

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2023 06:30 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Horizon Science Academy Des Moines (S282B230006)

Reader #1: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 40 | 32 |
| Sub Total | 40 | 32 |
| Continuation | | |
| Quality of the Continuation Plan | | |
| 1. Continuation Plan | 20 | 18 |
| Sub Total | 20 | 18 |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Quality of Project Design | 10 | 8 |
| Need for Project | | |
| 1. Need for Project | 30 | 30 |
| Sub Total | 40 | 38 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| CPP | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| 1. CPP | 5 | 3 |
| Sub Total | 5 | 3 |
| Total | 105 | 91 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Developers New Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Horizon Science Academy Des Moines (S282B230006)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. (1) Quality of the Charter School's Management Plan (up to 40 points).

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 the following factors:

Reader's Score: 32

Sub

1. (i) 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 (up to 10 points). (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(i))

Strengths:

- The management plan is detailed to the extent that it highlights a listing of tasks, with an owner, and a general range of due dates (pg. e23-29).
- The plan dedicates the project manager to oversee timelines and within budget (pg. e29).

Weaknesses:

- The management plan presented is a listing of items with minimal detail and no evidence of milestones related to accomplishing project tasks. Milestones in this case related to progress monitoring to ensure on-time and on-track to completion (pg. e23-29).
- The listing of items is not correlated explicitly to need, impact, and goals and objectives. Without some tie-in it appears to be just a listing of purchases (pg. e23-29).

Reader's Score: 5

2. (ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(f)(2)(iv))

Strengths:

- The proposal exhibits a strong alignment between the costs and the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (pg. e167).
- The budget reflects a judicious allocation of resources, ensuring that each expense directly contributes to achieving the project's goals. The costs are realistic and well-justified, demonstrating a clear understanding of the project's scope and the value it will bring (pg. e167).
- Moreover, the proposed budget reflects a prudent and efficient use of resources, indicating the applicant's

Sub

commitment to maximizing the project's impact while being financially responsible (pg. e167).

Weaknesses:

- The proposal indicates there will be no contracted services on the narrative (pg. e169), but then includes contracted services in the budget (e170).

Reader's Score: 4

3. (iii) 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 (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(iv))

Strengths:

- The proposal showcases a deep understanding of the significance of each team member's role, ensuring that their expertise and contributions align precisely with the project's goals. For example, the chart provided on page e31 indicates that across nine key and identified people, 5-20% of their time will be dedicated to the project, including the principal (20%) and the Director of Teaching and Learning (20%) (pg. e31).
- The proposal outlines the synergy and the relationship between the Concept Schools (CMO) and the Horizon Schools with delineated positions and responsibilities (pg. e31-32).

Weaknesses:

- Total FTE for the key personnel is less than 1 and does not seem adequate to meet the needs or total time commitment. Does not provide job descriptions (pg. e31).

Reader's Score: 3

4. (iv) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(e)(3)(ii))

Strengths:

- The key project personnel showcased in the proposal possess outstanding qualifications, demonstrating a wealth of relevant training and experience in their respective fields (pg. e58-89).
- Each team member's expertise aligns seamlessly with the project's objectives, instilling confidence in their ability to effectively execute the proposed project (pg. e58-89).
- The proposal provides compelling evidence of the key personnel's past accomplishments and successful track record, highlighting their immense value including the support of the CMO and delineation of duties and boundaries (pg. e58-89).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

5. (v) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to maintain control over all CSP grant funds (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

- The applicant's plan to maintain control over all CSP grant funds is exemplary, demonstrating a robust and

Sub

responsible approach to financial management (pg. e32-34).

- The proposal outlines a detailed and transparent budget management strategy, showcasing the applicant's commitment to utilizing grant funds prudently and effectively (pg. e32-34).
- Moreover, the inclusion of thorough monitoring and reporting procedures ensures accountability and compliance, assuring that the applicant will maintain full control over the grant funds and use them to achieve the proposed project's objectives successfully (pg. e32-34).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were observed.

