

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2023 03:57 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Opportunity Trust (S282A230004)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	34
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	15
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	34
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Sub Total	100	98
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

108

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - State Entities - 2: 84.282A

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: The Opportunity Trust (S282A230004)

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: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a well-developed rationale for the project using qualitative data (e29-e30), evidence of community need, and demand, based on existing open seats within the Kansas City and St Louis Public school Districts, and the overall disproportionality of quality public schools for underserved populations within the state, when comparing performance on assessments to existing charter schools and local school districts. (e30) The project plan addresses priorities to include opening sixteen new, expansion, or replication charter schools and adding 5,000 quality seats to the existing 25,000 students already served. The applicant provides comparison data of charter schools to local districts to show success during the 2022 school year in ELA (58% higher) and Math (63% higher) (e27). The logic model presented is research-based and objective one (opening of 16 charter schools with 5,000 seats) has supporting data and findings from the current waitlist and the pipeline of available operators. (e38-39)

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide disaggregated data between St Louis Public Schools or Kansas City Schools to support the learning loss or subgroup gaps to differentiate the quality seats needed in these areas for the project plan time period, as well as the outcome deliverables. (e29)

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 fully-developed performance measures that can be reported on annually. The objective performance measures contain both qualitative and quantitative data to align with the two program objectives of expanding charter school options and seats across the state and strengthening the operation and authorizing practices. Each objective contains actionable outcomes that will yield both short-term and long-term goals in a verifiable format through the collection of data, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. (e33-e34)

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

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 presents a fully-developed plan that provides two different types of objectives that are both ambitious and attainable. The first objective clearly aligns to need and demand, and the applicant demonstrates the attainment by providing explicit enrollment data for existing newly opened schools, and either waitlist or lack of quality option availability. (e30-31) The objective to improve academic performance through charter school operation and authorization is ambitious and attainable as written. The expectation for subgrantees to outperform the local school district, as well as the subgroups served, shows the commitment to providing quality seats. (e34)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 provides a fully-developed plan for the sixteen subgrant awards, the maximum funding allowance of \$ [REDACTED] per award, and the addition of 5,000 seats as final outcome. (e40) The applicant defines the community resources used to determine demand and need for expansion, replications, and new starts, as evidenced by outreach initiatives. (e38). The applicant describes the demand using data from the existing fellowship program to build capacity in launching new leaders to support over 36,000 students in struggling schools (e39). The applicant sufficiently describes the allocation of award funding from baseline to additional increases with specifications. (E41 Table3)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 20

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 describes a fully-developed plan to implement and monitor the CSP program. The review criteria are extensive and detailed. (e42-e48) The multi-faceted approach from application, capacity interview, and oversight is articulated and thoughtful. (e43) The communication process with social media blasts, website publicity, and authorizer email targets, will increase awareness. (e42). The overall application framework from Academics to Pre-Opening Plan allows each subgrantee to produce and align their own plan that will significantly impact underserved students and improve educational outcomes. (e45). Peer reviewer criteria selection is described as part of the overall program. The

applicant creates an Expert Peer Review Working Group (EPRWG) to read, review, and score each subgrant applicant. The collective capacity and knowledge of the EPRWG will help to ensure a subgrantee will be able to execute the state plan, as well as the goals set forth within their own grant application.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a fully-developed plan to ensure monitoring, identify risk, and for the articulation of deficiencies for each subgrant award. Specific timelines are given to mitigate confusion and address unknown factors that may arise between authorizer roles and CSP grant obligations.(Table-5 Monitoring Timeline). Each subgrant is evaluated for ongoing sustainability after conclusion of the grant period.(e52) Additional reporting requirements are added to each subgrantee for transparency such as the Annual Performance Report (APR) and Annual Financial Report (AFR). Both reports display performance and financial alignment to their overall grant objectives and assurance to outcomes.(e52)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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 fully-developed plan to align work of grant management--the commission, authorizers, charter schools, and stakeholders. (e53) The applicant will align timelines to remove duplicative reporting dates and work with entities to submit similar reports rather than require new data or create new reports that are from the same repository of information. (e53) In addition, by adopting best practices from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), all stakeholders can leverage national research and adaptation for technical assistance. (e53-e54). Collaboration and information sharing through communities of practice will enable the project to serve areas of high demand and need. (e54)

