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

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S282A230008)

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

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		35	31
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants			
1. Eligible Applicants		15	14
State Plan			
1. State Plan		35	32
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		15	14
	Sub Total	100	91
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	100

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S282A230008)

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: 31

> **Sub**

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

   Strengths:

    The Wisconsin Charter School Program (WCSP) responded with a rationale that is fully developed with supporting objectives and smart goals that are clear and support the intent of the grant. The 3 objectives designed to support and advance WSCP's statewide charter strategy (noted on page e34) are well aligned to the intent of this grant and demonstrate convergence between grant purpose and design. The rationale for WCSP's goal to strengthen, improve, support and promote is well stated. The need perspective is supported by data (i.e. top 10 rank of charter school student enrollment, page e34) coupled with a narrative (pages e34-36) which centers on sharing best practices, increasing collaboration between charter schools and other schools, and supporting the growing high-quality charter schools focused on improving academic outcomes for traditionally underserved populations. The narrative supports the entity's wish to continue and expand its current work in charter school planning, design and effectiveness, and the confidence displayed by the entity (who identified itself as a previous State Entities (SE) grant award winner) was noted, with evidence offered to support its established capability by the following statement, "WCSP has robust internal controls to support organizational capacity (i.e. segregation of duties) and strong fiduciary capabilities."(pg. e34). Including a previous grant monitor's comment from an award-winning grant application is a sound strategy used to bolster WSCP's fitness in managing a project of this size. The references to building on their already robust tools and systems, leveraging momentum, continuing collaboration with NN4DA and other national partners, and to use their existing annual conferences and technical assistance mechanism, supports the capability to strengthen and improve authorizing quality and support the growth of high-quality charter schools while sharing and promoting the adoption of best practices. The quality of the design is supported by a relevant and focused rationale which comes with a strong narrative aligning the rationale to the entities action as it supports the focus of the grant.

   Weaknesses:

    A research-backed logic model was not evident. There should be more data used to better explain the significance of accomplishing objectives 1.1 to 1.3 (page e13). The addition of more narrative or data to support the "why" behind the application's intent is needed. A richer discussion of how the 3 objectives are significant, in combination with a research-backed logic model with at least one key project element which is strongly informed by research and evaluation findings, would improve the quality of the response. There should be more detail as to the state of current charter schools in Wisconsin outside of how many exist and their demographics. This response could be strengthened by a candid acknowledgement of gaps, deficiencies and weaknesses in the current charter school

authorization processes (i.e. the promotion and adoption of best practices, the growth of high quality charter schools, collaboration) or more detail around data which points to the need for more growth. The use of stronger and transparent data could assist WCSP in making a better case for why they need to grow more, strengthen more, and expand more. It is unknown if the growth or expansion is needed because there is a large subgroup or at-risk population not being met or served by other schools. It is unknown if there is an unusually large increase in how many Independent Charter Authorizers (ICA) or Independent Charter School (ICS) are seeking charters or new schools and funds, or if WCSP is having to turn down applications for new ICAs or ICS at a larger rate than normal. There is absence of data in this proposal that suggests that charter schools are doing a better job on key performance indicators than non-charter schools. The response would be stronger if a clearer rationale for the objectives were made, especially if there are perhaps gaps in how authorizing is occurring, and more resources are needed to strengthen and improve the authorizing quality.

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:

There is alignment of objective performance measures to the outcomes of the project. The performance objectives are well written, measurable, relevant, and well aligned to the intent of the grant, particularly the 4 selection criteria. Data is clearly cited as support for the objectives will produce either quantitative and or qualitative data, which will give the project more depth and applicability of findings. A positive factor is that the performance measures are comprehensive given they are inclusive and specific.

Weaknesses:

While 100% is an admirable achievement goal, anything less than this would result in Wisconsin Charter School Program (WCSP) failing that objective. 100% as a goal may be a bit restrictive or too ambitious and therefore it may be an inadequate or inappropriate goal when one considers whether a goal is achievable. There were many 100% performance measures (i.e. smart goal 1.1- 1.4, 2.2, 3.2-.3 etc., pg. e736) Unless there are known motivators or consequences in place to ensure 100% compliance rates for meeting these goals, this goal may be restrictive. An all or none approach to some of these objectives does not seem compatible with the conceptual ideas of improving and growth.

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:

There is evidence, notably, historical trend data with percentage increases given, that the entity, Wisconsin Charter School Program (WCSP), has experienced increasing the number of active independent charter authorizers (ICAs) while also steadily increased the number of independently- authorized charter schools (ICS) in a short time period. The increase in virtual charter schools was noted as well, which is indicative of a strong commitment to growth. It is a reasonable conclusion that increasing numbers of charter schools, in both modalities of instruction (in-person and virtual), is an equitable practice and demonstrates that WCSP is moving in the right direction in its goal to serve larger numbers of at-risk students as well as general population students. In addition, in its response, WCSP has shared (what can be interpreted as confirmatory for this indicator) data which illustrates that the local districts are supporting charter schools as an option for their district, which the Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter schools (WRCC) is also helping to facilitate. (Page e37 cites district charter school activity in the form of raw numbers within

the categories of development, implementation, and approval). The data provided documents an 85% or higher acceptance rate for charter school applicants, which is indicative of a strong willingness or commitment to opening access. Through the creation of WRCCS, WCSP has appeared to have built the infrastructure needed to support growth of both Independent Charter Authorizers (ICAs) and Independent Charter Schools (ICS). With the noted expansion of WRCCS to include a new Center for High Quality for Authorizing as a mechanism to build capacity and provide for all future charter school authorizers and charter schools, there is strong evidence that the entity is both focused, ambitious and in tune with the charter school needs and its pipeline. Applying and being awarded for a previous grant and returning to seek additional funds communicates both ambition and commitment to the growth and support of the Charter School presence in the Wisconsin Education system.

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:

WCSP has provided its projection of cost and number for each of the awards (subgrants) as outlined in pages e37-42. The pipeline evidence for new schools, and its accuracy, is of particular importance, and the respondent (WCSP) included key factors and strategies which aid in WCSP having its finger on the pulse on charter school interest, needs, and possible feeder entities. Utilizing a contact database, emailed notices, and informational workshops are a few quality examples of the desire to have reliable information to best understand the potential pipeline. The compilation and maintenance of a list of possible authorizers, and knowing the potential school's the target population versus the accessible population is a good best practice and is considered a strength. The award numbers and amounts are supported on pages e37-e42 and Part 5, budget narrative.

Weaknesses:

Comparing the award amounts proposed by the applicant with other states' CSP subgrant amounts is not a perfect practice given potential variability in the funding variables; however, for estimation purposes, that method and the review of average awards paid under the previous CSP grant was used in the methodology for budget projection. Including flexibility statements regarding enrollment counts is admirable but could make projected award amounts less accurate. The entity did not explain sufficiently how it decided the various funding levels for schools and documentation was missing. There did not appear to be evidence that the entity surveyed or made inquiry to each school or authorizer to better understand their continued funding needs.

Reader's Score: 18

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:

WCSP provided a compelling narrative with supportive data in response to this criterion. WCSP has a ███ funding ratio over the last 4 years and highlights the inclusion of an improved benchmark scoring rubric which supports the efforts of the WSCP to award grant funding only to the most capable and quality charter schools who respond with strategies which align to the grant purpose. This is a positive finding which ensures the bar is always moving up and that methodologically sound rubrics are being used. Wisconsin charter schools are cited to have made gains in performance on state assessments during the previous 5-year CSP grant which is also encouraging data. Per page e43, WRCC is continuing to maintain high expectations, provide high-quality resources and provide timely and rigorous technical assistance to subgrantees to ensure compliance and high-quality outcomes. This is a good strategy to ensure the objectives for the quality charter school program is met, resulting in improved educational outcomes. Having institutional support systems is a great way to increase likelihood of success and demonstrates that WCSP remains consistent and focused in its approach to provide direct line support. The timeline of activities of the subgrantee process is well stated and should be conceivable given the resources in place at WCSP/WRCCS. The willingness to be transparent with applicants is an appreciated and appropriate choice. The publication of the subgrant application process and the subgrant application requirements are well supported in the narrative, and were found to be an equitable process utilizing a variety of dissemination tools which would yield equal opportunity for response (pg. 29). The details of the application requirements were clearly documented and aligned with the program objectives. It is noted that subgrant applications must not only derive outside measurable objectives but that they must provide evidence (both process and product) for how those objectives will be achieved, which is in line with methodologically sound program evaluation processes. This level of compatibility and inclusion of both input and output supports balance. In the areas of roles and responsibilities, the language was clear, and the intent was well understood. This is also true for the Family and Community Engagement Activities criterion, as it was noted that the combination of the commitment to support and a plethora of tools and resources for governance boards and school to increase parental and community involvement was evident and is an effective strategy which supports b.5.c The include of the community survey adds to the evidence needed for this review and is a great application artifact for applicant to submit and it is considered helpful and collaborative to assist subgrants with the needs assessment template. The use of standardized tools in addition to the focus group event d and the addition of a 5-minute video demonstrates WCSP's commitment to collaboration and success to its applicants. Flexibility afforded to charter schools was evident on page 34 and was written in clear language conveying the expectation that subgrantees include waivers in their applications and/or using the school contract template. WCSP makes use of an existing resource (the DPI team and the WISE grants system) which is a great step in strong grants management. The narrative describing the process of selecting peer reviewers and the process reviewing and awarding subgrants was documented with clear and distinct requirements and having more than one level of review is a best practice that can aid to the fairness of the review and ultimate selection of award recipients. The detail provided in identifying the types of "high quality reviewers'' demonstrated the commitment WCSP has towards using key stakeholders as reviewers who represent the qualities of diversity, expertise and community is noted as a strong point. The amended review process (pg. 39) is a generous practice which supports a wider inclusion of grant recipients and supports the entity's commitment to inclusion and an equitable and fair selection process.