Reader's Score: 5

6. (vi) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to make all programmatic decisions (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

- The applicant's plan to make all programmatic decisions is commendable, reflecting a well-thought-out and inclusive approach to project management (pg. e34-35).
- The proposal outlines a clear decision-making structure that involves key stakeholders, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process (pg. e34-35).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

7. (vii) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to administer or supervise the administration of the grant, including maintaining management and oversight responsibilities over the grant (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

- The applicant's plan to administer and supervise the grant is outstanding, exemplifying a comprehensive and well-structured approach to grant management. For example, the proposal elaborates on the project accounting controls (pg. e32), the school accounting and internal controls (pg. e.33), and records retention, processing and reconciliation controls (pg. 34), highlighting a check and balances process.
- The proposal outlines a clear organizational framework with defined roles and responsibilities, ensuring efficient administration and oversight of the grant's implementation (pg. e37).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Continuation - Quality of the Continuation Plan

1. (2) Quality of the Continuation Plan (up to 20 points).

In determining the quality of the continuation plan, the Secretary considers the extent to which the eligible applicant is prepared to continue to operate the charter school that would

receive grant funds in a manner consistent with the eligible applicant's application once the grant funds under this program are no longer available. (2019 NFP)

Strengths:

- The proposal outlines a clear and viable strategy, ensuring the school's continued success while remaining consistent with the initial application's objectives (pg. e38). For example, the school is projected to open and continue without the grant and will utilize the grant if approved to shift the earned per pupil to expanding board goals such as before and after school giving additional support to parents and services to students (pg. e38).
- The design of the proposal to include "one-time costs associated with start-up of the school" is exemplary in planning and highlights their ability to sustain the school beyond year one (pg. e38).

Weaknesses:

- The proposal did not mention efforts or funds raised or steps taken prior to opening or the planning year and what might be on-going to anticipate any real threats or challenges (pg. e38).

Reader's Score: 18

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. (3) Quality of the Project Design (up to 10 points).

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

1. (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(c)(2)(xxix))

Strengths:

- The proposal demonstrates a strong rationale that underpins its purpose and objectives (pg. e39-42).
- The applicant has provided a clear and compelling justification for addressing the identified problem of failing academic standards and student outcomes over the past 25 years and need the need to eliminate that gap with changing demographics, supported by comprehensive research and data (pg. e39-42).
- The proposal effectively establishes a logical connection between the project's goals and the potential impact it will have, showcasing a well-reasoned and well-grounded approach (pg. e39-42).

Weaknesses:

- No logic model observed.

Reader's Score: 4

Sub

2. (ii) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(c)(2)(i))

Strengths:

- The proposal excels in clarity and measurability when defining the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project (pg. e30-31, and e41-44).
- Each goal is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), leaving no ambiguity about the project's intended achievements (pg. e30-31, and e41-44).
- The well-defined objectives, accompanied by quantifiable indicators and metrics that will allow for systematic evaluation of the school's success (pg. e30-31, and e41-44).

Weaknesses:

- There is no explicit correlation or evidence of how these goals and objectives will be achieved (pg. e41-44).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. (4) Need for Project (up to 30 points).

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

1. (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project (up to 15 points). (34 CFR 75.210(a)(2)(i))

Strengths:

- The proposal effectively highlights the magnitude and severity of the problem the school seeks to address. For example, less than a third of 8th graders are reading on grade level (pg. e42).
- The applicant provides compelling evidence and data that showcase the significant impact of the problem on the target population or community (pg. e42-44).
- The proposal provides a thorough analysis and comprehensive understanding of the problem's scope and consequences emphasizes the urgency and importance of the school (pg. e42-44).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were observed.

Reader's Score: 15

2. (ii) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be

Sub

carried out by the proposed project (up to 15 points). (34 CFR 75.210(a)(2)(ii))

Strengths:

- The proposal convincingly outlines the substantial need for the services and activities proposed in the project by highlighting the 1.2 years of academic growth with other Concept Schools using the same model and similar demographics (pg. e44).
- The applicant presents a thorough analysis of the demand and gaps in existing services, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the community's needs including substantive MTSS services and flexible pedagogical approach based on individual and small group student need (pg. e45 - 46).
- The proposal effectively showcases the potential impact of the school(s) in addressing the identified need and highlights that they will be a non-selective school, with access to any students regardless of academic, behavior, or other challenges (pg. e44-45).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses were observed.