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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;**

Strengths:

i: The applicant presents a well-developed plan for technical assistance for subgrantees by providing grants management tools and resources within the identified areas of the leadership development framework and the five competencies. (e56) The specific target areas for technical assistance include rigorous instruction, organizational culture for collaboration, data collection and data-driven decision-making, staff development, and creating and aligning to school mission. (e56-e57). The direct need is determined during the subgrantee application process and tailored accordingly. (e53)

ii: The applicant presents a fully-developed model. The Quality Authorizing Technical Assistance is rooted in the community of practice model, with collaboration and input from NACSA and the commission. A plan is listed for NACSA to complete a needs analysis, review of authorizer evaluations, propose a scope and sequence, and meet quarterly to enhance overall authorizing best practices. (e59)

Weaknesses:

i: The plan for technical assistance ("TA") is outsourced from the grant management vendor. The plan does not provide enough detail in measuring the effectiveness of the TA and how the framework aligns to the overall project outcomes. There is no quantifiable goal or objective to determine the hierarchy or year-over-year detail between the grant monitor, subgrantee, and technical assistance provider.

ii: No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 9

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 proposes a fully-developed community and parent engagement plan. The overall timeline includes project management, outreach, input, collection, review, analysis, and sharing data as programmatic information has been obtained. (e71). The applicant specifically created parent advocacy groups to ensure inequity voices are part of the implementation process (e60). Community and parent input goes beyond just the subgrantee applicants and is part of the state authorizing practice that requires specific documentation. (e61)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Sub

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 plan fully demonstrates the state's flexibility awarded to charter schools within legislation regarding resource allocation. The required charter laws will continue to be followed as it pertains to assessment, criminal background checks, and health and safety--but no additional burdensome mandates will be placed on each of the new schools. The plan allows for the ongoing autonomy and flexibility for innovation. (e63)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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: 15

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 presented a fully-developed management plan, with a clear timeline and milestones that are realistic and will support the two objectives of the CSP grant. (e65-e71) The proposed budget, which is to include subgrants, technical assistance, and admin fees, is reasonable and necessary for the 5-year execution. (OT-budget narrative). The individuals slated to oversee, project manage, or support the project, have adequate experience and qualifications to contribute to success. (e86-e127). Utilizing the applicant's staff for additional support as philanthropic resources is a value-add for the overall outcome of the plan. (e73)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant describes a fully-developed plan to ensure feedback and continuous improvement utilizing surveys, interviews, focus groups, and team members with qualitative research design. Potential enhancements will be distributed for discussion and decisions prior to the next subgrant cycle. Implementation and impact will drive the overall metric before any change is made to the grant application. Each analysis is aligned to the overall objective

Sub

performance measures and guided by the logic model as the continuous improvement lens. (e70)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant presents a fully-developed timetable and execution of commitment for the project director and the key personnel, including their exact percentages of time allocated to the project. The time appears appropriate and adequate to meet the outcomes and measures of the grant. (e73-e74)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 meets this competitive preference priority point as there is a commission who is not a Local Educational Agency ("LEA") allowed to authorize charter schools within the State.

Weaknesses:

No weakness 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 demonstrates a fully-developed plan for equitable funding for charter schools-effective 2022. Bi-partisan support passed the annual funding bill in 2022. (e22)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 demonstrates a fully-developed plan outlining collaboration between the state education leaders, charter school leaders, and public-school leaders. The collective partnerships and collaboration between the traditional public schools and charter schools is evident through the creation of the Consortium Partnership Network. The turn-around of struggling schools utilizes charter autonomy and best practices. In addition, this network is a working group that discusses local challenges and how to be more effective. (e23) The ongoing collaborations between charter partners and public schools provide low-cost access. Improvement processes, data-driven decision-making, and authorizing frameworks are additional benefits to best practices for schools and LEAs. (e24)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 demonstrates a fully-developed plan that showcases the State's support of charter school facility funding opportunities. The State provides funding mechanisms through bond issuance, facility acquisition with local development authorities, low-interest or zero-interest loan programs, public school building leasing at low or zero cost--through covenants with a local district. (e25-e26) All of these lower financing options allow charter school start-ups to begin operations with a flexible or low-cost lease/facility, purchased as they increase enrollment.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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 applicant describes a fully-developed plan. The applicant framework requires subgrantees to specify within their application how they will serve at-risk youth and underserved populations. (e45) In addition, the applicant State charter law allows for a lottery of high-risk students and the requirement of schools to actively recruit dropouts or high-risk students. (e26) The applicant ensures that supports will be in place for existing and new charter schools to build capacity and create plans for success with the targeted populations. (e27)

