

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

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/28/2014 04:42 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Innovative Schools Development Corporation (U282B140013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Curriculum	15	10
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	3
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	13
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Community Support	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	21
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	14
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Improving Achievement and High School Graduation</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	4	4
<b>Support for Military Families</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>96</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 5: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Innovative Schools Development Corporation (U282B140013)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices. (15 points)

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including: how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards; the grade levels or ages of students to be served; and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.**

#### Strengths:

The applicant describes the early college concept and the STEM-focus for the school. The curriculum will enable students to have one to two years of transferable college credit, aiding in college completion (p. e34).

The applicant provided proof of results for the academic model and described programs that will encourage the early college concept and really integrate the college experience for the students.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not discuss how the program will enable students to meet the State student achievement and content standards. It does mention briefly on p. e42 that the curriculum will provide the credits necessary to meet high school standards but does not describe how the curriculum and instruction will address those standards' requirements.

The applicant does not indicate the grades levels to be served although it might be concluded that it is only 9-12, it is not stated anywhere.

Reader's Score: 10

### Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. (5 points)

#### Strengths:

The applicant provides evidence from other early-college models of their success in serving educationally disadvantaged students. The summer bridge program is described earlier as a way to ensure that students below grade level up to their grade-level standards (p. e43-5).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not articulate a direct link between the educational program and the state standards. The State standards are not described or explained.

The applicant did not address how they are going to meet the needs of specific disadvantaged subgroups.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation****1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school s objectives. (15 points)**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school 's objectives, including developing of performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the Performance Measures section of the notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the Performance Measures requirements when addressing this criterion.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant references (p. e45) and later describes in the appendix Delaware's Charter School Performance Framework.

The applicant intends to finalize a schedule for data review for the monthly board meetings based on this framework that includes academic, organizational, and financial metrics (p. e46).

The applicant details the use of traditional and formative assessments and explains how teachers and administration will utilize data for mid-course corrections, as well as how data will be shared with parents (p. e47).

The applicant details rigorous and measurable goals and performance measures that will measure the school's progress on its project. The measures include academic metrics to school culture and climate, to college readiness and success, to student recruitment and family engagement (p. 30-5)

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not include any performance measures around financial or operational goals.

**Reader's Score: 13**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design****1. The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers:**

**(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)**

**Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.**

**(10 points total)**

**General:**

The applicant thoroughly describes and details parental and community involvement in the planning, program design and implementation of the school. The school's partnership with the University of Delaware is of particular note due to the shared programming and partnership activities discussed in the application. Furthermore, the school will have a parent board member, elevating the voice of parents in the implementation of the school.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub Question**

**1. (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides letters from a group of community stakeholders including the University of Delaware, board members, and other community partners. The applicant has also undertaken a number of approaches to informing the community about the school and acquiring buy-in (p. e50-52).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant details how parents and community members were involved in the design and planning for the school and how a parent will serve on the board of the school (p. e51). The school also requires an information session and a letter of agreement from parents supporting their child's participation in the school. The university will serve as a particularly strong partner in the implementation of the charter school through various partner activities (p. e51).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers:**

**(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel' s skills, experience, and success in the following areas: launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; managing or leading a non-profit organization; establishing or maintaining school governance by board of trustees; developing and implementing an effective curriculum; recruiting and evaluating effective educators; and strengthening fiscal management.**

**(22 points total)**

**General:**

The applicant has assembled an incredibly well-qualified team for the proposed school. Each of the team members have direct relevant experience for the critical roles they will fill. The school also encourages applications from traditionally disadvantaged groups for future positions with the school.

**Reader's Score: 21**

**Sub Question**

1. **(i) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (up to 2 points).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has included an equal employment opportunity statement that is included in its management company's Policy Manual and a statement that is included on all of its job postings and descriptions (p. e53) demonstrating that it encourages applications from traditionally underrepresented groups.

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not discuss how it will actually encourage applications from underrepresented groups aside from the methods described above.

**Reader's Score: 1**

2. **(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).**

**Strengths:**

The applicant provides sufficient information to indicate the expertise of its project director in supporting successful schools and increasing student achievement in the schools she has served. The project director has almost two decades of teaching experience alone and significant experience in education management and leadership development (p. e54).

The school has a charter management organization that will provide support in planning, program design, and implementation (p. e55). The Executive Director of the CMO has over two decades of experience in public education, including curriculum, instruction, professional development and secondary education reform. She appears to be well-suited for the oversight of this new school.

