOE documented the strong legislative support that addresses charter school facility access and funding guarantees, with four specific laws focusing on 1) first access to vacant school facilities, 2) access in the Recovery School District (RSD) to facilities without lease payments for the use of those facilities, 3) requirements that local school boards must provide a pro-rata share of any facility funding, regardless of the funding source, and 4) charters are eligible to access tax-exempt bonding financing via the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority. These four strategies effectively level the playing field for charters to access equitable funding opportunities and build strong long-term stability to enhance the growth potentials of charters. The strength of these legislative requirements makes Louisiana's facility funding equitable and fair. (e7)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

(up to 3 points)

Strengths:

LDOE provided specific examples of how the state has systemically designed a model to support charters focusing on at-risk populations. One of the strengths of the state's approach is that the commitment is written into the Charter School Demonstration Program Laws. This approach provided a consistent focus to produce a variety of policy initiatives, professional development training, identification and use of specialized vendors, and programmatic enhancements. Due to the variety of legislation-supported interventions, there is not one model, but a set of models that communities can match to their specific at-risk student needs. It includes the traditional incarcerated youth, dropout prevention and recovery, internship-focused programs, wrap-around support services, trauma-informed care options, credit recovery, and K-16 learning opportunities.

What makes the approaches in Louisiana dramatically different is the policy implications, as evidenced in the development of at-risk alternative accountability frameworks. (e9) This provides the collaborative development of a new set of standards for charters, focusing on the specific at-risk student outcomes, based on their model design. The second

approach that strengthens their at-risk service delivery is using vendors that can provide early warning systems to assist schools in identifying issues, allowing interventions to be initiated before the problem results in the loss of student learning. (e9) The third focus that sets LDOE's approach apart is the partnership with other state entities, such as the Louisiana Workforce Commission, which supports the Fast Forward Program focusing on apprenticeships. (e10) The fourth focus is on establishing strong pathways for high-performing students and developing K-14 and K-16 programs like Tops University.(e11) These are all excellent models developing into a comprehensive service delivery system for disadvantaged and at-risk students.

Weaknesses:

While the programmatic initiatives provide a rich set of opportunities, it was not apparent how prevalent the interventions are across the state. There was no description of how the current innovative models are being seeded into areas of poverty and rural areas, or how prevalent the programs are in terms of students served. (e9-10) There is a need for a clear set of data on the outcomes produced by these interventions, and the number of students served, to ensure access is not determined by the geographic locale of the student.

Reader's Score: **2**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/23/2023 05:10 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2023 05:32 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Louisiana Department of Education (S282A230003)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	29
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	12
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	32
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	12
Sub Total	100	85
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
Competitive Preference Priority 1		
1. CPP1	1	1
Sub Total	1	1
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
Competitive Preference Priority 2		
1. CPP2	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
Competitive Preference Priority 3		
1. CPP3	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
Competitive Preference Priority 4		
1. CPP4	2	2
Sub Total	2	2
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
Competitive Preference Priority 5		
1. CPP5	3	3
Sub Total	3	3

Total

110

95

Technical Review Form

Panel #13 - State Entities - 1: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Louisiana Department of Education (S282A230003)

Questions

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:

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

1. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale;

Strengths:

The applicant presents a high-quality research-based rationale which demonstrates that increased access to high-quality public-school choices in both urban and rural communities drive student achievement outcomes (p11-13). The Logic Model described in the application clearly articulates the short-, medium- and long-term objectives; inputs; activities; outcomes; and impacts of the proposal over the course of the CSP grant period (p13-14). The application includes an in-depth plan for project implementation that will utilize appropriate methodological tools to ensure the successful achievement of project objectives (p14).

Weaknesses:

The applicant presents an in-depth discussion on the lack of access to high-quality public school choice options in rural communities. The application states that 85% of subgrant applicants and 75% of subgrant recipients will be located in either (a) a district where multiple schools have been designated as AUS 3+, (b) a 'D' or 'F' rated district, (c) a rural district, or (d) a district where free public school choice options are currently limited. The proposal does not present a deliberate strategy for rectifying the lack of school choice opportunities in rural district.