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

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Status: Submitted

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Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Opportunity Trust (S282A230004)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	35
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	14
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	35
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Sub Total	100	99
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

109

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - State Entities - 2: 84.282A

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: The Opportunity Trust (S282A230004)

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: 35

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant provided compelling details demonstrating the significance for the proposed project. On page e29-30, the applicant provided data demonstrating the academic performance standing as it compares to the surrounding district, which illustrates the positive impact charter schools are having in Missouri. On page e29, the applicant described how funding from this grant will strengthen their ability to provide equitable access to quality charter schools to all students, given the achievement rates within the surrounding district. Page e31 further describes opportunities to support subgrantees with an additional 5,000 charter school seats, as referenced on page e8, which supports a strong rationale for the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

On pages e33-34, the applicant included a comprehensive chart that describes the project objectives, activities, performance measures, and annual performance targets. The objectives and performance targets are consistent with the details described within the project description which demonstrates a well thought out plan to provide support for subgrantees.

The performance measures identified in Table 1, on page e33-34, provide multiple opportunities for collecting various data that would fully support the requirement for qualitative and quantitative data that captures the impact of the project for each objective. The level of details provided within the chart demonstrate consistent opportunities to gain feedback and aid in continuous improvement efforts.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

On pages e35-36, the applicant described a necessity to increase and expand the number of high-quality charter schools, to include an additional 16 schools, for economically disadvantaged students throughout Missouri. Through the expansion efforts, an additional 5,000 high-quality seats will be added to support the vast need for options described by the applicant. The efforts of the project set a high bar, however, the applicant is supported by commitments and support from community partners, as found in the appendices. The Letters of Support strengthen the application and add a greater level of assurance that the project will be fully supported against the ambitious goals of the project. On page e136, the applicant included a commitment of support, as a long-term partner of the applicant, providing financial and technical resources, which will be helpful in accomplishing project objectives.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

On page e37, the applicant described the number of students waitlisted at charter schools throughout Missouri due to the lack of available seats. Healthy waitlists are key indicators that demonstrate the necessity to open and expand schools.

On page e37-38, the applicant included information that described two parent advocacy groups, which were organized to teach parents how to advocate for access to school options. The Letters of Support from these groups provides strong evidence and makes a substantial case for the need of the proposed project.

The applicant included a plan on pages e39 and e40 for awarding allocations for subgrants for existing programs that provide opportunities for fellowships to individuals learning how to launch new schools, which demonstrates the number of resources within the community to increase the number of charter schools within the Missouri communities, and further supports the demand for the proposed project.

In Table 2 on page e40, the applicant included a breakdown of the estimated subgrants to be distributed during the project, which includes both new schools and existing schools, seeking to expand or replicate. The inclusion of existing charter schools assists school operators add access for students in schools with limited seats.

The applicant defined a tiered approach for funding, described on pages e40-41, which allows for subgrantees to receive additional funding based on growth initiatives that serve students who are underserved or providing a Diverse Charter Model, as proposed in their application. These priorities will add greater assurance that funding allocations are equitable for schools serving students with the greatest need.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 20

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 figure on page e42, provides a clearly outlined plan that describes the application process. The applicant also included information that describes how information about the application process will be communicated to potential subgrantees, which will help to ensure a fair opportunity to respond to the opportunity for funding.

On pages e43-49, the applicant review process included a request of a comprehensive review, to include in-person interviews. The thorough process adds a greater level of assurance that the selection process is unbiased, and a thorough vetting allowed for the reviewers to understand the capacity for meeting the project goals required by the grant.

The applicant will utilize external reviewers for the application selection process, which adds a greater assurance that the selection process is fair and unbiased. The applicant states that they will host mandatory training, as referenced on page e47, to ensure that ratings are consistent among reviewers. The external review process is thoroughly described on pages e48-49, which demonstrates a comprehensive plan for implementation and increases the likelihood that the subgrantees selected can fully carry out the program objectives and improve educational results for students.

