

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2023 09:20 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cincinnati Classical Academy (S282B230010)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	40	39
Sub Total	40	39
Continuation		
Quality of the Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	20	20
Sub Total	20	20
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	8
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	30	27
Sub Total	40	35
Priority Questions		
CPP		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. CPP	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - CSP Developers New Panel - 2: 84.282B

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Cincinnati Classical Academy (S282B230010)

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: 39

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 detailed management plan with goal-related timelines (e20). Project leadership has clear roles (e20). The application includes a comprehensive timeline of grant activities, including start and end dates and responsible individuals (e32). Board members receive training covering monitoring school performance, targeted marketing, and mission maintenance (e23). Committees handle key issues like facilities, finance, curriculum, and policy (e23). The project has sufficient staffing, including a school leader, business office team, dean of students, and a Building Leadership Team of parents, students, and community members (e28). A school accountability team analyzes educational programming and student achievement (e29).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

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 a fully developed response. The school plans to use the funding to expand from 460 K-6 students to 1300 K-12 students over the grant period (e858). The proposal's use of personnel funds is appropriate to the project. Expenditures are aligned with project goals. Instructional materials, including technology, are included in the budget and linked to the project through the budget narrative (e862). A range of instructional materials is included in the budget and used to support multiple learning styles (e868). Performance measures listed are linked to funding in the budget and are related to the goals in the logic model (e811).

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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 describes a staffing model that includes a Project Director and Project Manager, who will devote 50% and 75% of their time to the project (e44). Their extensive experience and expertise in project management support the allocation of time provided. In addition, the Partnership Director will dedicate 40% of their time (e45). With an emphasis on community engagement described in the application, this position seems adequate to support that outcome.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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 organization's Board members possess diverse and valuable qualifications, spanning finance, medical, business, and legal expertise (e24). The applicant enlisted the services of a seasoned consultant with more than 20 years of experience in charters, including work with the Department of Education, to aid in establishing a new school in Toledo (e25). Furthermore, a highly experienced fiscal officer from a reputable accounting firm, well-versed in managing finances for multiple charter schools, will be responsible for overseeing all financial affairs (e26).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 school's board retains control over the CSP funds as it plays a crucial role in overseeing all funding. The operator has a proven track record of managing grant funds and has designated a fiscal officer and business office staff to scrutinize all financial matters (e30). The school has implemented comprehensive financial control policies, encompassing audit requirements, cash management, and accounts payable, while being further supported by financial reporting, annual audits, and well-defined payroll and purchase processes (e30). The fiscal officer is contracted through a large and experienced firm specializing in working with charter schools (e30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Sub

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 Progress Plan and the Logic Model provide a clear plan for achieving the project objective on time and within budget (e31). The CCA Board of Directors has full control over all decision-making regarding programmatic decisions, with input and recommendations from the School Leader, Fiscal Officer, Building Leadership Team, and contracted professionals. Adkins and Company, LLC will serve as the CSP Project Manager as a subcontractor to the Board. The Project Plan (e32) lists the project goals and associated grant-funded activities for years 2-4, all aligned to the project goals and budget narrative and describing a transparent decision-making process (e32). The Project Plan specifies start and end dates for activities and identifies individuals responsible for their completion, including the School Leader and Operations and Business Manager. Monthly reports will be provided to the Finance Committee and the Board, including information on the school's financial standing, progress on grant activities, and meeting goal targets (e33). Overall, the plan appears adequate for making all programmatic decisions within the project's timeline and budget limitations.

Weaknesses:

The weakness of the plan to make all programmatic decisions is that the Board of Directors has complete control over decision-making, with no oversight from other individuals or entities regarding the school's programs. While recommendations are taken into consideration by the School Leader, Fiscal Officer, Building Leadership Team, and contracted professionals, the ultimate decision-making authority lies solely with the Board. The Project Plan only includes activities funded by the CSP Grant, with no plan for non-grant funded activities, which limits the comprehensiveness of the plan and could lead to oversights in decision-making about programmatic decisions outside of the CSP Grant.

Reader's Score: 4

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:

At each monthly Board meeting, comprehensive financial reporting covers grant requirements and comprises a balance sheet, revenue figures, aging reports, and a monthly financial narrative (e30).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

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 Building Leadership team oversees a continuation plan, focusing on sustainability planning (e38). Ohio University provides training on best practices for sustainability (e38). The team reviews quarterly performance reports to identify priorities for incorporation into the sustainability plan (e39). The applicant highlights diversifying funding sources, including in-kind services (e39). Furthermore, a comprehensive five-year financial plan is presented, encompassing estimates of all funding sources, such as per pupil allocation, state appropriations, and federal entitlement funds, while identifying areas of concern (e40).