Weaknesses:

To improve exposure, there is concern that perhaps SEA should publish grant applications in the newspaper to widen the net so to speak. In addition, it would likely make the application stronger if a charter's annual audit report be included under the application requirements rather than just the 5-year budget plan. It was not clear that the school and/or the authorizers annual audit report was a requirement. In discussion of roles and expenditures (pg. e51) it might be advisable that a facilities coordinator be part of the roles which schools should plan and make financial projections for. The response to this section would be stronger and more sufficient if these items were considered for inclusion.

Reader's Score: 14

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 entity provided a succinct description of its monitoring infrastructure (staff, technical/data, and communications systems) and clearly outlined the process of monitoring subgrantees which is demonstrated to be continuous, systematic and provides relevant and timely feedback. The detail provided in the response, regarding how programmatic implementation and grant response processes, academic success and fiscal expenditures are monitored, indicates several best practices are being utilized. These best practices are multiple levels of support and continuous monitoring with feedback and transparency, aimed at quality improvement. Multiple approaches to timely monitoring was a positive finding in this section. The plan was well designed as it outlined a comprehensive plan for monitoring subgrantees in both a direct and indirect manner as well as to provide timely technical assistance. It is also a plan of monitoring that maintains rigor as it uses multiple readiness, monitoring and assessment tools (pgs. e59-60). An objective tool to assess compliance and progress supports a healthy plan of monitoring and assessment, and one which is at little risk for subjectivity or misinterpretation. This type of transparent objectivity in monitoring and or assessment is what providers of services and subgrantees want to have in place. (pg. e59, 8 indicator/58 sub indicator tool). A triangulation approach to monitoring was documented and is appreciated as a best practice being used by WCSP; the choice of analyzing student and institutional data, post - secondary survey outcomes, preschool surveys, well as 1:1 calls, midyear subgrant monitoring visits and annual audit review, coupled with both virtual and/or onsite monitoring, offers a wealth of opportunity to collect data and assess progress and better understand the functionality and health of a charter school. Utilizing a team of reviewers to evaluate and monitor the subgrantees on a regular basis (as this entity has subscribed to) adds to validity and interrater reliability into a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan. The addition of feedback, recommendations and action required as components of transparency in monitoring were noted and these add to the entity's ability to demonstrate it has a strong component of quality subgrantee monitoring.

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:

WCSP has indicated a plan to streamline various monitoring and evaluation processes to avoid duplication was developed adequately (pg. e59). WCSP has described their actions to improve efficiency and information sharing to avoid duplication of work. This action demonstrates a sound approach to project management and supports the claim that they intend on "refining the model charter school application and contract templates, which are inclusive

of state law requirements, and NACSA's principles and standards which align with the criteria and requirements of the WCSP subgrant application," pg. e65. This approach appears to support this criterion as it will result in streamlining and reduces the work required of new applicants seeking approval from an authorizer. A focused approach to planning as part of continuous quality improvement, such as reducing duplication, is noted. The entity (WCSP) further supports this criterion by underscoring that this kind of streamlining reduces the amount of time spent as the contract template "supports efficient operation" for authorizers and charters school in contract drafting activities. WCSP also noted that it would use pre-existing reports or information already submitted to other entities, like the DPI and state legislature, to avoid duplication of efforts and data. T content from page e65 below is evidence of this practice:

"Subgrantees use information from their authorizer's annual report to fulfill certain WCSP monitoring requirements. The annual report requires authorizers to collect and compile academic and financial information from each school in a report to the DPI and state legislature. Subgrantees may use financial and academic information compiled for their authorizers to fulfill the request for academic and financial information under the WCSP monitoring protocol. This minimizes the time subgrantees spend compiling and assembling requested information for annual reporting to their authorizer and for WCSP monitoring.

Weaknesses:

While the entity did provide quality examples of streamlining which seemed to support the potential reduction of workload and duplication, it wasn't abundantly clear that the burden would be less for both the authorizer and charter school or how much less the burden would be.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

As a previous federal grant award winner, WCSP intentionally created WRCCS, a statewide charter resource center. The entity, WCSP, is in a unique position of not having to recreate or develop a technical assistance department or protocol. Per page e65 WCSP notes the following:
"WCSP was able to meet all its technical assistance performance measures under the previous grant through the successful partnership with WRCCS. If awarded, the WCSP plans to continue to partner with WRCCS to carry out the grant's technical assistance programming". The response outlines an extensive technical assistance platform and resources, citing that it assists in multiple areas to service and promote the sharing of best practices among high quality charter schools and the state. Areas of support include but are not limited to strategic planning, leadership training, enrollment, recruitment, professional monitoring, and budget support, which are areas requiring technical expertise if you are planning to open, replicate or expand (pg. e66). An example of great preparation and planning to provide technical assistance is the revision of the statewide plan for technical assistance which is expansive, seeking to include all authorizers and all charter schools in the state of Wisconsin, which would mean technical assistance is ultimately designed to reach 454 authorizers and 250 charter schools(pg. 49). This is an impressive reach supports the claim of its intent to have WRCSS be an integral part of ensuring high quality resources are shared among all of Wisconsin's charter schools. If awarded, WRCSS is showing forethought in the role of technical assistance evidenced by its intent "to develop a cohort model for charter school governance board design teams, The Charter School Design Institute," pg. e68. This is an example of WSCP/WRCCS expanding technical services to governance boards by providing more services about management, protocol, and responsibilities. WRCSS has been forthcoming in these new services on page e68 and has gone further to state that, "as a condition of funding, the governance board of each subgrantee must participate in an approved training through WRCCS." Linking funding to the provision of training to support and ensure successful actions and

outcomes is a good move for WRCSS and shows positive alignment with the grant goals.

Lastly , WCSP has responded to this criteria with a plan for providing technical assistant around key student areas, such as enrollment and retention, that promote the inclusion of all students (including those from traditionally underserved communities) by leveraging resources, including additional mental health funds and/or doing the following: Embedded workforce training (Equity Mindset cards was given as an example Pg e69); building up and expanding equity training tools and workshops by including those who can provide the most insight (i.e. charter school staff participation in workgroups to develop best practices); collaborating CESAs; and building school culture resources. These responses indicate WCSP has reflected about technical assistance offerings that are being done and what could be done better, which is important to planning service improvement. The utilization and sharing of key resources are noted as a strength and sound growth plan.

There is evidence of similar support for technical assistance in the accountability, fiscal and other contract (i.e. renewal) areas where intent and congruency in the regulatory process was well documented (pg. e71-e75)—with special attention given to annual reports, pre-existing data on performance measures, and third-party reports (external auditor, annual audit). It is notable that external tools/reports (i.e., Annual financial audit), and internal tools (the model school contract template) are offered as aids to the frameworks designed for performance measure guides and monitoring guides. This demonstrates forward thinking, as these types of guides would fall under purview of the technical assistance tools which are in clear alignment with the purpose of WRCC. The response provides examples which strongly support the entity's plan to collaborate and assist through the provision of technical assistance and there is depth in its approach.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses 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:

 Though it acknowledges that the WCSP and WRCC are housed within highly visible public agencies and has a present voice both informally and formally at educational conferences and quarterly meetings, one of its strengths is the acknowledgment that that is also not enough. An innovative approach noted as one of the multiple initiatives underway to incorporate community feedback is "ed fest" (pg. e73) as well. While the entity has done well to include community level data, a community needs assessment or a school viability plan as part of the subgrant application (as well as seeking detail on family and community engagements endeavors done), the entity's plan to seek a wider circle of input and data, with the idea of a wider community input and feedback loop is promising direction for this entity. An example of working outside of the box is to host events that parents, and other community members would not have access to or interest in. On page e74 the example of a statewide charter school event (a fair) is discussed as a strategy to learn about community factors such as student engagement needs, student service concerns as well as school selection factors which families and other community stakeholders may use in assessing the value or interest that they have in charter schools.