Reader's Score: 15

Priority Questions

CPP - Competitive Preference Priority

1. Competitive Preference Priority—Promoting High-Quality Educator- and Community-Centered Charter Schools to Support Underserved Students (up to 5 points).

(a) Under this priority, an applicant must propose to open a new charter school, or to replicate or expand a high-quality charter school, that is developed and implemented—

(1) With meaningful and ongoing engagement with current or former teachers and other educators; and

(2) Using a community-centered approach that includes an assessment of community assets, informs the development of the charter school, and includes the implementation of protocols and practices designed to ensure that the charter school will use and interact with community assets on an ongoing basis to create and maintain strong community ties.

(b) In its application, an applicant must provide a high-quality plan that demonstrates how its proposed project would meet the requirements in paragraph (a) of this priority, accompanied by a timeline for key milestones that span the course of planning, development, and implementation of the charter school.

Strengths:

- The applicant is proposing a new charter school set to open in August 2023 with 190 K-3rd graders and grow by one grade level per year until they reach 12th grade (pg. e11).
- The applicant demonstrated in their engagement with Concept a meaningful and ongoing relationship with current and former educators (pg. e16).
- The proposal presented a high-quality plan is detailed on pg. e25-29 that meets the criteria with a timeline and milestones consistent with the development of the school.

Weaknesses:

- The community-centered approach that includes an actual assessment of community assets and how the school will continue an on-going relationship and engagement is not evident (pg. e22). Philanthropy and organizations are discussed but no detail about the school, students, or teachers will interact with that community.

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2023 06:30 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2023 10:40 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Horizon Science Academy Des Moines (S282B230006)

Reader #2: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 40 | 30 |
| Sub Total | 40 | 30 |
| Continuation | | |
| Quality of the Continuation Plan | | |
| 1. Continuation Plan | 20 | 14 |
| Sub Total | 20 | 14 |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Quality of Project Design | 10 | 8 |
| Need for Project | | |
| 1. Need for Project | 30 | 29 |
| Sub Total | 40 | 37 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| CPP | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| 1. CPP | 5 | 3 |
| Sub Total | 5 | 3 |
| Total | 105 | 84 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Developers New Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Horizon Science Academy Des Moines (S282B230006)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. (1) Quality of the Charter School's Management Plan (up to 40 points).

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 the following factors:

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

1. (i) 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 (up to 10 points). (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(i))

Strengths:

The applicant describes several tasks that will aid the management of the proposed project. For example, the project manager will regularly track the progress of the execution during regularly scheduled meetings, at least monthly with the superintendent and school principal. In addition, the treasurer will regularly track expenditures versus the approved budget by line item to ensure project execution within the budget. The superintendent will ensure that all tangible items are labeled and logged so all items purchased are tracked (p. e-23-29).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. Instead, the applicant provides a list of items such as Social Studies, Chrome Books, Clever, and Laminator, which seems to indicate a list of supplies that need to be purchased for the proposed project (p. e-25-29). The list includes the names of persons who are responsible for the items and the time frame for obtaining the items but does not constitute a management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project. Without clearly defined responsibilities related to the management of the proposed project, it cannot be determined if the objectives will be achieved on time and within budget.

Reader's Score: 5

2. (ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(f)(2)(iv))

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a budget of [REDACTED] which is mostly reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (p. e-180).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The proposed budget is not completely reasonable as the budget is not clearly described. For example, the applicant indicates that it will not seek funding for contractual services (p. e-169), however, the proposed budget includes several contractual expenditures including training for software programs such as Renaissance Learning, Inc., face to face professional development, crisis prevention institute training, Social Emotional Learning training, and CPR training (p. e-170). This discrepancy may affect the total amount of funds requested by the applicant and makes it difficult to determine to what extent the costs of the proposed project are reasonable.