Furthermore, all the positions described within the application demonstrate applicable training and experience for the key roles they are filling.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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. (15 points)**

**Strengths:**

The applicant clearly and thoroughly describes the management relations between Innovative Schools (the CMO), EdWorks Early College High School (the provider of the academic program and school operations) with the school. The management plan calls for an additional Operations Manager onsite at the school as well as significant support from IS' charter school finance specialists. The applicant describes the accounting, payroll, and budget procedures it will utilize as well as its operations plan. Furthermore, the school has developed an aggressive fundraising plan to supplement core funding and maintain sustainability following the expiration of the grant. The applicant also includes a logic model (p. e58-63) In the appendix (p. e198-202) the applicant provides a detailed timeline for the management plan that includes defined responsibilities and milestones.

**Weaknesses:**

Not every task in the timeline is assigned a deadline (p. e198-202).

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design****1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.**

**The existence of a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency and the extent to which the charter or performance contract describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. (15 points)**

**Note: The applicant is encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter or performance contract. If the applicant has had an application for a charter denied, the applicant should describe the circumstances surrounding such denial and how it plans to revise the charter application before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant does have an approved charter application which details how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and any other assessments the school and the sponsor agree upon (p. e203-308).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 15**

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources****1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school. (3 points)**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the flexibility afforded under its State s charter school law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency, and whether charter schools are exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.**

**The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the**

charter school will have over such matters as the charter school s budget, expenditures, daily operations, curriculum, and personnel in accordance with its State s charter school law.

**Strengths:**

The applicant includes a thorough description of the appropriate flexibility provided by law in the state of Delaware to charter schools. Notably, charter schools in Delaware receive equitable funding and are not required to have collective bargaining agreements (p. e63-65).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 3**

**Priority Questions**

**Improving Achievement and High School Graduation - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates [Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners]**

This priority is for projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for English Learners.

**Note: The Department encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this Competitive Preference Priority.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant thoroughly describes how it will accelerate learning and improve high school graduation rates for English language learners and students with disabilities (p. e23-26). The applicant describes staffing, additional instruction, and its approach to data for both groups. The applicant will use a Response to Intervention approach and an intensive student support program to allow students with disabilities to learn in a small group setting. English language learners will be tested annually on the WIDA-ACCESS assessment to determine their English proficiency and participate in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model that will be used to plan and implement effective instruction. Teachers will use English Language Proficiency standards in addition to the content-based standards in each of their lessons for this student cohort.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score: 4**

## Support for Military Families - Competitive Preference Priority 2

### 1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Support for Military Families.

This priority is for projects that are designed to address the needs of military-connected students (as defined in the notice).

**Note:** To receive points under this priority, an applicant's project must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policies and practices must comply with the State's charter school law and CSP program requirements (for information on admissions and the lottery under the CSP, see [Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html) at (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>)).

#### **Strengths:**

The applicant describes how the school year, instructional plan, and additional support will meet the needs of military-connected students. The applicant details its proximity to the Dover Air Force Base and how it will be encouraging military families to apply. Most interesting is the school's decision to mirror the university schedule to allow students to complete credits in four months as opposed to a full school year of nine months. This schedule accommodates military families, giving them the flexibility to finish coursework in a short period of time in case their family is assigned to a different base during the school year. Students will also be gaining college credits which would be transferable to other colleges and universities across the country if their family is reassigned. The school will also work with the Delaware State University Office of Veteran Affairs to provide services and work-study opportunities to students.

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **3**

---

**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   08/28/2014 04:42 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 09/02/2014 10:38 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Innovative Schools Development Corporation (U282B140013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Curriculum	15	15
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	3
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	13
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Community Support	10	9
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	19
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	12
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Improving Achievement and High School Graduation</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	4	3
<b>Support for Military Families</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>95</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 5: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Innovative Schools Development Corporation (U282B140013)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices. (15 points)

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including: how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards; the grade levels or ages of students to be served; and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.**

#### Strengths:

The school is based on existing EDWorks' Fast Track Early College HS model. EDWorks has a track record of success launching schools; it has apparently launched more than 80 schools at this point (e35). The early college high school is located on a college campus, which ensures students exposure to college academic culture while still a high school student; The school has inquiry and project - based STEM instruction that aligns to courses of study at DSU, the school's university partner. The three STEM pathways are aligned to DSU's college programs (e35) and course of study will be supplemented with hands-on learning opportunities to demonstrate real-world applications to classroom learning (e37). The applicant did not describe alignment to state standards in this section, but in the performance measures, it is clear that their curriculum will align to Common Core in math and reading (e221).