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

Reader's Score: 20

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 foundation of this program is built upon the Hillsdale K-12 Classical Education model, which has demonstrated a strong track record of success in comparable environments (e41). Comprehensive data is provided, revealing the underperformance of Cincinnati public schools and underscoring the necessity for a high-quality alternative that offers families a viable choice (e43). The school's design results from carefully considering the community's requirements, with input from parents and the broader community. It is tailored to meet academic and character development needs (e42).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

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 project plan consists of four clear and distinct goals, targeting key aspects such as instruction, teacher development, community engagement, and creating a conducive learning environment (e32). To ensure the plan's effectiveness, well-defined performance measures are incorporated, with a sharp focus on student achievement and engagement, among other important indicators.

Sub

Weaknesses:

While the project outlines its objectives, it must fully align them with the overall goals (e53). Additionally, not all goals have concrete and measurable outcomes, which could hinder the project's ability to track progress effectively. Specifically, the assessment of effective teachers is narrowly based solely on their participation in professional development, needing a comprehensive evaluation of their overall impact on student learning and growth (e53). Expanding the objectives and incorporating more specific and quantifiable indicators could enhance the project's clarity and effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes.

Reader's Score: 3

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: 27

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 data presented paints a concerning picture, revealing elevated poverty rates within the community, with less than half of the families seeing their children progress beyond the 9th grade (e56). Moreover, the city's job growth ranks in the bottom 10, adding to the complexity of the challenges faced (e56). Given these circumstances, there is an apparent and urgent demand for school choice options, particularly a school that offers a classical education program to cater to the population's diverse needs (e56). Addressing these issues with well-defined strategies becomes paramount to uplift the community and provide better opportunities for its residents.

Weaknesses:

The provided information needs to include evidence that adequately illustrates the extent of the issues concerning achievement or the achievement gap, the overall school climate, or the effectiveness of teachers, making it challenging to comprehend the severity of these problems. Gathering comprehensive and specific data that accurately reflects the current situation is essential to understand better and address these critical matters. It highlights the areas that require urgent attention and improvement. Conducting thorough research and data analysis will be instrumental in developing targeted and effective strategies to tackle these challenges and foster positive change within the educational system.

Reader's Score: 12

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))

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant offers compelling evidence of the strong demand for the school by presenting letters of support and results from a parent survey (e57). Additionally, the school's considerable waitlist, with 400 students eager to enroll, further underscores the high level of interest (e60). Moreover, the desire for a classical education model is indicated through surveys conducted among parents and the local community (e58). The combination of these pieces of evidence provides a clear and detailed picture of the enthusiastic reception and need for the school's classical education program, substantiating the potential for its success and positive impact on the community.

Weaknesses:

No weakness found.

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 school is part of a more extensive network managed by Hillsdale College (e15), which supports teachers regarding content and instructional practices (e15). The network of charter schools associated with Hillsdale also facilitates the sharing of information and effective practices among teachers (e15). The applicant highlights a collaboration between traditional public schools and CCA, where resources are shared (e16). Furthermore, the applicant exemplifies a community-centered approach by involving parents and community members in the school's development through information sessions, focus groups, meetings, and surveys (e17). They also share community outreach practices from other Hillsdale-advised schools (e18). The program's Board of Directors comprises a diverse cross-section of professionals and community members (e17). Additionally, the applicant created a community engagement guide to promote collaboration with the community (e17) and included a Parent Engagement Policy in their proposal (e19).