Weaknesses:

Teachers did not appear to be identified as a real key stakeholder or a community asset to provide information. Students were listed briefly (pg. e73) as possibly being invited to charter school fairs, but students are the consumers of educational services and they should be considered as a valued source of input. Teachers have more presence in this section. Perhaps this was understood or implied but evidence of these groups being included in the

plan to solicit input is lacking or the narrative is not as clear as it appeared for other groups. This area would be stronger if student and teacher data was included as supporting the need for "input from parents and other members of the community". The timeline of activities was not abundantly clear nor was there specificity of how data would be used.

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:

   he response gave evidence of the state providing its charter schools with tremendous flexibility by acknowledging that charter schools were exempt from state public statutes Chapters 115 through 121 unless otherwise mentioned, except for provision section 118.40, which is specific to charter schools. This full state statute was not provided as part of the application (only 118), but the entity (WCSP) did expand upon their claim by providing specific examples of such flexibility which support that this criterion was met and that efforts are being made to continue this flexible posture. The statutory examples cited could be considered barriers to many schools without the stated exemptions, so steps taken to lessen restrictions and provide flexibility to charter schools who serve a unique function to some of the most underserved (at-risk youth) students seems to support the notion that the state is being considerate of a charter school's mission and wishes to support charter schools/authorizers to meet the needs of students, parents, and the community at large. Flexibility examples cited (pg. e74-75) were expansion of independent charter school authorizers, removing transportation and geographical barriers by eliminating pupil residency requirements, which can aid in enrollment and removing specific geographical restrictions on previous independent authorizers as well. Technical assistance from the WRCCS to monitor and ensure statutory priorities are implemented was offered as a mechanism for WCSP to work to maximize the flexibility. This is a good step in the right direction.

   Weaknesses:

   The answer applicant lacked advocating for the needs of the charter schools and authorizers and being responsive. This section would be stronger if the entity had written a response that included how it would work to maximize the flexibility allowed by law. The response would be fully developed if WCSP had discussed with greater detail: a) continuing to advocate for flexibility and monitor key stakeholders needs for flexibility;
    b) assessing the needs/complaints/barriers which charter schools and authorizers run into (i.e.. facilities, funding, enrollment caps, hiring regulations) as they plan, start, or expand schools;
    c) assessing the needs /complaints/barriers of front line staff and those directly impacted groups such as parents, students and staff. Detailing how the entity will maximize flexibility in areas of concern such as attendance requirements, food and nutrition, transportation, curriculum limitations would have made this section stronger; and
    d) responding to any annual strategic planning or final reports to uncover unknown or potentially upcoming possible restrictions to flexibility.

   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: 14

> **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 entity's response to this criterion was supported by a timeline which allowed for timely response and feedback by both the grantor and subgrantee. The qualifications of the staff are sound given their present roles, which have them working for areas of WCSP, DPI and/or WRCC. The breakdown of processes by month, with detail about the processes, was an appropriate way to be transparent with potential grant applicants. The processes outlined support and a comprehensive management budget which is sound. Having continuity of personnel (it was noted there were a few slated to be involved who have been employed with WCSP and working in the Charter School management areas) is advantageous given they are familiar with both grant functionality and process, not to mention familiarity with key areas/departments of WCSP, such as the WRCC, which will both monitor and support subgrantees. Having an existing infrastructure, institutional knowledge and experience and depth in the human capital area positions WCSP to have a strong framework in place for management. The discussion of milestones in such a transparent matter illustrates the commitment to practices which are steeped in openness and clarity. All milestones, timelines, tasks, and responsibilities of personnel are supportive of a successful and engaged management plan.

   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 entity's response to this criterion is thorough and convincing. The types of data and feedback collected, as well as the frequency and source of feedback, is multifaceted and demonstrates real insight regarding the kinds of information needed not just to monitor, evaluate, support and advocate for both authorizers and their charter schools, but to also provide relevant feedback to close the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) loop. The use of standing infrastructure (such as the Wisedash EDW) supports the capacity for the Department of Instruction (DPI) to collect meaningful and timely, reliable, and valid data from their SIS (WISE) is a strongpoint mentioned in the response. The inclusion of qualitative feedback related to charter schools via surveys, focus groups and in person meetings were mentioned (pg. e76-e78) and are appropriate given these tools offer opportunities to share ideas needed to better align resources to the needs of authorizers and charter schools. This is a practice with merit and illustrates that WCSP supports the model of CQI needed to collect ongoing information and feedback on many areas of charter school interest, such as the quality and content of technical assistance, new development ideas, feedback on resources and/or institutional support. Other areas of feedback (via survey or in person) regarding the reliability of WRCC's tools and support, and any other outstanding issues or concerns, appear to be valuable to WCSP as there is mention of frequent opportunities to ask for input during the year. The provision of so much technical assistance (pg. e78 citing coaching, PD workshops, courses, network events) provides ample opportunity to seek information from users. An example of the commitment to their position was taking feedback from the field (during the last grant submission cycle) and adding the Amended Review process to the application focus and adding components and operational definitions needed for successful application experiences (page e78). This

Sub

example of implementing change due to stakeholder feedback demonstrates that the entity is committed to bettering the process and outcomes for potential subgrantees. This entity has clearly planned for the role of feedback and CQI in the operation of the proposed project.

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 inclusion of utilizing pre-existing staff with experience in this very field (WCSP project Director of WRCC, additional support staff and consultants, page e726-728) is a benefit to the project and shows strong planning and use of human capital and experienced personnel. The clarification that the directors are full time with very clear roles is also supportive of this criterion. It is a positive finding that the personnel identified are familiar with grants management and monitoring charters schools having done this under the previous USDOE grant award.

Weaknesses:

Given the number of grants (all in different phases) needing to be monitored and supported, and the vast description of duties of the Project Director and the Team Director, there may need to be additional staff or higher FTE. Given the level of monitoring, feedback, compliance review, collaboration, and technical assistance planned, there does not seem to be enough key leadership staff in place, or the FTE is too low. Even with the support of WRCC staff, 1.70 FTE does not seem adequate for the expansiveness of a 5-year, ███████ grant. The financial positions seem to carry a low FTE (.15 to .25) yet are responsible for reviewing a wealth of financial information, monitoring grant notices and expenditures (42 projects will yield a large amount of financial data). The financial staff are also identified as being responsible to provide technical assistance, while doing these other functions.

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:

WCSP Provides evidence that supports more than one entity which is not an LEA to be an authorized public chartering agency. WCSP provided evidence that as of the 2023-24 school year, there are 6 independent charter authorizers (ICA), with 32 ICS being collectively authorized by these ICAs (pg. 5). It also cited, as of 21-22, there were 34 "eligible" independent charter authorizers in law. As outlined in this proposal, WCSP has a convincing authorizer structure and history and plans to accommodate additional ICA growth, which suggests that this CPP1 has been met. The inclusion of a discussion or the development of "hundreds of resources" (pg. e22) and larger goals for supporting non-LEA authorizers (such as grant information, ICS specific track of resources and events) and the writing of extensive smart goals relative to measuring their success in supporting non-LEA authorizers suggests that WCSP is invested in technical assistance for non-LEA authorizers.

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:

    WCSP provides an appropriate and thorough response by explaining how ICSs receive state funding from DPI on a current per pupil basis using the same funding process and funding criteria as traditional public schools (pg. e23), including access to summer school. Further, DPI supports equitability to charter schools by describing assistance to ICS in future funding projections, alignment and corrections to funding calculations based on particular authorizing entities. The expansion of support from CESA's to ICSs (pg. e24) and the use of contracts information sustaining that ICS subgrantees work with DPI to ensure access and eligibility supports this CCP, as well as the facilitation of sharing of resources and assurances that there is equitable access to federal programs, sped, transportation and school nutrition illustrate that this state entity is in a state following steps to ensure equitable financing. This entity specified funding practices and assurances it has adopted (and follows) which demonstrates how charter schools are being funded on the same criteria, and equitably, as traditional public schools. In addition, the provision of smart goals to support measuring the success of these best practices offer additional accountability and transparency.

   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:

   WCSP provides a comprehensive description of a shared learning environment which allows charter and non-charters (traditional public school) to share and develop a means to collaborate effectively (pages e25-28 and e31-e32). In this response, WCSP outlined a varied yet extensive best practices efforts which are inclusive and exhaustive, using myriad approaches and tools to support the sharing and implementation of best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAS, and is not limited to strategies such as:
   A) seeking collaborative partnerships with ICS through task forces, work groups in an effort for charter schools to share best and innovative practices, as well as utilizing their input to develop a resource library as well as a Professional Learning Network (PLNs) with quarterly meetings available to charter schools, ICS etc. and traditional schools, given topics support all schools. (Pge21 and e31)
   B) Involved charter school leaders in identifying classroom-centered best practices, including strategies to close race-based achievement gaps and launched an interactive website (network) for online courses and professional development, all of which is shared and made accessible to all schools (Pg e25 and e31). Making resources accessible and visible is a practice with merit that supports criteria of CPP3.
   C) DPI via WRCC facilitates equity training, and in collaboration with national experts from NCSI, School works etc. and maintains a rich electronic library of resources made available to charter schools and to other schools to support statewide strategies for serving traditionally underserved student populations (pg. e25).
   D) WRCCS has developed a statewide charter school, micro-credentialing program/mentoring, and provides technical assistance and its high-quality, peer-vetted resources are added to its library for other schools to use so that the public can easily locate high-quality schools from which to learn best practices. The expansion mentioned on page 14 to include some elements to the traditional schools is a valued idea.
   D) WRCC will share it's open-source curriculum and instructional material library (WISELearn) which provides best practices (templates, learning tools, project documents and competency guidelines) so those resources developed for charter schools will be shared with other schools.
   E) WRCC will create the Leadership Institute and Charter School Design Institute as evidence of its commitment to support and respond to the needs of struggling schools.