Reader's Score: 3

- 3. (iii) 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 (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(iv))**

Strengths:

The applicant effectively lists the time commitments of the Project Director who will contribute .05 FTE toward the initial phase of the proposed project. Day-to-day grant oversight will become the responsibility of the superintendent after the grant is awarded. He will contribute .10 FTE toward the proposed project. Other key personnel are Treasurer .10 FTE, Principal .20 FTE, Director of Teaching and Learning .20 FTE, Director of Operations .10 FTE, Director of School Culture and SEL .05 FTE, Director of Elementary Education .15 FTE, Director of Educational Technology .5 FTE. (p. e-31).

Weaknesses:

The total time commitment of all key personnel is less than one full-time position (.95 FTE), which seems inadequate for a project of this magnitude. The applicant does not provide job descriptions for the key personnel that would help to fully determine if the time commitments are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (p. e-31).

Reader's Score: 3

- 4. (iv) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(e)(3)(ii))**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a list of key personnel and effectively indicates that these key personnel have been instrumental in the foundation of the proposed charter school and its expected growth and success. The positions of key personnel fittingly include Board Chairperson, Chief Strategic Growth Officer, Superintendent, Treasurer, Principal, Assistant Principal, Instructional Coach, Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Operations, Director of School Culture and SEL, Director of Elementary Education, Director of Educational Technology (p. e-32). The resumes of these key personnel indicate relevant qualifications for this proposed project (p. e-58-95).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not state what roles the key personnel will play in the proposed charter school and does not describe their relevant job duties. Without a description of duties to be performed, the resumes alone cannot support the qualifications of key personnel including relevant training and experience (p. e-32 and p. e-58-95 Appendix B).

Reader's Score: 4

Sub

5. (v) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to maintain control over all CSP grant funds (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant comprehensively demonstrates an effective plan to maintain control over all CSP grant funds (p. e-32-34). The applicant fittingly proposes to contract with an audit firm to review accounting policies and procedures and assist in the yearly audit. In addition, a treasurer from the applicant's organization will prepare the annual budget and monthly reports for the governing board. The applicant also describes financial security measures where accounting software is accessible only to the treasurer and audit firm and usernames and passwords are issued for each user with access fittingly limited based on their positions. Other controls such as document control and accounting controls will appropriately be implemented to maintain control over all CSP grant funds (p. e-32-34).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 5

6. (vi) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to make all programmatic decisions (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates a mostly appropriate plan to make programmatic decisions (p. e-34-35). The applicant effectively indicates that the principal empowers her administrative team, teachers, and staff to analyze data to help guide the decision-making process that relates to student academics, school culture, programming, and other community needs (p. e-34). For example, curricular decisions are made in collaboration between teachers, the regional director of teaching and learning, and the director of elementary education. School culture and SEL-related decisions are made in collaboration between teachers, principal, and Concept's Director of School Culture and SEL. Facilities and operational decisions are made in collaboration between the principal, superintendent, and director of operations. effect by teacher teams. Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams meet weekly to discuss student performance (individual and group), academic issues, and how to adjust instruction considering current data (p. e-34).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 5

7. (vii) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to administer or supervise the administration of the grant, including maintaining management and oversight responsibilities over the grant (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant indicates that project accounting controls are in place for the proposed project as the treasurer monitors project expenditures (p. e-37). The applicant proposes a plan to administer and supervise the administration of the grant, including maintaining management and oversight responsibilities over the grant. For example, the treasurer will fittingly monitor project expenditures and prepare required documentation, and the superintendent will oversee grant administration as an actor of the governing board (p. e-37).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Continuation - Quality of the Continuation Plan

1. (2) Quality of the Continuation Plan (up to 20 points).