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/03/2023 09:20 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2023 10:17 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cincinnati Classical Academy (S282B230010)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	40	40
Sub Total	40	40
Continuation		
Quality of the Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	20	20
Sub Total	20	20
Selection Criteria		
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	10	10
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	30	30
Sub Total	40	40
Priority Questions		
CPP		
Competitive Preference Priority		
1. CPP	5	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	105

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - CSP Developers New Panel - 2: 84.282B

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Cincinnati Classical Academy (S282B230010)

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: 40

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 provided a management plan with time and within budget, clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. For instance, starting on page e32, the applicant provided a chart that included actions steps, a timeline and the person responsible for completion. Each activity was tied to one of the four goals listed: proven curriculum, effective teachers and leaders, parent and community engagement and high-quality educational and organizational environment. The action steps were sequential in nature and correlated with necessities to start and maintain the project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 10

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 provided a complete narrative with costs that are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of the proposed project. For instance, starting on page e411, the applicant provided a detailed summary for all aspects of the budget including assumptions, 5-year forecast, category breakdown, grade level breakdown, monthly budget, purchased services, supplies and capital expenditures. There was a chart of the budget for fiscal year 2023 that included a breakdown of items in the areas of instruction, support services, administrative services, operations and management and facilities/construction services. Each line item listed was tied to a budget per pupil and it was reasonable.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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 provided a narrative that included the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel. The information provided was appropriate and adequate to meet the objective. For instance, the time commitment of the project director was listed as 50%. The time commitment for key personnel for the project was provided starting on page e521. Each member of the school program had time commitments that were appropriate for their roles and responsibilities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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 provided qualifications, including relevant training and experience of key project personnel starting on page e24. The applicant included a chart of the board members and their areas of expertise. Additionally, the applicant provided detailed information on the training and experience for the CSP project manager, the fiscal officer/treasurer, school leader, dean of students, and operations and business manager. The roles and responsibilities were listed for each key position as well as general background information on the person fulfilling the role. Each person had ample experience and training to oversee their duties and responsibilities.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 provided proof in their plan that they would maintain control over all CSP grant funds. For instance, starting on page e29, the applicant stated that the Board of Directors will have full control over all CSP Grants funds as well as other school funding. They will provide an annual comprehensive financial report, detailed transaction listings, and supplemental schedule of expenditures of federal awards. The school's finances will be monitored monthly by the Board of Directors, the Fiscal Officer and the CSP Manager. A detailed financial reporting will be provided by the Fiscal Officer at all monthly Board meetings. The report will include a balance sheet, comparison of revenues and expenses, bank reconciliations, check registers, aging report and monthly financial narrative. Each board member will receive a financial packet prior to the meeting for their review.

Sub

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 provided a detailed narrative on how they will make all programmatic decisions. For instance, the applicant stated on page e31 that the Board of Directors has full control over all decision-making. Recommendations are taken from school leader, fiscal officer, building leadership team and contracted professionals to make decisions on grant goals, activities and expenditures.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 provided a narrative demonstrating that they would administer or supervise the administration of the grant including maintaining management and oversight responsibilities over the grant. For example, starting on page e37, the applicant stated that they would be working with the Board of Directors, the CSP Project Manager, the Licensed Fiscal Officer and the leadership team to manage and oversee all aspects of the grant.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 provided a narrative that demonstrated how the 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 are no longer available. For example, starting on page e38, the applicant stated that they would establish a Building Leadership Team to develop a sustainability plan. Members of the team will include planning and implementation partners, community and business leaders, parents and other stakeholders. The team will look at quarterly performance reports and determine critical success and challenges throughout the grant life. Data will be reviewed to determine which

activities will continue to be available to students as well as what services, strategies and action steps will be sustained and maintained. The focus will be to dedicate time and resources to the activities that need to be sustained. They will review funding opportunities from indirect funding sources such as in-kind services, grants, contributions/sponsorships, events or earned income.

Additionally, there is an informal sustainability plan that will focus on the first five-year financial plan for the school, the enrollment projection that will allow for funding from public, per-pupil state allocations, private donations and federal IDEA and Title funds, and the equipment, materials and resources that will be purchased over the life of the grant project.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 20

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: 10

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 provided a complete rationale for the proposed project. For example, starting on page e43, the applicant provided the demographic information for the targeted area as well as the academic rating for the area. The ratings listed on the 21-22 public school report cards were achievement 2 out of 5 stars, progress 2 out of 5 stars, gap closing 2 out of 5 stars, graduation 1 out of 5 stars and early literacy 2 out of 5 stars. The applicant provided the star achievement ratings for the schools within the targeted areas. Out of the 13 schools listed, 10 received a 3-star rating out of 5 and only 3 are performing above the State average.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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 provided goals, objectives and outcomes that are clearly specified and measurable. For instance, starting on page e51, the applicant listed four project goals for implementation; proven curriculum, effective