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not include information that describes how they intend to prioritize models that serve rural communities and the opening of high schools, as described in the selection criteria. A detailed plan that incorporates the opening of rural schools and high schools would strengthen the application and ensure that the applicant is able to afford educational options for all students.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

- 1. The State entity's plan to--**

Reader's Score: 35

Sub

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

Sub

Strengths:

On page e49, the applicant stated that all eligible applicants would be monitored through a comprehensive monitoring plan, outlined in the Monitoring Timeline. A combined approach to monitoring, including desk monitoring and site visits (pages e51-52), is listed within the plan and maximizing the human resources necessary to adequately and consistently monitor schools. The timeline adds a greater level of accountability for the applicant and subgrantees.

In the Appendices, the applicant provided a sample of the monitoring tool that will be utilized with schools. The monitoring tool is comprehensive and will provide insight into multiple aspects of the school performance and compliance.

Pages e50-51 include a plan to engage external firms to aid in programmatic and fiscal monitoring to ensure the alignment of project goals, and CSP objectives. Gaining an outside perspective will be helpful to ensure that documented progress is unbiased. The firms will utilize a monitoring rubric, as described on pages e51, which will ensure consistency with reviews.

Pages e52-53 include an implementation process for corrective actions for subgrantees found to be in noncompliance, or who have other risk assessment factors throughout the project. The corrective action plan is forward thinking and demonstrates the applicant's ability to effectively respond with a process of support for applicants, and to ensure transparency between the applicant and the subgrantee.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

As stated on page e53, the applicant describes a collaborative approach with authorizers to ensure that there is no overlap with reporting requirements. On page e54, the applicant also references the use of the "Community of Practice," to collect and maintain best practices to mitigate the duplication of efforts. Through the various organizations and mechanisms listed on pages e53-54, the applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to monitoring project work in order to ensure that all stakeholders are collaborating to eliminate the duplication of work.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

On pages e54-55, the applicant included a list of resources that will be utilized to provide technical assistance and individual consultations. Providing ongoing technical assistance will help to ensure that continuous improvement

Sub

efforts are implemented throughout the duration of the grant, which adds a greater level of assurance that subgrantees are more likely to meet the project objectives and improve educational results for students.

On pages e56-59, the applicant described technical assistance opportunities that would be available to support leadership development and continue throughout the duration of the proposed project. Subgrantees will greatly benefit from continuous opportunities to gain additional skills in delivering rigorous teaching and learning, developing a clear mission and vision, authentic leadership, driving results through data, strategic talent management, governance training, serving students with disabilities, and quality authorizing efforts. The wealth of opportunities for training and support will help to strengthen the subgrantees ability to implement project activities effectively and ensures that opportunities of support directly support the needs of the sub-applicants.

On page e59, the applicant states that they will solicit the feedback from subgrantees regarding additional materials and topics that are of interest that would better prepare them in their capacities. Stakeholder feedback greatly informs continuous improvement efforts and demonstrates a collaborative approach to administering the program.

On pages e57-e60, the applicant provided strong evidence that describes the disciplinary practices and technical assistance opportunities for potential subgrantees. This information demonstrated the applicant's understanding of current legislation and provides opportunities to share best practices with other schools and organizations.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

On pages e60-61, the applicant describes a plan to engage the parent advocacy groups to gain additional insight from parents and community members. The parent advocacy groups are integral to the success of the Missouri charter schools and would likely receive a greater level of feedback from parents, that can inform the work of the project.

The applicant further explains on pages e71 a schedule for collecting feedback through stakeholder surveys, with year-over-year and quarter-by-quarter results. Given the interests and involvement by the parents and community of charter schools within the Missouri region, it is critical that parents and community members have opportunities to learn about the benefits of charter schools, ask questions, and provide feedback. Without parent and community support, it is unlikely that the project goals will have the intended impact in serving students.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

As referenced on page e62, Missouri embraces the autonomy of charter schools and provides the flexibility in operating charter schools in accordance with the law. Given the significant needs and numbers of underserved

Sub

students, the flexibility to operate innovative schools that are better able to serve families, is an important factor for the successful implementation of the project goals. On pages e62-63, the applicant describes a commitment to conducting technical assistance efforts to demonstrate how flexibilities for charter schools can generate innovation. Efforts by the applicant ensure that charter schools can operate and deliver school options that best meet the needs of students and families within their community.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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: 15

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 included clearly defined responsibilities for key personnel listed on pages 64-65. The responsibilities directly support project objectives, which ensures that adequate resources are allocated to support the project.