In determining the quality of the continuation plan, the Secretary considers the extent to which the eligible applicant is prepared to continue to operate the charter school that would receive grant funds in a manner consistent with the eligible applicant's application once the grant funds under this program are no longer available. (2019 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a mostly feasible continuation plan. The applicant seeks [REDACTED] for the duration of the proposed five-year grant period and appropriately demonstrates that most of the up-front costs associated with the proposed project will be for supplies to launch the project. Personnel costs will not be incurred until year two of the proposed project, which will ensure that most funds can be distributed over the course of the remaining four years. During the first five years of project implementation, student enrollment is effectively anticipated to increase from 190 students to 390 students, which will generate an increased revenue from the state for per pupil funding (p. e-38-39).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not demonstrate how much revenue it will receive from the state in per pupil funding, which makes it difficult to determine to what extent the applicant is prepared to continue to operate the charter school after grant funds under this program are no longer available. The applicant does not address funding from other sources such as additional grants, fundraising efforts, in-kind contributions, or donations that would support the quality of the continuation plan.

Reader's Score: 14

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. (3) Quality of the Project Design (up to 10 points).

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

1. (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(c)(2)(xxix))

Strengths:

The applicant somewhat demonstrates a rationale for the proposed project. For example, the applicant indicates that the state's legislature started funding for charter schools with a founding group state board model to promote charter school growth. The charter school authorizer holds the belief that every child deserves the right to a high-

Sub

quality, free, and public education with charter schools playing an important role in providing this education. The applicant's proposed project was approved by the state in 2023. Horizon is historically the first charter school in Iowa to operate with an independent governing board overseeing its operations. The proposed project appropriately seeks to provide a safe and enriching learning environment with a science-based curriculum. The applicant plans to open in the Fall of 2023 and anticipates enrolling 190 Kindergarten through 3rd-grade students living within the Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) attendance zone, and it will expand yearly until it reaches K-12 and serves about 650 students by 2032 (p. e-14-15).

Weaknesses:

The applicant refers to a logic model which was not located in the application. A logic model would potentially support the rationale for the proposed project.

Reader's Score: 4

- 2. (ii) **The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(c)(2)(i))**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes several objectives which include the implementation a STEM-focused educational model; the implementation of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational model; the implementation of staff development and school culture model; and meeting the associated and target goals (p. e-41). The applicant lists several performance measures which include the number of Horizon charter schools in operation, increases in percentages of students' proficiency levels in reading and math, and the percentage of teacher who will use at least one plan designed in collaboration with instructional coach (p. e-41-42) (Performance measures p. e-174-175).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not demonstrate how project outcomes were determined and whether current baseline achievement data was considered in establishing performance measure targets. For example, reading and math performance expectations are identical and anticipate that 50% of students reach proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. These outcomes seem overly ambitious and not likely attainable given the current 20% proficiency rate among students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. (p. e-174-175).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

- 1. (4) **Need for Project (up to 30 points).**

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

Reader's Score: 29

Sub

Sub

1. (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project (up to 15 points). (34 CFR 75.210(a)(2)(i))

Strengths:

The applicant mostly demonstrates the magnitude of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. For example, the applicant indicates that Iowa's national educational ranking dropped from #3 to #24 over the course of 27 years with less than one third of Iowa's 8th grade students being proficient in reading and math (p. e-42). Additionally, only 20% of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch are academically proficient (p. e-42). The applicant indicates that 66% of the target area student population is racially diverse, and about 76% qualify for free and reduced lunch programs.

Weaknesses:

The applicant provides data to highlight the severity of the problem by indicating that fewer than one third of Iowa 8th graders are proficient in Reading and Math, however, the proposed charter school will serve K-3rd grade during the period of this grant which makes this need to be addressed non-relevant for the duration of the grant and does not support the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed (p. e-43).