Sub

teachers and leaders, parent and community engagement and high quality educational and organization environment. The applicant also includes three objectives that dealt with closing the achievement gap, providing a proven and tuition free charter school option and meeting the high level of interest and demand for a classical education model. The project outcomes and measures of effectiveness where also provided. For instance, the applicant stated that 80% of students who have attended the school for two or more years will score proficient on the English Language Arts Test in grades 3-8th. Another project outcome listed was that 80% of the students proficient in reading will improve by at least 10% annually for the duration of the contract in all subgroups including students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, African American, white, and Els.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

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 applicant provided a narrative providing the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. For instance, starting on page e55, the applicant stated that they would enroll from a predominately underserved socioeconomically disadvantaged communities around the target area. The average household income for the target area is \$65,213 with a poverty rate of 28.65%. Additionally, only 43.5% have less than a 9th grade education and only 24.26% received a high school diploma. The labor of Statistics has rated the city in the bottom ten urban areas in the US for job growth. There are several private schools in the area but because of the poverty rates, most of the students are unable to attend.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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))

Sub

Strengths:

The applicant provided a narrative that stated the need for the services to be provided and the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. For instance, starting on page e32, the applicant provided a chart with the grant action steps for each project goal, with a start and end date and the responsible agent. For example, under the project goal of parent and community engagement, the applicant listed the action step of developing marketing materials including yard signs, brochures and employ various mediums such as radio, TV, Internet, and social media from October 2023 to June 2027 with the School Leader and Project Manager as the responsible agent. Additionally, the applicant stated on page e58 that they would address the gaps in educational opportunities through academic supports such as wrap-around services, tutoring, special education services, individualized instruction, differentiated learning, high expectation of staff and a discipline and code of conduct policy.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

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 provided documentation that they had meaningful and ongoing engagement with current or former teachers and educators as well as usage of a community-centered approach. For example, on page e16, the applicant stated that they provided professional development and support to their existing faculty in collaboration with the local school district. There is also support provided by the local school district for marketing efforts, student and teacher recruitment and effective practices for addressing the needs of the students. The applicant also stated that there is a focus on collaboration between the traditional public schools and their school. This collaboration will lead to additional professional development, training and resources in the areas of universal design for learning, co-planning and co-serving and meeting the requirements for IDEA students, dyslexia training and literacy development.

a. (2) The applicant provided a community-centered approach that includes an assessment of community assets, development of the charter school and implementation of protocols and practices. For instance, starting on page e17, the

applicant stated that the charter was developed based on input and feedback from parents and community members through the use of informational sessions, focus groups, one-on-one meetings and surveys. The applicant has established a Board of Directors made up of public stakeholders with representation from different backgrounds and socioeconomic status. Activities such as recruitment information in local papers, Q and A sessions at public libraries in the region, meetings with community leaders from local business, churches and non-profit organizations, marketing efforts on billboards, social media, radio interviews, parent information sessions and open public events are some of the examples of the outreach focus provided by the applicant.

b. The applicant provided a high-quality plan with the requirements of priority, timeline for key milestones that span the course of planning, development and implementation of the charter school. For example, starting on page e19, the applicant stated that they would continue their efforts with educator input, community involvement strategies and actions steps through the Board of Directors and the CSP Grant Project Manager with the goal of refining informational materials, systems and practices for educator and parent/community involvement. Some of the activities listed by the applicant were providing information, gathering and incorporating feedback, sharing decision-making responsibilities and supporting and following the community's lead.

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses identified.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2023 10:17 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/02/2023 09:19 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Cincinnati Classical Academy (S282B230010)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Management Plan	40	38
Sub Total	40	38
Continuation		
Quality of the Continuation Plan		
1. Continuation Plan	20	19
Sub Total	20	19
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	5
Sub Total	5	5
Total	105	99

Technical Review Form

Panel #2 - CSP Developers New Panel - 2: 84.282B

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Cincinnati Classical Academy (S282B230010)

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: 38

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 plan outlines a clear and specific goal of growing the school's enrollment by adding an additional grade each year, aiming for grades K-7 by the 2023-2024 academic year. This clear objective provides a solid foundation for the management plan's success ("CCA has developed a management plan with timelines, which are driven by the goal to grow the school's enrollment by adding an additional grade each year, resulting in grades K-7 for the 2023-2024 school year"). The inclusion of well-defined timelines and milestones further strengthens the adequacy of the plan. By having a step-by-step growth plan driven by the goal of adding one grade annually, the management plan demonstrates a strategic approach to ensure timely progress ("timelines driven by the goal of adding a grade each year").