#### Weaknesses:

None noted.

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Significance

#### 1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. (5 points)

#### Strengths:

The applicant has very focused strategies around preparing first generation college - bound students for college and have used research on early college high schools to inform the design elements of the school and its culture, including Power of Place (school location on college campus), Strong Advisory Program, Personalized Learning Plans, and Summer Bridge Program.

#### Weaknesses:

There is no information about college matching or counseling at the school. Although credits from DSU are transferable to any accredited university or college, it is not clear what and how much support students get in the college application, financial aid, and over college match process if they do not go to DSU.

Reader's Score: 3

### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

#### 1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school s objectives. (15 points)

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school 's objectives, including developing of performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the Performance Measures section of the notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the Performance Measures requirements when addressing this criterion.

#### **Strengths:**

There will be a regular review of student data to monitor performance and drive higher achievement. Teachers review data in PLCs (e47). Goals, targets, and assessments are thoroughly described (e200-226). The school has set goals around student achievement in core content areas, enrollment, students retention, parent involvement and satisfaction. It was also great that applicant seeks to build understanding of goals in students so that the students can articulate their progress to goals.

#### **Weaknesses:**

Applicant mentioned Smarter Balanced formative assessments, but did not describe them fully (e46). It is not clear how teachers are trained on how to analyze data and adapt instruction to meet the needs of students. Although there are many goals, there is no goal for teacher retention, which can be significant issue, esp. in new or growing schools.

Reader's Score: 13

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers:

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

**Note:** In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.

(10 points total)

#### **General:**

Reader's Score: 9

#### Sub Question

##### 1. (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points).

**Sub Question**

**Strengths:**

The school has strong plans for collaboration and partnership with DSU and it is an indicator of support and sustainability that the school has also secured financial support from the DSU Foundation. The school plans to involve the local business community in the school by placing students in internships at local businesses and via support in designing hands-on STEM teaching and learning opportunities (e51).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant did not describe any specific grassroots community outreach efforts to raise awareness of the new school in the community. All the letters of support were from very prominent business and civic leaders, but the school didn't include letters of support from parents or other smaller partner organizations in the local community.

**Reader's Score:** 4

2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).

**Strengths:**

There are many ways in which the school will encourage parental involvement, such as having parent representatives on the Board, establishing a Family Engagement Committee on Board to identify parent needs, engaging parents to work with their child's teacher develop Personalized Learning Plans for each student; and a parent satisfaction survey, which will show that the applicant is committed to partnering with parents to assess satisfaction and improve support based on parent feedback (e51-e52).

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score:** 5

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel's skills, experience, and success in the following areas: launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; managing or leading a non-profit organization; establishing or maintaining school governance by board of trustees; developing and implementing an effective curriculum; recruiting and evaluating effective educators; and strengthening fiscal management.

(22 points total)

**General:**

**Reader's Score:** 19

**Sub Question**

1. (i) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (up to 2 points).

#### Sub Question

##### Strengths:

The school has a non-discrimination policy.

##### Weaknesses:

Having a policy around diversity of staff does not necessarily equal actively recruiting a diverse staff. The applicant should note how the organization will live up to its policy.

Reader's Score: 1

#### 2. (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

##### Strengths:

Key staff have expertise in educational management. The Project Director and the School Leader, in particular, have very strong credentials and track records of success.

##### Weaknesses:

It isn't clear exactly what EdWorks Fast Track Early College High School's role would be. It's possible that EdWorks would send someone out to work with IS's local team on the ground, or it may be EdWorks offering remote support.

Reader's Score: 18

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

#### 1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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. (15 points)

##### Strengths:

The applicant provides a great visual representation of the short, intermediate, and long term outcomes and outputs on e62. The management plan starting on e198 is very detailed; its listing of compliance, finance, academics, fundraising, board, facility, recruitment, and operations activities, for the 2014-15 year.

##### Weaknesses:

Project activities are not broken out by year of grant project. The applicant may also strengthen the application by listing specific due dates for accomplishing each of the activities listed on the management plan. There are some completion dates listed on the first two pages of the plan, but the rest are blank.

Reader's Score: 12

#### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.