Reader's Score: 4

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 project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; and

Strengths:

The applicant presents clearly articulated objective performance measures that are related to the project outcomes as set forth in the Logic Model (p14, 16-18). Each objective performance measure concisely describes the intended outcome criteria for success, when that activity will be completed, how the impact will be measured, and includes at least one measure that can be reported on annually.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Sub

Reader's Score: 5

3. The ambitiousness of the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program carried out under the CSP State Entity program

Strengths:

The applicant outlines a robust set of goals and performance objectives that are both ambitious and attainable (p16-18). Each performance measure (PM) is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. The logic model is informed by both research findings that suggest the goals and objectives are achievable, and that students will benefit from its implementation.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand and need, and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants

Strengths:

The applicant presents compelling statistical evidence with respect to the demand and need for the proposed project across the State (p21-28). The demand and need for at least 5,000 high-quality public-school seats reflected in the application clearly justify the proposed 25 subgrants that will be awarded to new, replicating, or expanding schools over the project period (p22).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address a proposed average subgrant award amount. It is impossible to determine the extent to which the average subgrant award amount is supported by evidence of the need of applicants without this information.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants

1. The likelihood that the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the program will meet the State entity's objectives for the quality charter school program and improve education results for students.

Strengths:

The applicant presents a comprehensive subgrant solicitation and evaluation process to ensure a high likelihood that subgrantees will meet the State entity's objectives for the high-quality charter schools and improve education results for students (p28-38). The applicant presents extensive information about how the applicant will publicize the availability of subgrants, the requirements, and the process. The applicant describes in detail how the subgrant process will support diverse charter models, including models that serve rural communities, as well as prioritize communities with high concentrations of schools that have earned Academically Unacceptable Status (AUS) for at least three consecutive years. The manner in which subgrant applications are assessed, including the peer review process, is sufficiently discussed in the application (p36-38).

Weaknesses:

A scoring rubric for evaluating subgrant applications is mentioned (p37), but the weighting factors with respect to the Project Narrative Components or explicit criteria are not specified. The applicant does not discuss minimum qualification scores subgrant applicants must earn to be eligible for charter school awards.

Reader's Score: 12

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

1. Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;

Strengths:

The applicant presents a robust range of monitoring activities designed to ensure that all subgrantees are in compliance with the activities of their applications, meeting their project goals, and adhering to federal rules and regulations under the State entity's program (p38-40).

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not demonstrate that they have specific training programs to ensure their monitors have clear and aligned monitoring materials and/or rubrics. The applicant does not state a rationale to justify unannounced school visits (e36).

Reader's Score: 8

2. Work with the authorized public chartering agencies involved to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies;

Strengths:

The applicant presents a comprehensive proposal to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies (p40-42). The applicant will utilize information already in its possession; authorizers, student, and employee data systems; as well as the timeline approved by Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for both application cycles.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. Provide technical assistance and support for--

- i. The eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program; and**
- ii. Quality authorizing efforts in the State;**

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant presents a very comprehensive approach to providing technical assistance and support to eligible applicants receiving subgrants, that begins during the pre-award phase, and extends throughout the project period (p42-46). The applicant describes a plan that details several examples of collaboration between the applicant, subgrantees, outside experts, and key stakeholders to focus on capacity building of the authorizing community (p. 46-49).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 10

4. The State entity's plan to solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of charter schools in the State; and

Strengths:

The application presents clear and concise details on how the applicant plans to solicit input from parents on the implementation and operation of existing and prospective charter schools across the state, throughout the project period (p50-51). The applicant describes a systematic data collection system that include hosting an annual webinar where parents can provide input regarding charter schools in their community and administering annual Parent & Family Engagement (PAFE) surveys to engage parents in the education of their children.