A timeline of milestones is included on pages e65-71, and the described activities align to project goals and objectives. The timeline demonstrates consistent implementation efforts, along with designated responsibilities for various milestones. The timeline represents a clearly defined plan to ensure that all key activities are implemented and accomplished in a timeframe that supports the project timeframe.

The budget narrative on pages e349-363, provides extensive information on how grant funds will be utilized in accordance with the proposed project objectives. The explanations of project expenses within the budget narrative and budget categories are aligned with the goals of the Charter School Program (CSP), and demonstrated a thoughtful analysis of the needs for both physical and human resources to ensure the successful implementation of the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Sub

Strengths:

On pages e72-73, the applicant listed the mechanisms for collecting feedback from stakeholders. The applicant described a plan for the use of surveys and focus groups to inform project refinements and work streams. The use of both stakeholder surveys and focus groups serves as important avenues to ensure the stakeholders have an opportunity to share feedback about the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

Pages e64-65, provide a detailed list of key personnel that will be directly responsible for overseeing the proposed project, along with their responsibilities for supporting the project. The resumes included for project personnel are included in the appendices and demonstrate the ability to manage a project of this magnitude within their specified roles.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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 explained that the Charter Public School Commission, a non-LEA, is an independent entity and is empowered to authorize "high-quality" charter schools. The explanation of the entity on page e21 satisfy the requirements to meet this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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 provided information detailing HB 1552 that codified per-pupil funding parity between students attending traditional public schools and children attending public charter schools. On pages e22-23, the applicant provided data that shows Missouri's mandate to authorize payment to the charter school in a timely fashion, which satisfies the requirements for this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

On page e25, the applicant references the requirement to disseminate and integrate best practices in charter renewals. The applicant further describes opportunities to collaborate through the Consortium Partnership Network, where strong practices are shared to support turnaround schools. The collaboration efforts described on page e25, satisfy the requirements for this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

On pages e25-26, the applicant indicates that the State entity provides facility assistance for charter schools through bonds, loans, state financing programs, and access to public facilities. Given the number of options for facility assistance to subgrantees, the applicant satisfies the requirement to fulfill this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

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:

Pages e26-27 clearly describe the disproportionate number of black or Hispanic students served in Missouri Charter Schools. The applicant further describes the large number of students attending charters from economically disadvantaged families. Data included on pages e27-28 demonstrate that considerable strategies are implemented to support at-risk students in Missouri charter schools, which satisfies the requirements to fulfill this priority.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted in this section.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/23/2023 04:27 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2023 05:51 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: The Opportunity Trust (S282A230004)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	35	35
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants		
1. Eligible Applicants	15	14
State Plan		
1. State Plan	35	34
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	15	15
Sub Total	100	98
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

108

Technical Review Form

Panel #12 - State Entities - 2: 84.282A

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: The Opportunity Trust (S282A230004)

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: 35

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant presents a strong case for meeting their objectives through their Logic Model (page e16). In the model, the applicant describes their work that involves creating a pipeline of charter schools, while supporting existing charters in their efforts to expand. Through collaborating with a network of high-impact technical assistance providers, schools, and school leaders will receive support in the most leveraged areas, including leadership, financial management, academics and operations.

Additionally, the applicant intends to award 16 subgrantees. Of these, nine are anticipated to be new schools, two schools are set to replicate, and five schools to expand either through adding grades or adding seats. Each subgrantee will participate in technical assistance training and communities of practice, and benefit from monitoring.

Once given the supports, financial resources, and benefitting from the collaborative efforts of the charter association, as well as the authorizers and partners, the expectation is that the state will see an increase in the number of high-quality public school seats, and as importantly, an increase in the academic performance of students, as a result of attending these schools.