The existence of a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency and the extent to which the charter or performance contract describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually

agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. (15 points)

**Note:** The applicant is encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter or performance contract. If the applicant has had an application for a charter denied, the applicant should describe the circumstances surrounding such denial and how it plans to revise the charter application before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.

**Strengths:**

The charter contract is very detailed and includes all the student performance measures required. Apart from student achievement goals, the school also has goals around parental involvement and satisfaction, enrollment, student retention, and service learning (e220-224), which makes their goals very well rounded and representative of their school program as a whole. The applicant should note that the form on e301 isn't signed.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score:** 15

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school. (3 points)

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the flexibility afforded under its State s charter school law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency, and whether charter schools are exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.

The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school s budget, expenditures, daily operations, curriculum, and personnel in accordance with its State s charter school law.

**Strengths:**

In Delaware, charters receive the same formula funding as traditional schools, but have more flexibility in how they spend the funds as long as they meet their student performance goals. State also provides some funding and minor capital funding.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score:** 3

**Priority Questions**

**Improving Achievement and High School Graduation - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

1. **Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates [Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners]**

This priority is for projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice)

and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice).

(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.

(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for English Learners.

**Note:** The Department encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this Competitive Preference Priority.

**Strengths:**

The school will have IEPs for each and every student and regular monitoring and review to ensure students are progressing academically. The school will hire certified SPED teachers, who are capable of supporting the students in at least one content area.

**Weaknesses:**

The school relies too heavily on EdWorks's success serving students with special needs (e253-258).

**Reader's Score:** 3

**Support for Military Families - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Support for Military Families.**

This priority is for projects that are designed to address the needs of military-connected students (as defined in the notice).

**Note:** To receive points under this priority, an applicant's project must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policies and practices must comply with the State's charter school law and CSP program requirements (for information on admissions and the lottery under the CSP, see [Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html) at (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>)).

**Strengths:**

The applicant recruited at neighboring air force base during enrollment period and scheduled the school year in 4 month increments in order to give students from military families more flexibility to earn credits. DSU has extra support for students from military families through their Office of Veterans Affairs on DSU campus.

**Weaknesses:**

None noted

**Reader's Score:** 3

---

**Status:** Submitted

**Last Updated:** 09/02/2014 10:38 AM



Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 08/25/2014 10:20 AM

## Technical Review Coversheet

**Applicant:** Innovative Schools Development Corporation (U282B140013)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Project Curriculum	15	11
<b>Significance</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	3
<b>Quality of the Project Evaluation</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	12
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Community Support	10	6
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	19
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	13
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>		
1. Existence of charter	15	15
<b>Adequacy of Resources</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	2
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Improving Achievement and High School Graduation</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	4	3
<b>Support for Military Families</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>86</b>

# Technical Review Form

Panel #5 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 5: 84.282B

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

Applicant: Innovative Schools Development Corporation (U282B140013)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

#### 1. Quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices. (15 points)

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the quality of the educational program to be implemented by the proposed charter school, including: how the program will enable all students to meet challenging State student academic achievement and content standards; the grade levels or ages of students to be served; and the curriculum and instructional practices to be used. If the curriculum and instructional practices have been successfully used in other schools operated or managed by the applicant, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the implementation of such practices and the academic results achieved.**

#### Strengths:

The application demonstrates a well-thought out design for a STEM-based curriculum that promises a quality educational program based on experience of the MSO and other schools using the curriculum and instructional design:

- 1) The Innovative MSO has experience with using EDWorks Fast Track Early High School model (used in 80 schools e35) and will be helping the school during their startup phase (e33).
- 2) They describe the logic model where motivation will improve with increased rigor + opportunity (e33).
- 3) The application points out the 5 core principles used in early colleges throughout the country (e34 and footnote) including a commitment to serve underrepresented schools.
- 4) A STEM focus hands-on, project based approach will be used to prepare success and give the students power by allowing them to choose among three different pathways (e35).
- 5) One of the prerequisites to success is a strong vision statement and this is described on page e36-37.
- 6) To prepare students for the environment and culture of college, the high school will be co-located on the college campus (e37) aptly dubbed "power of place."
- 7) Project-based learning is one method for meeting challenging standards and the application states that this approach will be used (e39) and backs it up with a document in the appendix that documents its success (e102).
- 8) The program will attempt to monitor each student's needs through an advisory (e40) College Connection time and a personalized learning plan (e40).
- 9) To ensure that students have the resources (time), the program will have a longer school day and a 5 week Summer Bridge Program for 9th and 10th grade that includes college classes (e41).
- 10) The description of the program includes theories that are backed up through documentation (e.g. students need at least 2 years of college to break through the threshold for middle class success – e43).