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that all prospective CSP subgrantees will be required to hold public hearings in which they obtain information and feedback about the potential benefit of their school model within the target community but does not sufficiently address mechanisms for soliciting input from members of the community.

Reader's Score: 4

5. The degree of flexibility afforded by the State's charter school law and how the State entity will work to maximize the flexibility provided to charter schools under such law.

Strengths:

The applicant describes in detail how the law establishes an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency (p51-52). The applicant will oversee charter schools in a way that will ensure flexible operation and management, while allowing operators to use evidence-based models as appropriate to their contexts.

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

- 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:**

Reader's Score: 12

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 sufficiently describes a management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks on time and within budget (p52-57). Each of the major tasks have been ascribed timelines, milestones, and assigned responsible parties, which are summarized in a table within the application. The roles and responsibilities of key staff team members are clearly reflected in the application.

Weaknesses:

The applicant's management plan lacks due dates for required reports and events. The names and positions of responsible parties are missing from the Management Plan table (p54-57).

Reader's Score: 7

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents clear and concise details on how the applicant plans to solicit input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of existing and prospective charter schools across the state throughout the project period (p50-51). The plan will include an interdepartmental Management Council composed of representatives across the Louisiana Department of Education that will meet on a monthly basis for ongoing coordination, engagement, and accountability (p58). In addressing continuous improvement, the applicant states that pertinent feedback data will be solicited from key constituencies on a routine and ongoing basis (p58-59).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 3

- 3. The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.**

Strengths:

The time commitments of the project director and other key personnel presented in the proposal are adequate and appropriate to accomplish the specific aim of oversight and administering federal grant programs (p59).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Competitive Preference Priority 1

1. To meet this priority, the applicant must demonstrate that the State--

a. Allows at least one entity that is not a local educational agency (LEA) to be an authorized public chartering agency for developers seeking to open a charter school in the State ; or

b. In the case of a State in which LEAs are the only authorized public chartering agencies, the State has an appeals process for the denial of an application for a charter school.

Note: In order to meet this priority under paragraph (b) above, the entity hearing the appeal must have the authority to approve the charter application over the objections of the LEA.

Please specify whether they meet (a) or (b) and clearly explain why in the strengths.

(0 or 1 points)

Strengths:

The applicant clearly states that the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) is the authorized public chartering agency for their State (p3).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 1

Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Competitive Preference Priority 2

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant cites State law regarding charter schools receiving per-pupil funding that is equal to no less than the per pupil amount received by the school district in which the charter school is located (p3).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Competitive Preference Priority 3

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs.

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant clearly states it is located in a State that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs (p4-7, 16) .The applicant describes how the State partnered with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) to launch the first Excellence in Authorizing Fellowship Program in a step to augment its own internal capacity to conduct high-quality authorizing. The program was developed during the 2022-2023 school year to build the individual and collective capacities of Louisiana school systems to use authorizing best practices, as well as provide fellows with resources, professional development (PD), and collaboration opportunities (p2).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 4 - Competitive Preference Priority 4

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it is located in a State that provides charter schools one or more of the following:

- a) Funding for facilities
- b) Assistance with facilities acquisition
- c) Access to public facilities
- d) The ability to share in bonds or mill levies
- e) The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings
- f) Low- or no-cost leasing privileges

(up to 2 points)

Strengths:

The applicant clearly states that they are located in a State that provides charter schools with funding for facilities, low- or no-cost leasing privileges, the ability to share in bonds, and assistance with facilities acquisition (p7).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority 5 - Competitive Preference Priority 5

1. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, a State entity must demonstrate that it supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through activities such as dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services.

(up to 3 points)

Strengths:

The application clearly states that the applicant has placed a focus on ensuring that charter schools have access to generalized supports for at-risk students in need of dropout prevention, dropout recovery, or comprehensive career counseling services (p9, 52).

Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: **3**

Status: Submitted
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