   The entity has satisfactorily responded to CCP3 with best practices fit to aid in improving struggling schools and LEA with a wealth of resources, inclusive of professional development, school networking/sharing, as well as meetings/presentations and resource networks/libraries. In addition, the provision of SMART goals to support measuring the success of these best practices offer additional accountability and transparency. Page 14 also reiterates how WRCC shares best practices from charter schools with traditional public schools and invites non charter public schools to their events and exceeds their 20% event goal (from traditional schools) as it documents a 29% traditional school attendance rate at its events. The sharing of resources (videos, PD, courses) and conference inclusion of non-charters demonstrates that WRCC is supporting collaboration between charter schools and traditional schools which support CPP3.

   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:

   WCPS presented a brief but succinct response which addressed one or more of the CCP4 criteria. By citing Wisconsin law, and the statutory provision which deemed potential or current charter school authorizers to be considered eligible educator operators, who can contract with local authorizers, access to the public facilities criteria is supported. Access is further supported in the WCPS's statement that, "86% of the state's district authorized charter schools have access to public facilities via their charter contract and it provides an inventory of public school buildings to eligible educator operators," (Pg e28). Wisconsin subsidizing debt service costs via a shared cost formula also supports other charter schools in the facilities acquisition. WCPS also specified that charter schools have access to public facilities, the right of first refusal to purchase public school services, access to funding for expansion and or reports (pg. e31). This is a significant need for charter schools in either the start -up, maintenance or expansion phase. A supportive step was noted in WRCC's anticipated future actions and goals to develop a facilities checklist and facilities guidebook as well as a partnership with Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESEA) to support charter schools in all 12 regions of their state. This goal in addition to the written commitment of WRCC to "work closely with ICS to develop budget projections to plan for their facilities costs proactively "(Pg.e31) as well as efforts to ensure location is a component to be reviewed upon application, is considered a proactive, positive step.

   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:

   WCSP has responded with details that demonstrate that it actively supports charter schools which serve at-risk students. In areas which WCSP seeks to expand support, it has provided written details of its plans to take additional steps to support schools which serve at-risk Students.

   In its response to CCP5 WCSP cites Wisconsin statute which includes an "At-risk students "law, which among many strategies, allows school districts to utilize flexibility in alternative credit and graduation plans as well as providing educators with an at-risk teaching license. In alignment with some of the same mission, goals, and policies which Wisconsin has adopted to serve at-risk schools, the WCSP subgrant application requires a description of how the charter school will: reduce or eliminate achievement gaps for underserved students, serve students at-risk of dropping out, increase graduation rates, or increase college and career readiness for its students. The WCSP making this a part of their subgrant application paves the way to ensuring at-risk populations are being appropriately considered with

meaningful strategies to improve educational outcomes (p.e29).

Since the 2012-13 school year, charter schools have, overall, served a higher percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged compared to all public schools (pg. e33). The DPI developed an alternative accountability process for schools that exclusively serve at-risk students to ensure proper measurement of growth in low populated schools while still maintaining accountability. This is evidence that the state entity supports all schools (and esp. charter schools) that serve at-risk students. The use of educational data (school level and student level) can/should be used for prescriptive approaches to educational interventions for the subgroups.

With regard how charter schools will provide educational strategies/activities and programs to serve their at-risk students, the WRCC provides a narrative which supports that it has developed resources "around the focus areas of educationally disadvantaged students, which are the populations most often at-risk, including guidance around equitable enrollment and admission processes, Promoting Excellence for All, equitable technology, alternative measures, personalized learning, restorative justice, school culture, and democratic practices," page e34. This supports the mindset that this population can benefit and should be considered with prescriptive needs to address possible educational/social deficits.

On pages e30-31, WRCC notes a commitment to continued development of resources for students from traditionally underserved sub groups via needs assessments honed on subgroups, professional development for all WCSP subgrantees on promising practices for serving both at risk and secondary students, as well as equity training focusing on success for all learners and a comprehensive statewide analysis focused on areas where changes may be made to better serve at-risk students" and mentions future areas of possible research ,such as a statewide recovery charter school system.

Weaknesses:

 The application was lacking in specific detail regarding the exact strategies /programs being utilized. It did not mention which or how these programs are being implemented at the school level. There should be more evidence of the existence and application of the planning or inclusion activities/strategies to address at-risk students. There was a focus on future assessment, surveying, and research. While this is an excellent strategy, especially to include stakeholders and to review accountability and school/student data, there appears to be sparse detail regarding the programmatic or educational strategies at-risk students would need (or which are in place) and how those are being leveraged to help this group. The response seems a bit generic and lacks specificity on activities and a plan to provide equitable access to these supports.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/30/2023 02:26 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S282A230008)
Reader #2:   **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		35	30
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants			
1. Eligible Applicants		15	14
State Plan			
1. State Plan		35	30
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		15	15
	Sub Total	100	89
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	98

Technical Review Form

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

Applicant: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S282A230008)

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: 30

Sub

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

    Strengths:

    The application has three objectives it aims to achieve in the proposed project's design. In general, the application seeks to prioritize subgrantees that intend to serve low-income, at-risk, and other students that have been traditionally underserved. The application's objectives are as follows:
    • Objective 1: Strengthen and improve authorizing quality and promote the adoption of best practices for all authorizers in Wisconsin;
    • Objective 2: Support the growth of high-quality charter schools, especially those focused on improving academic outcomes for traditionally underserved students; and
    • Objective 3: Promote and support collaboration and sharing of best practices between high-quality charter schools and other schools in the state (e33-34).

    The application hopes to complete several undertakings to achieve its objectives and explain its rationale. As it relates to objective one, "through the Center for High-Quality Authorizing (CHQA), The Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) will develop and promote authorizing resources, workshops, and networking opportunities for authorizers. The WCSP, via WRCCS, has previously and intends to continue to require all subgrantee authorizers to attend their annual conference, at which there are authorizing breakout sessions led by both national experts and peers" (e35).

    The application emphasizes its commitment to traditionally underserved students graduating high school ready for college and/or career as it pertains to its second objective. "The WCSP will utilize and engage with the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) existing networks and resources around equity, universal design, and special education, and the WRCSS will create a community needs assessment template for schools to use during their design stage. WRCCS will also convene a group of charter schools and authorizing leaders in the state during year one to discuss practices of high-quality schools" (e36).

    To accomplish objective three, "The Wisconsin Charter School Program (WCSP) and The Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) have a strategy to build on the robust tools and systems in the state to leverage existing momentum in order to spread the practices of existing charter schools. Wisconsin already has a free curriculum-sharing platform, open to all schools, through which charter schools can tag and exchange resources" (e36).

Sub

The application's logic model (e350) articulates these objectives and outcomes in a compelling manner that demonstrates the thoughtfulness of its design from start to finish. There are several short- and long-term outcomes of the application documents as it works to support the authorizing quality through its resource center, grow high-quality schools and at-risk students through best practices to support students and focus on collaboration. The application justifies its objectives, planned activities, and ultimately its outcomes based on its historical observation of its schools, students, and their demonstrated needs.

Weaknesses:

Although the application strongly emphasized its mission and goals for traditionally underserved students, it does not satisfactorily mention robust academic programming for this subgroup to improve their academic outcomes and well-being. Additionally, the application presents a logic model that is not clearly informed by research-backed and evaluative findings.

Reader's Score: 3

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 application's performance measures are clearly aligned with the overall objectives needed to achieve the project's intended outcomes. Performance measures are both quantitative and qualitative, as noted below and showcase the various ways the application will be able to evaluate outcomes (e737). The performance measures are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. The application thoroughly notes how its subgrantees will work to achieve measures and any additional and relevant stakeholders involved in accomplishing the goal. This level of specificity strengthens the application's achievable and clarifies how the goals will be achieved. The application also adequately details when each performance measure will be satisfied, resulting in a fully developed timeline.

Objective 1: Strengthen and improve authorizing quality and promote the adoption of best practices for all authorizers in Wisconsin.
Quantitative Measures: During the proposed five-year grant period, 100% of subgrantee charter school contracts will meet the applicable state and federal laws in DPI benchmarks document.
Qualitative Measures: WRCCS will develop, implement, and maintain the Center for High-quality authorizing, including the development and support of high-quality authorizing materials.