Weaknesses:

No weaknesses noted for this section.

Reader's Score: 10

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 budget narrative exhibits a number of positive traits that support its thorough approach to presenting the anticipated expenditures and expenses for the proposed project. First of all, it makes it abundantly clear that all projected costs are outlined in the budget narrative and that these costs are based on the anticipated revenues and outlays for a five-year operational budget ("All projected costs are outlined in the budget narrative and are based on the anticipated revenues and outlays for a five-year operational budget"). The narrative acknowledges the funding challenges faced by Ohio charter schools, as they do not receive local funds and typically receive less overall funding than nearby school districts ("Ohio charter schools, on average, receive significantly less overall funding

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than nearby districts, according to research by the Thomas Fordham Institute" – page 9). By acknowledging this reality, the budget narrative demonstrates an understanding of the financial constraints that the school may face and how the CSP Grant funds can help bridge this gap.

Weaknesses:

One of the weaknesses in the narrative is the lack of specific funding amounts provided in this section. While it is mentioned that all projected costs are detailed in the budget narrative, the absence of concrete figures in this part of the proposal makes it difficult to fully assess the reasonability of the costs in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. Without specific funding amounts, it is challenging to determine whether the budget allocation aligns appropriately with the project's goals and potential impact. Moreover, not including these figures in the main narrative may hinder the reader's ability to grasp the overall financial scope of the project and its feasibility.

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 narrative provides a clear and comprehensive list of key personnel involved in the project, including the project director, principal investigator, and fiscal officer. These individuals play critical roles in the successful implementation of the proposed project (Fiscal Officer/Treasurer). The project demonstrates a strong commitment to collaboration with experienced partners, such as St. Aloysius, BCSI (Barney Charter School Initiative), and Adkins and Company, LLC. These partners have a proven track record in supporting charter schools and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and requirements (Appendix G3 - Charter Contract, Barney Charter School Initiative, Appendix G11 - Grant Program Allocation Spending Report). The narrative additionally highlights the expertise and experience of key personnel, such as the Research Professor of Neurosurgery, the Physician and Entrepreneur, and the Financial Consultant, among others. These individuals bring diverse backgrounds and skills that enrich the decision-making process for the project (Appendix B - Key Personnel Resumes).

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 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 narrative highlights the CCA Board of Directors has chosen St. Aloysius as the authorizer for the project, and it is rated "Exemplary" by the Ohio Department of Education. St. Aloysius provides oversight and accountability to ensure the school operates successfully and complies with state and federal requirements. The Board of Directors consists of six members with diverse backgrounds and expertise, including higher education, teaching, law, finance, and more. Each member's qualifications have been carefully considered to ensure a wealth of knowledge and skills are available to support the project's success (Board of Directors, Appendix B - Key Personnel Resumes). The CCA Board of Directors has contracted the CSP Grant Project Manager. The CSP Grant Project Manager has over twenty years of experience in charter school governance and compliance requirements, supporting new start-up schools throughout all phases of development. Her expertise and success in assisting other schools with CSP Grant implementation add strength to the project (CSP Project Manager). The strengths lie in the experienced and diverse team of key project personnel, the involvement of a reputable authorizer, and the establishment of collaborative forums for data analysis and decision-making. These factors and several others that are found in the