As demonstrated in the Logic Model, the applicant has a well-thought-out process that will connect with new and expanding schools at every step of their process. They will have the financial and intellectual resources that will enable them to avoid common pitfalls and place them in a community in which they are supported by their peers and their grantor. They will have access to numerous resources that will aid them in facing some of the most significant challenges in providing a high-quality education and will be a part of a statewide network that changes the life trajectory for Missouri's students.

The applicant clearly understands the needs of schools and has thoughtfully created a project that will effectively meet their needs, while also creating a safety network for all stakeholders in the charter space, from authorizers to parents and students.

Finally, the applicant has established that the number of partnerships including charter management organizations, key decision makers, the largest state authorizer, and the state charter association, are all poised to assist and support these efforts. Found on pages e10-11)

Sub

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

Reader's Score: 5

- 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:

Within the Management Plan Timeline, the applicant has created a clear timeline starting with quarter four in 2023, that extends to the end of the grant period in 2028. Within the section on Project Management on pages e51-52, the applicant describes numerous ways in which data will be collected from multiple stakeholders including surveys, focus groups, reviewing enrollment data, analyzing formative implementation and impact data, conducting monitoring visits, and issuing and sharing reports. These are all ways in which the applicant can measure performance objectives and ensure they are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data. In addition, the monitoring process within itself will also yield important information for the subgrantees and the applicant.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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 recognizes the significant need to increase the number of high-quality seats for students. Their goal is to increase the number of high-quality seats for disadvantaged students by 5,000 seats. This is a 20% increase over the proposed five-year investment. This is an ambitious goal to grow, replicate, and establish new schools, however, one that based on their track record of success, is attainable. (page e19)

In addition, the applicant has an impressive group of supporters in the political, educational, and professional space to support the work of the grant and the subgrantees. Their track record, ongoing technical assistance, and support systems in place, lean themselves to a successful project.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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:

On page e14, the applicant makes the case for both the high demand and need for additional high quality charter seats in the state. Specifically, it points out that "over 36,600 children statewide are stuck in persistently struggling schools where composite ELA and Math proficiency rates remain in the bottom 10% of the state for at least 3 years

Sub

in a row.” Further, over 80% of those schools are concentrated in two of the major cities in the state. Additionally, of the two new charter schools that recently opened, the number of applicants was twice the number of available seats. This clearly demonstrates both the need and the demand for more seats. These numbers also demonstrate a sense of urgency to address the need for additional seats.

The applicant has determined based on the enrollment increases, grade expansion, and the unique needs of new schools, the amounts each potential subgrantee will likely need. Based on the demand and the process to determine the average subgrant (up to [REDACTED]), this amount is supported.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

Reader's Score: 20

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 has designed a process that mirrors the application process of the CSP from pre-application, to monitoring and accountability.

During the pre-screening process as described on page e27, potential subgrantees are vetted through an eligibility review that includes ensuring there is no history of academic or financial challenges. Additionally, applicants must submit a Letter of Interest. Prior to those steps, the applicant has several measures in place to cast a wide net to ensure broad access for potential subgrantees, as well as pre-webinars and holding office hours to provide information.

Only after they are deemed eligible, are applicants able to submit applications. This is a form of quality control to ensure eligible applicants are aligned and able to meet the state entity’s objectives for the program.

The applicant has a track record of incubating and fostering new schools and uses best practices in school leadership, academics, financial practices, and accountability to ensure their current schools are closing gaps for children. Based on the track record, as noted on page e22, and the robust process in place for the CSP grant, it can be expected that the schools receiving these funds will improve educational outcomes for children.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not place emphasis on high school grades, which is a requirement of this grant.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

- 1. The State entity’s plan to--**

Reader's Score: 34

Sub

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

Strengths:

The applicant lays out a thorough monitoring plan with multiple touch points that will ensure subgrantees are implementing their plans with fidelity, that they are meeting their project goals, and are adhering to federal rules and regulations--as stated on page e33.

The applicant plans to enlist monitoring partners who will assist them in the monitoring process of the subgrantees. From scheduling calls to set monitoring expectations with the subgrantees, to reviewing plans and budget plans prior to approving the plan pre-funding, to a monthly review of subgrantees' spending reports, desk reviews, site visits to providing technical assistance to provide support if there are any findings--the applicant has identified numerous ways to provide ongoing support throughout the grant cycle to ensure progress and compliance. The monitoring plan is both robust and intentional, which can ultimately lead to the success of the schools and their operation.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

On pages e37-38, the applicant discusses ways in which they will guard against duplication of work for the charter schools and authorized public chartering agencies in the following ways.