Objective 2: Support the growth of high-quality charter schools, especially those focused on improving academic outcomes for traditionally underserved students.
Quantitative Measures: 100% of subgrantees will engage their board members, leaders, and educators in WRCCS technical assistance, including access to hundreds of online tools
Qualitative Measures: Not applicable

Objective 3: Promote and support collaboration and sharing of best practices between high-quality charter schools and other schools in the state.
Quantitative Measures: 100% of subgrantee schools will present and earn a peer-reviewed WRCCS Micro-credential during the life of their grant, by September 30, 2028.
Qualitative Measures: WRCCS will offer partnership opportunities for and regional convenings annually with, all 12 Wisconsin CESAs to better support charters in their region.

Objective 4: GPRA-focused Goals
Quantitative Measures: The percentage of 4th and 8th grade charter school students that meet or exceed state academic standards on the reading portion of the statewide assessments will increase by at least 3%

Sub

Qualitative Measures: Not applicable.

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 application's strength lies in its ability to provide ambitious, attainable goals. The application clearly notes that its state has led in cultivating learning environments that foster innovation in charter schools. "In the 2017-18 school year, there were three active Independent Charter School (ICS) authorizers with 23 schools. As of 2021-22, there are now five active ICS authorizers with 35 schools, which is a 52 percent increase in the number of ICSs during the past five years. Similarly, the number of operating Virtual Charter Schools (VCS) increased by 108 percent from the 2011-12 to 2020-21 school year" (e37). It is evident that the application is rapidly increasing in the number of charter schools and charter authorizers, validating the ambitiousness of the objectives for quality charter school programs.

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:

It is clear that the application relies on data to substantiate new claims and targets. The application presents projections for its current design, relying on data from its previous CSP grant (38). Over the grant period, the application anticipates awarding 42 subgrants. "The methodology and calculations for projecting the number of sub-awards are based on the pipeline database, previous awards, and potential expansion or replication schools in Wisconsin," and additional funding may be available to schools supporting underserved populations aligned to the state's priorities (e38-39). This reliance on past data is helpful in justifying current needs identified in the application for this grant project.

The application also expounds upon the history of charter schools in the state, detailing that its previous CSP award allowed charter schools to grow and become more integrated into the system and increase its pipeline. "Though Wisconsin has had charter schools for well over 20 years, since the implementation of WRCCS in 2018 and the dedication of support during this previous five-year WCSP grant, charter schools have become more fully integrated into the system at large."

The application primarily articulates its need by discussing data about individuals who have used its trainings. "The WCSP has data that indicates practices are actively adopted and implemented by other public schools. WRCCS data shows that 25 percent of the individuals who have utilized WRCCS training are not currently connected to an operating charter school, and 96 percent of participants in the classroom and leadership trainings said they learned the intended content and would use what they learned. This indicates that charter school best practices are being utilized outside the charter sector" (e41).

Sub

Overall, the application provides evidence that supports the amount needed in subgrant funds based on anticipated student enrollment and the assumed needs of schools to expand (e39).

Weaknesses:

The application does not convincingly explain whether there is demand for new seats and schools and who is making expressing the need for increased demand. The application could be clarified by providing a more guaranteed methodology that explains this need and is not solely reliant on pipeline database, which can be unstable (e38).

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:

A documented strength of the application is its focus on appropriately serving traditionally underserved students. The application aims to only award subgrants to applicants demonstrating the capacity to "create, replicate, expand, and operate high-quality charter schools that improve academic outcomes and meet the needs of all students" (e42).

The application has historical solid data to suggest that future subgrantees will need to meet program objectives and demonstrate their ability to improve educational results for students in order to receive an award. "Wisconsin charter schools have made huge gains in their performance on state assessments over the duration of the previous five-year CSP grant. On the 2015-16 school report cards, 69.5 percent of charter schools received a rating of 'Meets, Exceeds, or Significantly Exceeds Expectations.' Wisconsin charter schools have now averaged 85 percent in the same category over the past five years" (e42-43).

The application will support subgrantees through the project period with robust technical assistance, statewide practice partnerships, and workshops on a variety of subject areas. "There is an established infrastructure and strong foundation of technical assistance from WRCCS and the WCSP to ensure high-quality subgrantees. The WCSP, through WRCCS and statewide partners, will develop and provide extensive targeted technical assistance to eligible applicants before a subgrant application is submitted to the DPI. Workshops will highlight the planning, preparation, and developmental work required to submit a successful subgrant application and also to ultimately open or expand and operate a high-quality charter school. WRCCS provides assistance and resources in areas that include admissions, recruitment, school climate, discipline, retention, serving students with disabilities, and serving English learners. This will enable eligible applicants to craft subgrant proposals designed to improve academic results for all students" (e44).

Aligned with its goals to increase the number of charter schools, the application hopes to increase the number of charter authorizers through this award and provide training to support authorizers in improving its process. "This grant application seeks to increase the quality of authorizing in Wisconsin. Resources and technical assistance provided to authorizers will ensure quality eligible applicants if funded. Authorizers will receive individualized guidance and support to improve authorizing processes. By strengthening statewide authorizer quality and promoting best practices in authorizing" (e44).

Finally, the application demonstrates how it will provide comprehensive technical assistance to governance boards to ensure they are equipped to oversee subgrantees' objectives. "The existence of strong and trained governance boards helps ensure charter schools receiving subgrants meet program objectives and operate high-quality educational programs that improve educational outcomes for all students" (e45).

In addition to provisions the application intends to offer subgrantees, the application highlights the rigorous nature of its selection process and provides evidence to support its assertion. "The WCSP will only fund high-quality applications that

receive a minimum point total from external peer reviewers and have the potential to increase student achievement and improve results for all students, especially traditionally underserved students. Furthermore, applicants must identify the evidence-based model(s) the school will utilize to improve student achievement. All applicants must submit a five-year budget and plan for sustainability, ensuring that high quality is established from the outset and maintained throughout future years of operation. Finally, applicants must include a plan for sharing best practices" (e47). The application's benchmark or subgrantees is thorough and details key requirements needed to meet its objective of serving at-risk students and increasing the number of high-quality charter schools.

Overall, the application effectively communicates its plan to support subgrantees and that those awarded will be aligned with the objectives articulated in the project's design.

Weaknesses:

While essentially comprehensive, the application omits outcome data for previous subgrantees that adequately demonstrates whether they met goals to serve as an appropriate indicator for future subgrantees. Namely, the application states that Wisconsin charter schools have made "huge gains in their performance assessments over the five-year CSP grant…69.5% received a rating of "meets, exceeds, or significantly exceeds expectations" (e42), but does not provide evidence for subgrantee-specific performance data. The application lacks information that would aid in adequately projecting the need for subgrantees of this award. The mentioning of past subgrantees without sufficient data regarding their outcomes does not provide strong evidence for new subgrantees and their likeliness to meet objectives and goals.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

1. The State entity's plan to--

Reader's Score: 30

   Sub

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

   Strengths:

   One of the many strengths of the application is its robust plan to adequately monitor eligible applicants. The application documents that its monitoring protocol contains eight indicators with 58 sub-indicators and was developed to ensure that all subgrantees comply with the project's design requirements. "The WCSP project design includes multiple levels of support and review of awarded applicants, including progress monitoring, technical assistance, and continuous subgrantee oversight during the grant period to ensure eligible applicants have the capacity to create and sustain high-quality charter schools that improve academic achievement for all students. Authorizer oversight is required under state law, occurs during and after the subgrant period, and further ensures subgrantees develop and demonstrate the capacity to operate high-quality schools" (e59). This level of detailing convincingly underscores how the applicant will monitor subgrantees throughout the grant process to ensure the process is void of discrepancies.

   Specific items to highlight from the application's monitoring protocol include "continuous, systematic feedback and progress monitoring for all subgrantees on meeting project goals during their subgrant period, risk assessments prior to a subgrant award, the requirement for schools to submit a rationale for any changes to subgrant activities or budget, a requirement for schools to complete an Assurance or Readiness checklist prior to opening or expanding,

monthly calls with subgrantees during their first year followed by ongoing quarterly calls to gauge progress and address issues or questions, review of all annual financial audits submitted to the DPI, and virtual and on-site visits, ensuring schools are in compliance with ESEA and IDEA (e60).

Of particular significance is the training the application notes all monitors will receive. "The WCSP staff are highly trained and qualified to monitor a potential 2023 CSP grant to Wisconsin. The monitors are all current employees of the DPI, many of whom have been actively monitoring the 2017 WCSP subgrantees for several years" (e46). Additionally, the application seeks to evaluate the sustainability of programs when award funds have been exhausted. To do this, the application established new enrollment caps (e64).

The application justifies how risks will greatly be reduced through its comprehensive monitoring protocol rooted in continuous improvement through training personnel, oversight of reporting, and regular check-ins with subgrantees.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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:

To avoid duplication, the application notes that subgrantees are subject to the Federal Uniform Grant Guidance requirements.