Reader's Score: 14

2. (ii) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project (up to 15 points). (34 CFR 75.210(a)(2)(ii))

Strengths:

The applicant appropriately demonstrates the magnitude of the need for services to be provided. For example, students attending charter schools achieve higher academic results compared to those students attending traditional schools (p. e-44) and proposed research-based instructional approaches such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to increase student achievement (p. e-41). The applicant effectively demonstrates the types of services to be provided by the proposed project (p. e-44-47). For example, students with disabilities will be supported within a collaborative environment and a supportive culture and according to state and federal laws. The applicant appropriately proposes to develop individual equity plans which will help all students have access to planned services and activities (p. e-46). The applicant effectively indicates that there are many high-quality schools in the target area, however, many have struggled to perform at high levels for many years. For example, more than one-third of all elementary schools, a large majority of middle schools, and ALL high schools in the target area are rated by the Iowa Department of Education as either Needs Improvement or Priority. This indicates that the problem of public education in the target area is significant and indicates the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided by the proposed project (p. e-42-44).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses are noted.

Reader's Score: 15

Priority Questions

CPP - Competitive Preference Priority

1. Competitive Preference Priority—Promoting High-Quality Educator- and Community-Centered Charter Schools to Support Underserved Students (up to 5 points).

(a) Under this priority, an applicant must propose to open a new charter school, or to replicate or expand a high-quality charter school, that is developed and implemented—

(1) With meaningful and ongoing engagement with current or former teachers and other educators; and

(2) Using a community-centered approach that includes an assessment of community assets, informs the development of the charter school, and includes the implementation of protocols and practices designed to ensure that the charter school will use and interact with community assets on an ongoing basis to create and maintain strong community ties.

(b) In its application, an applicant must provide a high-quality plan that demonstrates how its proposed project would meet the requirements in paragraph (a) of this priority, accompanied by a timeline for key milestones that span the course of planning, development, and implementation of the charter school.

Strengths:

(a)(1) The applicant effectively demonstrates that the proposed charter school is developed with meaningful and ongoing engagement with current teachers. For example, teachers and department chairs will meet monthly to discuss and resolve issues that have been raised in the other team meetings (p. e-19).

(a)(2) The applicant appropriately shows a community engagement plan which fittingly seeks to identify non-profit organizations that already work within the target area and establish relationships with those non-profits (p. e-23).

Weaknesses:

(b) The applicant does not propose a plan that includes specific activities related to the implementation of community assets (p. e-29).

Reader's Score: 3

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/03/2023 10:40 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2023 06:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Horizon Science Academy Des Moines (S282B230006)

Reader #3: *****

| | Points Possible | Points Scored |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Questions | | |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of the Management Plan | | |
| 1. Management Plan | 40 | 31 |
| Sub Total | 40 | 31 |
| Continuation | | |
| Quality of the Continuation Plan | | |
| 1. Continuation Plan | 20 | 15 |
| Sub Total | 20 | 15 |
| Selection Criteria | | |
| Quality of Project Design | | |
| 1. Quality of Project Design | 10 | 8 |
| Need for Project | | |
| 1. Need for Project | 30 | 30 |
| Sub Total | 40 | 38 |
| Priority Questions | | |
| CPP | | |
| Competitive Preference Priority | | |
| 1. CPP | 5 | 3 |
| Sub Total | 5 | 3 |
| Total | 105 | 87 |

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - CSP Developers New Panel - 1: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Horizon Science Academy Des Moines (S282B230006)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. (1) Quality of the Charter School's Management Plan (up to 40 points).

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 the following factors:

Reader's Score: 31

Sub

1. (i) 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 (up to 10 points). (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(i))

Strengths:

The applicant provides a management plan that consists of the name of an item with the last name of the responsible person and the month for the timeline. (pgs. e25-29)

The applicant states that the project manager (.10 FTE) will track the progress of the tasks for completion and the treasurer (.10 FTE) will track expenditures to ensure appropriate spend-down of funds. (p. e29).

Weaknesses:

There are no details provided in the management plan such as the nature of the task listed. (pgs. e25-29). For example, IXL does not clarify if this is referring to a software purchase or training for teachers.

There is no evidence of milestones within the management plan. (pgs. e25-29).

Reader's Score: 5

2. (ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(f)(2)(iv))

Strengths:

The applicant provides budget details with costs that appear to be reasonable in support of the proposed project. (p. e167; Attachment 27).