1. The state entity will work collaboratively with the schools and the authorizing agencies by meeting quarterly to synchronize timelines, work to remove unnecessary burdens on subgrantees, identify areas of overlap between the state's existing application and reporting requirements and the CSP reporting requirements. This will be of greatest benefit to the schools.
2. They plan to create a repository of best practices within the community of practice among authorizers.
3. They will ensure that activities such as holding public hearings are coordinated and each entity has the information shared by the public at each events.

The applicant has established strong relationships with the authorizers, the charter school association, and partners to create a streamlined process to incubate, connect, support and train charter leaders and their schools. This level of partnership is atypical in many states and will prove to benefit the schools and the students they serve, as well as ensure each entity is working in their own respective lanes. Their constant communication, sharing of best practices, and streamlining of activities will guard against duplication and maximize what each entity offers to schools and the charter community.

Sub

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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:

On page e18, the applicant lays out their plans to provide ongoing technical assistance and support for their subgrantees. This includes 100% participation in their community of practice. They will also be connecting subgrantees to one another to share their challenges, opportunities, assist one another in problem solving, and build community. This is a strong form of technical assistance and support, in addition to their formal technical assistance opportunities provided. As importantly, the applicant points out on page e39 that they will identify needs of each subgrantee during the Request for Application process, to determine the specific needs of each school and create individualized capacity building plans that will meet the diverse needs of all students.

On pages e33 and e34, the applicant includes Technical Assistance and training prior to subgrantees receiving approval of their spending plans. Additionally, as part of the monitoring process, once grants are awarded, subgrantees receive technical assistance if they receive findings during their monitoring. The topics and the frequency are determined by the risk assessments.

The applicant has included technical assistance as an ongoing tool starting pre-award, and throughout the process. This includes utilizing a leadership development framework encompassing five competencies: Rigorous Instruction and Learning, Authentic Leadership, Vision and Systems, Driving Results, and Strategic Talent Management. (as found on pages e40-41)

Overall, the applicant places a high priority on high-quality authorizing. Examples of this include a strong partnership with NACSA--utilizing their best practices and collaborating with the state's charter association--all working directly with the state's largest authorizer. Additionally, targeted authorizers will also participate in an authorizer-focused community of practices, enabling similar opportunities with entities executing the same body of work on behalf of charters.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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 expresses a commitment to parent and community voice. One example of such commitment is providing startup funding support and capacity building to parent advocacy groups. In addition, on page e44, the applicant discusses previous practices in which the existing authorizing ecosystem places a heavy emphasis on parent and community engagement. Within this current application, the applicant requires subgrantees to have meaningful engagement and robust analysis of needs of the community. They must use surveys to parents and students at least twice a year and reflect on their findings within the monitoring processes and the communities of

Sub

practices.

The applicant also points out that the state entity requires parent engagement and is an area of focus in two parts of the application. In addition, the authorizers place a heavy emphasis on it, as well in not only requiring engagement, but also in demonstrating need.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

Reader's Score: 5

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:

According to the applicant, state laws provide charters will flexibility from numerous state laws, giving them the flexibility to make decisions based on the needs of their schools and community. Additionally, (page e46) the applicant emphasizes the flexibility charters in the state have to expend resources such as time, people, and money based on the needs of their students.

The way in which the applicant states it will maximize the flexibility provided to charters is by collecting best practices from charters and maintaining a repository that can be accessed by schools, and the partners of this effort. Additionally, subgrantees will receive examples of flexibilities during their technical assistance.

Weaknesses:

Other than collecting and sharing best practices of how existing charters may use their flexibility, it is not clear that the state entity itself has implemented any policies or practices that provide any additional flexibilities for the subgrantees.