Weaknesses:

The application neglected to advise how it will support authorized public chartering agencies to avoid duplication of work for the charter schools. The application only notes that "subgrantees may use financial and academic information compiled for their authorizers to fulfill the request for academic and financial information under the WCSP monitoring protocol to minimize the time subgrantees spend compiling and assembling requested information for annual reporting to their authorizer and for WCSP monitoring" (e65). However, the application does not include any helpful methods it will undertake to ease this process.

Reader's Score: 3

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 application deeply demonstrates the importance of supporting subgrantees. To that end, "WRCCS has developed extensive and comprehensive technical assistance that ensures charter school developers, operators, authorizers, and governance boards are equipped to operate, oversee, and manage high-quality charter schools that increase student achievement for all students, especially those that are traditionally underserved" (e65). The provision of technical assistance is salient in ensuring subgrantees are fully supported throughout and have accessible and easily identifiable resources to navigate the process.

The application is committed to ensuring it provides robust technical assistance support to subgrantees. "If awarded, WRCCS will develop the following internal structures to better support authorizers and charter schools in

Wisconsin: Center for High-Quality Authorizing, Governance Board Institute, Leadership Institute, and the Charter School Design Institute. The WCSP's updated technical assistance and support plan is ambitious because it seeks to impact all authorizers and all charter schools in the state: 421 district authorizers, 34 independent authorizers, and almost 250 charter schools serving approximately 50,000 students. The statewide plan provides technical assistance and support to applicants, charter schools, authorizers, governance boards of current schools, support for charter school design teams and caregivers, as well as support for the public around how charter schools work. The objectives of this 2023 Wisconsin CSP project are strategically aligned with the WRCCS Technical Assistance programming."

The application's plan for supporting schools and subgrantees is as follows:
•	WRCCS meets with the authorizer, governance board chair, school leader/lead teacher of each individual subgrantee at least twice each subgrant year to discuss their goals for the year and how they have met and will continue to meet technical assistance requirements.
•	WRCCS reaches out throughout the year via email, phone, and in-person visits to all parties at each subgrantee school to offer customized support and check in on their progress.
•	All subgrantees are required to complete an equity training approved by WRCCS.
•	WRCCS works with each subgrantee to develop action plans for authorizing, governance board, leadership, and classroom technical assistance each year of their subgrant.
•	Subgrantees track progress in the WRCCS learning management system.
The level of detail displayed in the application's plan is evidence that it is equipped to support subgrantees during the duration of the award. In total, the application aims to provide technical assistance around assessing annual performance data of schools, financial review, and assistance with annual audits, holding charter schools accountable to their performance agreements, processes related to renewal, non-renewal, or revocation, and establishing clear plans to assist students enrolled in charter schools that close (e70-73).

Lastly, the application specifies its plans to support quality authorizing in order to yield high-quality charter schools. The application highlights Wisconsin's law which requires authorizers to consider as a framework the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) Principles and Standards and use this framework as the method for approving high-quality schools. "A key objective of this grant proposal is to assist all authorizers in complying with these statutory requirements. Under NACSA's Principles and Standards, authorizers must implement a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system, including a formal review, at least once every five years. To assist authorizers in reviewing and evaluating their charter school portfolio, DPI collects and publicly reports comprehensive school-level data by subgroup and issues school and district accountability reports. The WCSP developed a report template and technical assistance document for authorizers to complete the annual report and will continue to provide support related to this resource" (e70). The application notes that it will support this work by creating a guidebook, model contract, application templates, renewal process, and monitoring process for chartering authorizers. The various modalities to utilized to support subgrantees is thoroughly described in the application and directly related to the assumed needs of the subgrantee to ensure they are successful in meeting the objectives and outcomes detailed in the project's design.

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 application is committed to ensuring subgrantees are considering input from parents and community members. The application requires subgrantees to submit either a "data analysis, a community needs assessment survey or a school viability study and explain what family and community engagement activities have already been completed"

(e56). The application also has four primary methods it plans to incorporate to solicit feedback: "networks they run, the events they attend, the micro-credentialing review process, and online surveys for charter school audiences. WRCCS will also build off a pilot program called "EdFest" in which a region's schools were invited to set up a booth to share about their school, welcoming other school staff and families of students to attend and get to know what options are available in a particular region. WRCCS will work with schools across the state to plan and promote charter school fairs for families, students, educators, and others interested in joining to learn about the charter schools in our state" (e73). This detailed plan for engaging families is varied and inclusive. It ensures that stakeholders have ample opportunity to engage and provide input to limit time from being a barrier to entry into the conversation.

Finally, the application's continuous use of the State Superintendent's Advisory Council for Charter Schools (SSACCS), which was created "to allow the state superintendent and the WCSP to benefit from the knowledge and perspectives of a cross-section of charter school stakeholders: parents, teachers, school district administrators, school board members, charter school operators, university staff, charter school governance board representatives, and others interested in developing and supporting high-quality charter schools," appropriately demonstrates the numerous ways parents and members of the community will have a voice in this process. The council also serves to increase the public's overall understanding of charter schools and serves as a positive community liaison between authorizers, advocates, charter school operators, and the DPI (e73-74).

Weaknesses:

The application did not include enough detail about some of the more specialized events it intends to operate, networks they run, and the event they attend. As such, it is challenging and unclear to gauge what these programs are and whether they will satisfactorily meet the needs of parents and community members.

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 application provides compelling statutory evidence for the degree of flexibility afforded its state's charter school law and identifies a way it is currently working to broaden this flexibility. "All charter schools are exempt from state public school statutes Chapters 115 through 121 unless otherwise specifically mentioned (with the exception of Wis. Stat. sec. 118.40, which spells out the charter school laws)" (e75).

   The application will work to enhance and expand flexibilities through its technical assistance work to grow the state's charter school sector.

   Weaknesses:

   While the application suggests the state already has tremendous flexibility, it did not name a specific method or idea it plans to utilize to expand flexibility. The application details the flexibility it already is afforded but failed to sufficiently describe how it might maximize this flexibility.

   Reader's Score: 3

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 application's experience with grants was observed in its logic model, which thoughtfully considered a plan to achieve the objectives, responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing tasks. "The WCSP has a history of successfully administering federal charter schools program grants within budget and grant cycle timeframes. The proposed logic model, performance measures, milestones, and timelines below set forth how WCSP objectives will be met and identify key actors and responsibilities. Ambitious and achievable performance targets correspond to each measure and align with WCSP objectives, the cohesive logic model, and the DPI's mission: Every Child a Graduate, College and Career Ready" (e75).

   The application's grant management team is comprised of experts who are seasoned employees in their fields and familiar with the federal grant process. The application's grant team is as noted: The Director of the WCSP has been in this position for three years and has been working in the Wisconsin charter schools sector for over a decade, the Director of the Parental Education Options (PEO) Team, in which WCSP is housed, previously served as a DPI charter schools consultant and then as the WCSP Director, the Assistant Director of the PEO Team has been at the department working on charter schools for six years, including for the entire 2017 CSP grant, the Director of WRCCS has served since its inception and has been working in Wisconsin charter schools and supporting the work of charter schools for over a decade.

   The application's timeline, while broad, presents a plan that is extensive, clearly noting important details such as a clear timeline with sociated activities that are realistic and necessary to remain in alignment with the project's design.

   Weaknesses:

   No weaknesses found.

   Reader's Score: 10

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

   Strengths:

   The application will seek and receive feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project from participants in DPI-hosted events, participants in WRCCS-hosted events and support opportunities; all charter schools; all authorizers; and the SSACCS. WCSP collects feedback from subgrantee schools and applicants following the grant writing workshops, annual mandatory reporting sessions, through open Q&A time at monthly calls, and as needed throughout the award period (e76-77). Moreover, the application explains how it will utilize the feedback to guide improvements for future projects. The application anticipates adjustments based on feedback from stakeholders, similar to the process it underwent during the 2017 grant cycle, "under the 2017 WCSP grant, the Director used feedback from the field to make adjustments to several aspects of the project, updating the subgrant application with a focus on equity, and clarifying the terms of an expansion subaward" (e78). The application's sound judgment and adaptability reasonably demonstrate how it will use feedback to make improvements in subsequent years.

Sub

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 application understands that adequately staffing its team will be crucial to certifying the success of the project's plan, evidenced by its staffing decisions. This understanding is demonstrated by its Project Director serving full-time, working alongside additional staff and consultants. The application also underscores the nature of the Project Director's role, which is both appropriate in terms of time commitment and adequate to meet the full needs of the project's goals. The Project Director will work alongside the larger charter school team, the parent team (e40), and the Department of Public Instruction to provide substantive post-subgrant oversight and support (e61).

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 application demonstrated that it has at least one entity that is not an LEA charged with authorizing charter schools by noting Wisconsin statute §118.40(2x). This statute "created the Office of Educational Opportunity (OEO) in 2015 within the University of Wisconsin System's office, expanding the number of state institutions who could act as independent charter authorizers. As of 2021-22, Wisconsin has 34 eligible independent charter authorizers in law" (e5). This number continues to expand as "one new ICS authorizer, the Waukesha County Executive, has entered into a contract for a school opening in the 2023-24 school year" (e22).