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant states that the CMO provides comprehensive services in the areas of curriculum consultation, financial systems and operational services but there is no evidence provided in the management plan. (p. e169).

Reader's Score: 3

- 3. (iii) 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 (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(iv))**

Strengths:

The applicant provides the time commitment for each of the key personnel supporting the proposed plan. (p. e31). For example, the current Project Director, also the Chief Strategic Growth Officer dedicates .5 FTE until the CMO Superintendent assumes the role with a .10 FTE.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide reasons why there is a .10 FTE Project Director role for a project of this magnitude. (p. e31).

Reader's Score: 3

- 4. (iv) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(e)(3)(ii))**

Strengths:

The applicant has provided sufficient evidence substantiating the qualifications for the key personnel to provide significant support for the proposed project in the prospective roles. The personnel included have appropriate qualifications for each identified roles. (pgs. e58-95).

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

- 5. (v) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to maintain control over all CSP grant funds (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)**

Strengths:

The applicant states that the organization follows federal and state guidelines regarding grants and will maintain monthly progress reports as well as annual audit procedures to ensure controlled spending of CSP funds. (p. e33). For example, internal controls such as records retention, processing controls, and reconciliation controls allow the organization to ensure accuracy of expenditures and reporting to the funder.

Sub

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

6. (vi) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to make all programmatic decisions (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant states that are processes in place to ensure consensus and transparency related to all programmatic decisions. Decisions are made upon review of relevant academic, behavioral and community based data. At the school level, the principal in collaboration with the administrative team, analyze data to guide decisions related to academics, school culture and programming. (pgs. e34-37).

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

7. (vii) The adequacy of the applicant's plan to administer or supervise the administration of the grant, including maintaining management and oversight responsibilities over the grant (up to 5 points). (2022 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant states a team approach to supervising the administration of the grant. For example, all expenditures are monitored by the treasurer who prepares the necessary documentation for fiscal reporting. The superintendent, as the project director, will also supervise the grant administration. Both roles include responsibilities such as tracking completion of tasks and procurement of expenditures, regular meetings with key project personnel regarding project progress, preparation of the annual report and participation in CSP meetings and any other meetings related to the project. (p. e37).

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 5

Continuation - Quality of the Continuation Plan

1. (2) Quality of the Continuation Plan (up to 20 points).

In determining the quality of the continuation plan, the Secretary considers the extent to which the eligible applicant is prepared to continue to operate the charter school that would receive grant funds in a manner consistent with the eligible applicant's application once the grant funds under this program are no longer available. (2019 NFP)

Strengths:

The applicant indicates that the budget was developed with one-time expenditures to eliminate future costs. (p. e38).

Future funding will occur with the increase in student enrollment. For example, an anticipated increase from 190 students to 390 students. (p. e38).

The applicant indicates that the Iowa Department of Education, the authorizing agency, provides comprehensive oversight for Horizon Science Academy Des Moines relevant to sustainability of funding. (p. e38).

Per the chart found in Appendix G5, the applicant explains a forecasting plan for a steady increase in enrollment to maintain funding for related expenditures.

The budget is designed to decrease in allocation starting Year 2 through 5. For example, Year 1 electronics [REDACTED] versus Year 4 electronics [REDACTED]. (p. e167; Attachment 27).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not address strategies to meet a funding shortfall if enrollment numbers do not meet anticipated projections. (p. e38).

Reader's Score: 15

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. (3) Quality of the Project Design (up to 10 points).

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

Reader's Score: 8

Sub

1. (i) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)) (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(c)(2)(xxix))

Strengths:

The applicant states that the rationale for the project stems from the decline in the K-12 education system in the state. Despite Title 1 services, less than one-third of the state's 8th grade students have achieved proficiency in Reading and Math. The Horizon Charter School mission is to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for the whole student to develop and reach academic achievement to thrive in a STEM focused world. (pgs. e39-41). For example, the school values include, STEM focused college preparatory curriculum, family and community engagement, elevated achievement standards, data driven decision making and instruction, student engagement, assessments to ensure accountability of learning and qualified instructional staff.