Reader's Score: 4

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: 15

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 has created a robust management plan to achieve the objectives of the project. This includes a set of highly qualified and experienced individuals who will manage different portions of the project. This includes a Grant

Sub

Manager, multiple capacity builders, a Monitoring and Compliance Advisor, as well as the leadership of the project, the Executive and Project Director. (page e48)

Throughout the proposal, the applicant describes numerous ways in which they will manage the project effectively. From the vetting process of subgrantees prior to applying for the grant, throughout the monitoring process that provides ongoing support and feedback, regular meetings and check-ins, communities of support, and corrective action plans, the applicant has incorporated multiple fail-safe measures to ensure they achieve the objectives of the plan.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

Reader's Score: 10

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

Strengths:

The applicant conducts surveys, interviews, focus groups, annual assessments of program implementation and impact, and ultimately, an annual internal memo that summarizes the data that documents the program enhancements that are informed by analysis.

Specifically, on page e56, the applicant discusses the use of an implementation assessment and an impact assessment that will measure the key objectives of the CSP program, as well as the impact on enrollment and student performance, to help identify trends, opportunities, and technical assistance needs. All of these tools will assist with evaluation and implementing continuous improvement across the board in the program and in school operations.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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:

On pages e57 and e58, the applicant discusses the key roles and responsibilities of the grant's management team. It is the intention of the applicant for the Grants and Program Manager to commit 100% of their time to overseeing this grant. This will be the only full-time role paid for by the grant. Additional staff and consultants will be paid for by existing grants from philanthropic organizations but will ensure additional staff time. This includes the Project Executive, Project Director, and the Advisors--currently on staff with the Opportunity Trust.

According to the applicant, the project will also benefit from existing infrastructure and the vast support from partners across the state.

Having the Grants and Program Manager commit 100% of their time is essential to the success of this project. There are numerous pieces to manage and will require the expertise and time of a professional who has the capacity to handle human resources, as well as project manage. Based on the resume provided for the potential

Sub

hire, this individual has the expertise and experience to manage a project of this magnitude. Because they are committed 100%, the applicant can also be assured that they will be laser-focused on this project, versus juggling multiple high priority projects at one time.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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 meets priority (a) in that the state has multiple authorizers, including colleges and universities. Moreover, the state created the Missouri Charter Public School Commission, (page e4) leveraging the training and support from NACSA, and it has become the largest authorizer in the state.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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 meets this priority due to their recent passage of HB1522, discussed on page e6 of the application, that provides funding parity between students in traditional public schools and those in public charter schools. Further, the legislation allocated an additional [REDACTED] dollars for charter school students. In addition, on page e7, the applicant notes that the state requires timely payments from school districts. In the event timely payments are not made, the Charter Commission issues payments, then deducts the amount from the next state school aid apportionment from the owing school district. These are strong policies and practices at the state level to ensure equitable funding for charter schools.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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 points out that they have created the Consortium Partnership Network, a network of district public schools that have adopted some best practices from charters, such as their governance models. Also on page e7, the applicant discusses the collaborative where leaders from St. Louis Public Schools and charter public schools meet quarterly to discuss ways to work together as well as common challenges they face. The applicant continues to share several practices in which information is shared by charters to traditional public schools and even requires within their charter renewal documents to include how they have disseminated and integrated best and promising practices and are posted on their website.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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:

On pages e9 and e10, the applicant outlines that in the Missouri law, there are multiple pathways for charter schools to access funding for facilities, including access to bonds and no interest loans. Additionally, the applicant includes examples of local education agencies who work with charters to lease or sell buildings at a low cost.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

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 clearly demonstrates its commitment to serving "at-risk" students through multiple initiatives. First, the state law requires authorizers with at least three charter schools, grant at least one-third of their charters to schools that actively recruit dropouts or high-risk students to their student body. Second, charters have adopted weighted lottery systems that give priority to high-risk students. Third, the majority of students attending charters are students of color. This significantly outpaces the state in its enrollment of students of color in traditional public schools.

It is also important to note that on page e16, the applicant is intentional about supporting "at-risk" students by including a review of potential subgrantees' plans to support them are developed and implemented. The focus on this population is consistent throughout the process from application to implementation.

Moreover, on page e11, the applicant acknowledges that given their experience internally and within their partners, they recognize the unique challenges schools who serve "at risk" students may encounter, and thus provide a number of tools to support schools in areas such as professional development, side by side coaching, and a plethora of other services. The applicant has been thoughtful in their efforts to support schools and ensure students have access to high-quality educational opportunities.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses to note.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 06/23/2023 05:51 PM