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 application identifies in statute how its state law ensures equitable financing for charter schools, as well as the ways the DPI ensures charter schools access federal programs and state special education, transportation, and school nutrition aid programs. Namely, "Independent Chart Schools (ICSs) receive state funding directly from the DPI on a current-year per-pupil basis. These charter schools participate in federal programs in a manner consistent with traditional public school districts and are eligible to receive the aforementioned state aid. In 2017, Wisconsin Act 59 allowed ICSs to receive state funding for summer school, which increased access to these schools for many students" (e23).

   It is evident that the application believes equitable funding between the charter and public school sector is handled effectively based on its mention of the course correction recently undergone by DPI and the state legislature concerning this. The application's depiction of funding, noting both past and present practices to achieve parity across traditional and charter school sectors, is sound. "In 2022, DPI staff worked with the state legislature to correct the difference in statutes between ICS funding calculations previously based on particular authorizing entities… the Department of Public Instruction administers state and federal funding to school board-authorized charter schools using the same processes as traditional public schools" (e23).

   Finally, the application appropriately explains how it supports schools with funding, demonstrating its commitment to funding equity. "The state's 12 regional Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) support schools with accessing and managing funding, including support for filing their special education reimbursements, writing grants, support with filing federal reimbursements, notifying them of new and changing state and national financial opportunities, and contracting to serve as business managers for the schools" (e24).

   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 application expressed its focus on reducing and eliminating persistent race-based achievement gaps. "The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) launched a network, an interactive website with tools, videos, resources, and research, including an online course that all educators and schools can utilize as professional development to increase awareness of skills and strategies to improve academic achievement and close gaps" (e25).

The application also satisfactorily discusses how the state uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. "The Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) has developed a statewide charter schools' micro-credentialing program in which schools peer review one another's presentation of practices at public events. These high-quality, peer-vetted resources (which are aligned to WRCCS competencies) are collected from the presentations and added to a resource library for other schools to utilize" (e25). This peer-to-peer review of materials allows a professional learning community for different schools.

Additionally, the application highlights the steps taken to specifically support and target struggling schools. "WRCCS will create the Leadership Institute and the Charter School Design Institute to proactively support and respond to the needs of struggling schools with strong leadership practices and strong design and implementation practices for their boards, two of the pillars of successful charter schools. All subgrantee leaders will engage with both institutes through their required professional development under the grant, though all schools, especially those who are struggling with leadership and staff turnover, retention, equity, achievement, or other areas will be encouraged to participate as well" (e26).

The application comprehensively mentions several methods it utilizes to bolster struggling schools for traditional and charter schools to improve learning for all students. The application convincingly details the collaborative nature of disseminating best practices across the state, as seen in its DPI network, Resource Center, Charter Institute, as well as its WISELearn open-source curriculum system (e26). WISELearn encourages cross-sector collaboration and eliminates barriers to access resources between charters and traditional public schools. The set of resources available for all throughout the state exemplifies the extensive nature the application is making towards ensuring all struggling schools and LEAs throughout the state are equipped with the necessary resources to improve.

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 application provides satisfactory evidence that the state is actively working to provide charter schools with facilities access through several means: funding for facilities, access to public facilities, and the right of first refusal to purchase school buildings. Overall, the application documents several ways its state provides funding for charter schools including, debt subsidies to support expansion, a sampling of inventory provided by the state, and statutory language that supports

funding and access. Below are specific examples of how the application meets the priority of adequate funding for school facilities.

a)   Funding for facilities
According to the application, "Wisconsin directly subsidizes debt service costs in school
Districts through a shared cost formula through general aid, which means that these charters also have access to funding for expansion and/or needed repairs. WRCCS will work closely with ICSs to develop a budget projection that allows them to plan for their facilities costs proactively" (e28).

b)   Assistance with facilities acquisition
The application did not identify this area for receiving funding.

c)   Access to public facilities
According to the application, "Wisconsin law specifies that Milwaukee Public Schools must annually provide an inventory of public school buildings designated as surplus, underutilized, or vacant and must publicize and first make available for sale any of the buildings included in the inventory to eligible education operators" (e28).

d)   The ability to share in bonds or mill levies
The application did not identify this area for receiving funding.

e)   The right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings
According to the application, "under Wis. Stat. §119.61, charter school operators in the
largest metropolitan area in the state (City of Milwaukee) have access to public facilities and the right of first refusal to purchase public school buildings. Regarding access to public facilities, 86 percent of the state's district-authorized charter schools have access to public facilities via their charter contract" (e28).

f)   Low- or no-cost leasing privileges
The application did not identify this area for receiving funding.

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 application has a preference designed to award charter contracts to schools serving at-risk students. In alignment with this preference, for the last decade, charter schools have served a higher percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged in comparison to other public schools (e29). Additionally, "The Wisconsin Charter School Program (WCSP) subgrant application requires a description of how the charter school will: reduce or eliminate achievement gaps for underserved students, serve students at-risk of dropping out, increase graduation rates, or increase college and career readiness for its students" (e29). The application describes its state's unique model that both requires and supports charter schools with an at-risk preference. In so doing, the state allows for an alternative credit and accountability process, graduation plans, and an at-risk teaching license (e29). These provisions justify how the state

aims to support at-risk students and ensure growth and success measures are tailored to the exclusive needs of this subgroup. Additionally, the application provides an overview of ways it intends to further solicit information to better support at-risk students. The application hopes to develop a community needs assessment that will highlight best practices for serving this population, engage with all subgrantee schools to ensure equity training is delivered to all staff, conduct a statewide analysis on improvements needed to serve at-risk students, and assess the effectiveness of its new research and best practices via a multiple measures performance framework used for accountability (e29-30).

Weaknesses:

While the application requires subgrantees to include ways to reduce or eliminate dropout rates in their applications, the application does not note specific activities related to dropout recovery or comprehensive career counseling services to do so in its application. Additionally, the application focused on research and assessments that it will create to ensure at-risk students are served appropriately but provided little evidence for specific activities it is utilizing to demonstrate how at-risk students are currently being supported.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 06/30/2023 03:01 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S282A230008)
Reader #3: **********

		Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions			
Selection Criteria			
Quality of Project Design			
1. Quality of Project Design		35	30
Quality of Eligible Applicants Receiving Subgrants			
1. Eligible Applicants		15	14
State Plan			
1. State Plan		35	29
Quality of the Management Plan			
1. Management Plan		15	14
	Sub Total	100	87
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	1
	Sub Total	2	1
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 | 95 |

Panel #3 - State Entities - 6: 84.282A

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

Applicant: State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S282A230008)

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: 30

> **Sub**

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

> **Strengths:**

> The applicant's rationale for the project is poorly developed. The project's main objective is to support high-quality charter schools by granting subgrants to 42 new, expanded or replicated schools (e38). Additionally, the project involves partnering with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to assist in developing these schools (e40). SMART goals are outlined, specifically targeting struggling schools, which include the creation of an interactive website, equity trainings, collaborations with national experts, and implementation of practices that support traditionally underserved populations (e25). The proposal also highlights the provision of personalized technical assistance to charter schools (e26). To strengthen the statewide approach, a high-quality authorizer center is established, which offers workshops and is supported by NN4DA (e35). Collaboration with national organizations is listed as a means of supporting authorizers (e35). The application further describes strategies for sharing best practices, such as a free curriculum-sharing platform (e36).

> **Weaknesses:**

> The application lacks a research basis for the logic model (e350). Although the applicant discusses strategies for establishing a statewide system of collaboration, there needs to be more mention of approaches beyond resource sharing. The application outlines various methods to support schools; however, there needs to be more data demonstrating the areas where these supports are needed, and no strategy is provided for identifying the specific schools. Furthermore, it is unclear which data were utilized in developing the objectives.

> **Reader's Score:**   2

> 2. **The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; and**

> **Strengths:**

> In this fully developed response, the applicant provides three project goals and 16 objectives. All performance measures and objectives are aligned with the logic model and the grant objectives. The SMART objectives are quantifiable and can be used to review progress (e12). The goals and objectives are supported by data demonstrating how performance measures are attainable and realistic.

Sub

> **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

> **Reader's Score:** 5

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

> **Strengths:**

In this fully developed response, the applicant thoroughly addresses the ambitious nature of the program. They present data showcasing the growth of the charter sector and an increased number of authorizers (e37). The objectives and goals are well-aligned, aiming to foster a robust charter sector (e36). Data on charter school growth are provided to demonstrate the feasibility of the performance measures (e42). The applicant also presents student achievement data, highlighting their previous success in improving outcomes (e43). Additionally, data on the growth of independent charter schools are included, indicating a rise in the number of these schools, many of which lack extensive support networks. This underscores the strong demand for the program's support in creating, replicating, or expanding charter schools (e37). The authorizer objectives are designed to accommodate the growing pool of authorizers (e37).