Sub

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide evidence of a Logic Model to support the proposed project. (pgs. e39-40).

Reader's Score: 4

2. (ii) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable (up to 5 points). (34 CFR 75.210(c)(2)(i))

Strengths:

The key objectives and strategies of this Horizon Science Academy Des Moines project are both clearly defined and measurable:

Objective #1: Implement Horizon's STEM-focused educational model.

Strategies include: extended school day/year, robotics clubs, science fairs, increased time dedicate for Math instruction, implementing data-driven academic interventions to ensure student success.

Objective #2: Implement Horizon's diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) model.

Strategies include: establishing partnerships with early childhood centers and non-profit organizations, hosting recruitment fairs, participating in neighborhood association events, and implementing data-driven behavior and SEL interventions to eliminate barriers and ensure student success.

Objective #3: Implement Horizon's staff development and school culture model.

Strategies include: timely and consistent teacher feedback and evaluation, adding instructional coaches, implementing targeted instructional support, and competitive salary and benefits for teachers. (pgs. e30-31).

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide clear evidence regarding how the plan aligns to the goals and objectives. (pgs. e30-31).

Reader's Score: 4

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. (4) Need for Project (up to 30 points).

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

Reader's Score: 30

Sub

1. (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project (up to 15 points). (34 CFR 75.210(a)(2)(i))

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant states that no more than 20% of all students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch in the state are reading with proficiency. (p. e42). The project components are aligned to the needs of the students that reside in the attendance area. Moreover, the applicant provides evidence that the charter network has experienced successes in increasing student achievement in other areas of the state. (pgs. e44-45). The proposed plan aligns with the identified needs of the students residing in the school's attendance area.

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 15

2. (ii) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project (up to 15 points). (34 CFR 75.210(a)(2)(ii))

Strengths:

The applicant states the necessity of the underserved communities to receive academic opportunities for students to advance in science, technology and math. The K-12 curriculum has been established as most effective in ensuring success as well as a 100% graduation rate and college acceptance rate. (p. e44).

Weaknesses:

There are no identified weaknesses.

Reader's Score: 15

Priority Questions

CPP - Competitive Preference Priority

1. Competitive Preference Priority—Promoting High-Quality Educator- and Community-Centered Charter Schools to Support Underserved Students (up to 5 points).

(a) Under this priority, an applicant must propose to open a new charter school, or to replicate or expand a high-quality charter school, that is developed and implemented—

(1) With meaningful and ongoing engagement with current or former teachers and other educators; and

(2) Using a community-centered approach that includes an assessment of community assets, informs the development of the charter school, and includes the implementation of protocols and practices designed to ensure that the charter school will use and interact with community assets on an ongoing basis to create and maintain strong community ties.

(b) In its application, an applicant must provide a high-quality plan that demonstrates how its proposed project would meet the requirements in paragraph (a) of this priority, accompanied by a timeline for key milestones that span the course of planning, development, and implementation of the charter school.

Strengths:

The applicant states that teachers will ensure that ... “teachers are part of the decision-making process”, with reference to a team-oriented organization structure that will enable teachers to be involved in decision-making. (p. 5).

The applicant promotes the idea of retaining teachers through strategies including: staff surveys, competitive compensation, a professional development plan, and a mentoring program. (p. 5).

Grade level chairs and department chairs will participate on the leadership team and engage in monthly meetings to develop benchmarks and professional development plans. (p. 7).

A chart is provided that outlines key milestones for community engagement as well as a timeline and person responsible for each task. (p. 11).

Weaknesses:

The applicant states implementation of a thorough administrator and teacher recruitment process. (p.4). There is no evidence of strategies in place to provide continuity of instruction if positions remain unfilled.

The applicant states that Concept Network provides a Community Engagement Coordinator who is responsible for establishing external relationships within the community. There is no mention of this role within the community engagement chart. (p. 9).

The community engagement chart does not provide evidence of a task to assess community assets, nor does it provide specific tasks to sustain community ties (i.e. an external advisory committee). (p. 9).

Reader's Score: 3

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