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text contribute to the project's potential success and effective management throughout its implementation.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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 narrative demonstrates several strengths regarding the applicant's plan to maintain control over all CSP grant funds. Firstly, the CCA Board of Directors emphasizes their commitment to fiscal management, compliance, and reporting, as outlined in Board policies (Fordham Institute, 2023). They follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), which includes implementing an Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), Detailed Transaction Listings (DTL), and Supplemental Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA) (Fordham Institute, 2023). This commitment to financial standards ensures transparency and accountability in the use of grant funds. Secondly, the Board employs a state-of-the-art system for all financial, accounting, and purchasing transactions, closely monitored by a Licensed Fiscal Officer as required by Ohio law. This ensures that financial processes are adequately tracked and managed. Additionally, the presence of a Board Finance Committee, which includes one Board member, the Finance Director/Treasurer, the School Leader, Operations/Business Manager, and the CSP Manager, provides oversight and advice on financial matters, budgeting, and financial projects. Overall, the applicant's plan demonstrates a strong foundation of financial management practices, reporting, and oversight, enhancing their ability to maintain control over the CSP grant funds effectively. Overall, the applicant's plan demonstrates a strong foundation of financial management practices, reporting, and oversight, enhancing their ability to maintain control over the CSP grant funds effectively.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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 strengths in the narrative regarding the adequacy of the applicant's plan to make all programmatic decisions lie in the clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among key stakeholders, particularly the Board of Directors, School Leader, Fiscal Officer, and Project Manager. The narrative emphasizes that the Board maintains full control over all decision-making, ensuring a centralized authority for programmatic decisions. The involvement of various professionals and contracted services, such as Adkins and Company, LLC, adds to the expertise available for decision-making processes. Additionally, the inclusion of a comprehensive Project Plan, Progress Plan, and Logic Model provides a structured framework for achieving project objectives on time and within budget, with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones. Monthly reporting to the Finance Committee and the Board ensures ongoing oversight and monitoring of financial standing, progress on grant activities, and goal targets. Monthly reporting and adherence to accounting standards further strengthen the plan's adequacy, enabling ongoing oversight and fiscal responsibility (Fordham Institute, 2023). Overall, the narrative showcases a well-organized and competent approach to making programmatic decisions.

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Weaknesses:

A lack of mentioning any advisory committees or feedback channels raises questions about how diverse perspectives and opinions are considered in the decision-making process. Without such mechanisms, it may be challenging to ensure that decisions align with the needs and aspirations of the school community. These omissions raise questions about the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the decision-making process, and it may be beneficial for the applicant to provide more concrete evidence and demonstrate a commitment to transparency and community engagement in the plan to bolster its adequacy.

Reader's Score: 4

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 strategy for managing and supervising the grant is shown to have various merits in the narrative. It emphasizes the significant administrative experience of important professionals, such as the CCA Board of Directors, CSP Project Manager, Licensed Fiscal Officer, and leadership team. This experience suggests a solid framework for the CSP Grant's management and control. The essential staff resumes in Appendix B serve as additional proof of the financial management team's credentials and experience. The applicant's dedication to competent grant administration is further supported by the pledge to exercise complete due diligence in managing and monitoring all areas of the grant.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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 narrative delivers an elaborate sustainability strategy that entails a planning framework (Building Leadership Team), data-driven decision-making, financial diversification, and activities to create capacity. The narrative's well-defined planning structure emphasizes the importance of diversifying funding sources for sustainability, including volunteerism, grants, contributions, events, and earned income ("Sustainability strategies depend heavily on diversification of funding sources...", "Funding may come from Indirect Funding Sources such as volunteerism and in-kind service, Grants, Contributions/Sponsorships, Events, or Earned Income." - pg 27); and highlights ongoing staff training "Throughout the life of the CSP Grant, teachers and school leaders will continue to receive training in the use of evidence-based strategies, programs, and equipment, in addition to physical assets."- pg 29).

Weaknesses:

The narrative lacks explanation regarding how permanent partnerships will emerge from this grant. Providing more concrete detailed examples of how the referenced partnerships and how they will contribute to sustainability beyond the grant period would strengthen the narrative.

Reader's Score: 19

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

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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 narrative effectively conveys the school's mission, goals, and commitment to providing a high-quality classical education to underserved students. CCA's mission to serve students from challenged and disadvantaged backgrounds demonstrates a commitment to narrowing the achievement gap and providing educational opportunities to those who may not have had access to a tuition-free classical education before. The narrative effectively demonstrates a rationale for the proposed project. It provides a clear description of the school's target population, which includes students from challenged and socioeconomically disadvantaged urban areas in Cincinnati and surrounding districts (Fordham Institute, 2023). The applicant emphasizes the need for a high-quality tuition-free classical education model in the region, as evidenced by the underperforming public schools and the demand for school choice and access to such a program. The alignment with the mission of providing a content-rich classical curriculum and character development is well-established. The narrative also highlights the successful track record of similar Hillsdale-affiliated schools in multiple states, which further supports the rationale for adopting this classical education model.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

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 narrative provides clear and well-defined goals, objectives, and outcomes for the proposed project. Each project goal is outlined in detail, and specific objectives are listed under each goal, outlining the intended focus and impact of the project. Additionally, the outcomes are measurable, with specific metrics provided for each outcome, allowing for easy evaluation and tracking of progress. For example, under "Project Goal #1 Proven Curriculum," the objective is to offer high-yield curriculum, instruction, interventions, and materials grounded in the classical education philosophy, implemented with fidelity, and measured for impact. The outcome is measured by metrics such as student proficiency on the Ohio State tests in English Language Arts and Math, as well as growth norms on NWEA's Reading and Math MAP assessments.