> **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 response demonstrates a well-developed approach supported by sufficient evidence. The applicant draws evidence from their previous CSP SE award between 2017-2022 (e38). A chart depicting the projected subgrant awards is included (e38). The evidence is based on various factors, including the number of grantees, the percentage of new charter schools receiving federal charter grants, and the average award amount given (e38). To support an increase in the number of schools serving at-risk students, additional funds are allocated to grantees focused on this group (e39). Furthermore, the applicant seeks funds for up to 42 existing grantees (e39). To maintain a consistent influx of applicants, the applicant plans to collaborate with stakeholders throughout the state (e40).

> **Weaknesses:**

The applicant needs to provide a rationale for funding grant recipients from the previous cycle.

> **Reader's Score:** 18

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's response is well-developed, providing sufficient detail about the application process. A program timeline that covers all aspects of the application process is included (e349). The applicant demonstrates a longstanding

commitment to rural schools and showcases various pedagogical models supported by a library of resources collected from high-quality charter schools (e45-e46). They describe a range of publication methods to ensure widespread awareness of the grant and its requirements, along with offering technical assistance before submitting a proposal (e46). The application requirements are outlined, accompanied by detailed descriptions of each section (e48). Roles and responsibilities are briefly mentioned, including the requirement for authorizers to endorse applications (e49). Family and community engagement activities, such as listening activities and board preparation, are listed (e51), and a needs assessment is mandated for the subgrant (e52). Additionally, applicants are expected to provide a five-year operational budget that extends beyond the grant period, aiding in developing a sustainability plan (e51). The sub-award granting process is clearly articulated, encompassing the selection of peer reviewers and eligibility determination. Student transportation plans are also required as part of the subgrant (e57).

Weaknesses:

The application process described does not fully explain how rural and high schools will be prioritized. The plan for ensuring student transportation does not suggest that this barrier to enrollment is addressed sufficiently.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - State Plan

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

Reader's Score: 29

> **Sub**
>
> 1. **Adequately monitor the eligible applicants receiving subgrants under the State entity's program;**
>
> **Strengths:**
>
> The proposal includes a fully developed response to this criterion. The application outlines several monitoring actions that effectively capture the program's success, focusing on enrollment and student achievement (e59). A protocol consisting of eight indicators and 58 sub-indicators is utilized to monitor schools, with three dedicated staff members responsible for this monitoring work (e59). The monitoring plan involves identifying risk areas and providing technical assistance to struggling grantees (e59). Monitoring is conducted not only for schools but also for authorizer practices (e60). The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) implements a comprehensive academic review using multiple state sources (e60). Additionally, the state ensures compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and requires an annual financial audit (e60). The proposal includes a monitoring timeline (e62) to outline the specific monitoring activities.
>
> **Weaknesses:**
>
> No weaknesses found.
>
> **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;**

Sub

Strengths:

: The applicant's response demonstrates a well-developed approach to minimizing duplication of work. They describe policies and processes for the grant aligned with reporting procedures for other federal grants (e61). The subgrant application requirements will directly inform the contract requirements (e65). Financial and academic information obtained from audits and already mandated for authorizers will be utilized for grant reporting purposes (e65). This integration of existing data sources and streamlined reporting procedures ensures efficiency and reduces unnecessary duplication of efforts.

Weaknesses:

While it is clear that charter schools will benefit from these practices, beyond using similar data reporting, it is unclear how the subgrants and monitoring process will reduce duplication for authorizing agencies.

Reader's Score: 3

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's response is comprehensive and well-developed. They have established a charter school resource center that supports developers, operators, authorizers, and governance boards (e65). This resource center boasts an extensive collection of nearly 1,000 resources, including videos, documents, live training sessions, and web-based courses (e66). Additionally, the applicant intends to develop the Center for High-Quality Authorizing (e66), which will utilize standards and principles from reputable national organizations like NACSA to support authorizers (e70).

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 response adequately addresses processes for soliciting input from parents and community members (e72). It is emphasized that a community needs assessment will be mandatory before submitting grants to ensure the project development is informed by the assessment results (e73). The subgrants will be evaluated based on the quality of the needs assessment submitted (e52). Applications that demonstrate meaningful community engagement will be given preference (e53). Activities such as Edfest are organized to provide families with information and an opportunity to ask questions (e73). Additionally, the Superintendent's Advisory Council for Charter Schools enables stakeholders to provide feedback and share perspectives on various aspects of the programs (e73).

Weaknesses:

The application needs to be clearer as to how parents and community members will provide ongoing feedback beyond some annual surveys and opportunities to ask questions. Parents' and community members' role in the implementation phase is unclear.

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 proposal adequately responds to this criterion. The state provides a great degree of flexibility to charter schools. Recent changes have removed geographical restrictions and residency requirements for enrollment (e75). All charter schools are exempt from Wisconsin public school statutes (e51).

Weaknesses:

: The application needs to sufficiently describe the methods and strategies for ongoing efforts to maximize flexibility or increase autonomy.

Reader's Score: 3

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: 14

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 application includes a fully developed response to this criterion. The application demonstrates a comprehensive and well-developed response to this criterion. A detailed grant timeline is provided on e349. The applicant has effectively aligned performance measures, milestones, and timelines with the responsibilities of key staff members (e75). The proposal includes performance targets that are in sync with the goals and provide evidence of the successful achievement of project objectives (e75). The responsibilities of the staff members are clearly defined and adequately described, drawing upon the applicant's prior experience with CSP (Charter Schools Program) grants. The logic model incorporates milestones for the project, ensuring a clear path to progress. The staff members possess the necessary qualifications and experience in administering CSP subgrants (e76).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 delivers a comprehensive and fully-developed response. They provide a list of participants who will receive feedback, which will be solicited after workshops and meetings. As part of an annual survey, authorizers are

asked to provide feedback on charter schools to the state. Additionally, periodic surveys are conducted to gather feedback on resources, ideas, needs, and authorizers (e77). The feedback received will be utilized to amend various components of the project, focusing on enhancing the application process.

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 an adequately developed response. Some details of time commitments are provided (e78), including activities outlined in the logic model. A grant timeline on e349 describes the program's activities, although the persons responsible are omitted. A full-time director leads the project. The director also receives support from staff at the resource center (e78).

Weaknesses:

Although information about the director's time is provided, there is only mention of other positions—without enough specific information to tell whether the time commitments are sufficient; Specific job responsibilities are not listed. There is insufficient information related to the management of external partners. The timeline does not show whom is responsible for each task, nor are milestones tied to deliverables that may require staff time.

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 application meets the priority. The state has 34 eligible authorizers (e22), including many non-LEAs.

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 provides some evidence that the state provides funding similar to traditional schools. Charter Schools receive equitable state and federal financing (e23). Charter schools also receive equitable funding for summer school (e24). Other statewide educational resources are also available such as Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA's) support for special education and federal funds and state grants (e24).

   Weaknesses:

   While the application clearly describes the equitable distribution of state and federal funds, non-LEA charters do not appear to receive local funds. More information on the timing of the distribution of funds would be helpful to determine if charter schools have sufficient funding at all times of the year.

Reader's Score: 1

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 DPI provides many opportunities for sharing resources between charter and traditional schools. School leaders, including charter schools, identify and share strategies to close achievement gaps (e25). Micro credentialing program allows charter school leaders to share best practices (e25). Professional Learning networks were established to share best practices (e26). The applicant will partner with the state using WISELearn, an open-source library, to share curriculum and instructional materials (e26). This resource contains organizational templates, project-based learning tools, community engagement strategies, and other resources to both charter and traditional schools. A micro-credentialing program allows peer review of schools to share resources and strategies (e25). Personalized technical assistance is provided to charter schools, including video meetings, training sessions, and document reviews (e26).

   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:

   Wisconsin provides some support for charter school facilities. Milwaukee charter schools have access to unused public facilities and first right of refusal (e28). District-authorized charters have access to public facilities written into the charter agreement (e28). Resources such as a facilities checklist, cost projections, zoning guidance, etc., are available from the Charter Resource Center. A facilities guidebook will also provide technical assistance to authorizers considering school locations (e29).

   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 evidence that some support for at-risk students in charter schools is available. Authorizers are required to give preference to charter applications that include provisions for serving at-risk students. State law allows all schools flexibility to use alternative plans for at-risk students, and subgrantees are required to provide a plan for reducing achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates and college and career readiness (e29). Additional subgrant funds are offered to schools that serve at-risk students at high schools (e29). Equity training is required of subgrantees (e30). An alternative accountability process for schools serving at-risk students provides accountability and growth measures for schools with limited data (e29). Schools receive guidance on enrollment and admission procedures and other practice resources (e30).

   Weaknesses:

   The applicant describes general support for at-risk students but does not explicitly demonstrate that the required activities will be implemented due to the grant. SMART goals associated with this priority do not clearly show evidence of support for at-risk students.

Reader's Score: 2

Status: Submitted

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