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Weaknesses:

While the narrative provides clear goals and objectives, some of the outcomes could be further refined to be more specific and measurable. For instance, the outcome related to student enrollment being at 90% of projected enrollment could be clearer by specifying the exact number of students that constitute 90% of projected enrollment. Additionally, the outcome related to the teacher retention rate at 90% could benefit from specifying the number of teachers that should be retained to meet the target. Overall, regardless of how the narrative outlines the goals and objectives, it may benefit from offering more precise, quantifiable, and time-bound goals to ensure clear and quantifiable progress towards attaining the proposed project's goals.

Reader's Score: 3

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

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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 narrative demonstrates several strengths in emphasizing the magnitude and severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. It effectively utilizes population data from national sources like the World Population Review to highlight the size and demographic composition of Cincinnati, including its declining population and the high poverty rate in the region. The text provides specific figures on poverty levels and educational attainment, such as 43.57% of families meeting the poverty designation having received less than a 9th grade education and 24.26% only attaining a high school diploma. By citing the Bureau of Labor Statistics' rating of Cincinnati in the bottom ten urban areas for job growth, the narrative emphasizes the economic challenges faced by the population. The text further strengthens its case by indicating that Cincinnati currently has no other classical schools in the region, limiting quality school choice options for families in underserved areas. Moreover, the narrative draws upon data from Appendix G15 - Hillsdale Achievement Data and the success of other BCSI schools in Florida to showcase the potential impact of the classical education model on student performance and enrollment numbers, highlighting that parental support and student performance in successful schools surpass those of traditional public schools. The extensive network and data sources established by the CCA Board of Directors, as well as the school's first-year success and enrollment numbers, further underscore the severity of the problem and the demand for quality education choices in the area. These strengths collectively provide a compelling case for the importance of the proposed project in addressing the educational challenges faced by underserved communities in southwestern Ohio.

Weaknesses:

The proposal highlights the need for wrap-around services and other supports to address the challenges faced by students and families in poverty, it does not provide detailed information on the extent and effectiveness of these services (Appendix G15 - Hillsdale Student Achievement Data). By including more specific data and evidence in these areas, the narrative could further strengthen its case for the severity of the problem and the importance of the proposed project in addressing it.

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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 narrative exhibits several strengths in highlighting the magnitude of the need for the proposed project's services in underserved communities in Cincinnati. The text presents compelling demographic data on the city, such as the 28.65% poverty rate and the percentage of families with less than a 9th grade education. These statistics demonstrate the socioeconomic challenges faced by families in the region and underscore the necessity for quality school choice options. Moreover, the text emphasizes that there are currently no other classical schools in the area, leaving families with limited options for accessing a classical education. The strong emphasis on the lack of free public charters offering a classical education model in Hamilton County further highlights the urgency and significance of the proposed project's services. Additionally, the inclusion of success stories from other BCSI schools, such as South Bronx Classical, where a high-performing classical education model has proven effective for economically disadvantaged students, reinforces the viability and potential impact of the classical education model on the targeted communities in Cincinnati. These strengths combine to present a compelling case for the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided by the proposed project, indicating that the underserved communities in Cincinnati are ripe for a quality classical education option.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses 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:

CCA demonstrates strong collaboration with Hillsdale College's K-12 Education Office and Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI), fostering meaningful engagement with educators and promoting effective instructional strategies. The school's commendable community engagement involves parents and local community members in decision-making, focus groups, and surveys to address their needs and expectations. Additionally, CCA's successful outreach strategies have led

to exceeding enrollment goals and high retention rates, showcasing a proactive approach to student recruitment and community involvement. CCA also discusses methods for obtaining teacher and parent input and highlights their commitment to continuing a community centered approach as mentioned in the text, "CCA will continue to implement protocols and practices designed to ensure that the school will use and interact with community organizations, businesses, and parents on an ongoing basis to create and maintain strong community ties" (pg 5). The protocol's mentioned include fundamental practices outlined in the Community Engagement Guide utilized to determine methods to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 08/02/2023 09:19 PM