#### Weaknesses:

Only rising 9th and 10th grade students (e41) are in the Summer Bridge Program. The application does not discuss why 11th and 12th are not included. The application also mentions EDWorks but does not include a letter of support or agreement. There is no description on how the applicant will meet state application standards.

Reader's Score: 11

## Selection Criteria - Significance

### 1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards. (5 points)

#### Strengths:

The commitment to serve underrepresented and educationally disadvantaged students comes through strongly throughout the application. The commitment is described on page e43, as a Core Principle of Early Colleges (e34), as part of the history DSU as a Black College (e28), and generally a comment in all of the letters of support (e82-93). The application connects the proposed school to the improved success of other early college students over their peers in local districts for daily attendance rates, grade-to-grade promotion, and proficiency.

The application describes additional supports that have been meaningful for disadvantaged students: small school environment to ensure more personalization (e44), smooth transition from high-school to college (e44), and the ability to return to the high school for support while in college (e45). This page also lists the parts of the academic program that help educationally disadvantaged programs and this reviewer agrees that if all of the programs are implemented with fidelity, educationally disadvantaged students will improve their chances of meeting the state academic standards. Furthermore, the thorough nature of the management and charter agreement sections demonstrate that there is a higher chance that this fidelity of implementation will occur.

#### Weaknesses:

The data presented for early college and other supports does not go into enough detail whether the improved rates (e43) are a result of students self-selecting into this type of school who would have already demonstrated these behaviors. There is not enough of a link between standards and how the school would help subgroups of students.

Reader's Score: 3

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Project Evaluation

### 1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school s objectives. (15 points)

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school 's objectives, including developing of performance measures and performance targets for its proposed grant project that are consistent with those objectives. The applicant should clearly identify the project-specific performance measures and performance targets in its plan and should review the Performance Measures section of the notice for information on the requirements for developing those performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project. The applicant may choose to include a discussion of the project-specific performance measures and targets it develops in response to the Performance Measures requirements when addressing this criterion.**

#### Strengths:

The application shows a good strategy to assess achievement of charter school director and act on the data:

- 1) The school director is named as the person responsible (e30).
- 2) A schedule of assessment tools with rationale provided on e224-e226 and discussion for the rest of the benchmark schedule (e46). The Smarter Balanced assessment is discussed on e46.
- 3) There is a description of evaluations and how students will improve on e226-e239.
- 4) Benchmarks for academic performance, organizational efficiency, and financial stewardship are laid out (e131-e150).
- 5) Students who are identified who need the greatest amount of performance monitoring will be identified (e46), taught how to navigate their own learning (e45), and develop plans through grade teams (e47) at least twice a month.
- 6) Data will be communicated to parents through newsletters and through a link to the schools profile and students will learn how to interpret their own data and show parents their portfolio with assessments (e47).

7) Goals for reading, math, science, social studies, and college readiness, are described on paged e48- which are challenging.

**Weaknesses:**

It is hard to tell from the application if this school is significantly below the state average to start with and therefore difficult to tell if the state average enough of a “stretch” goal for many of the items in number 7 above. This reviewer is assuming based on the data that this school will serve more under-represented students than other schools do. Perhaps this question could have been answered better in the application so it wouldn't have occurred. There are no performance operation and financial goals.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**

**1. The Secretary considers the extent of community support for and parental and community involvement in, the charter school. In determining the extent of community support for, and parental and community involvement in, the charter school, the Secretary considers:**

**(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)**

**Note: In describing the extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school, the Secretary encourages the applicant to describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the charter school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the charter school.**

**(10 points total)**

**General:**

There is a very strong board made up of credentialed educators. While the proposal says there were meetings of parents, documentation of how many meetings, parents, or the strength of their interest was not evident in the application.

**Reader's Score: 6**

**Sub Question**

**1. (i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points).**

**Strengths:**

The support letters are very strong endorsements, especially coming from academia:

- Semi-original letters of support (some paragraphs the same):
- US Senator Carper (e82) including supporting the EDWorks program.
- Dr. Thompson - Provost of Delaware State University (e83-84) he is the one who signed the agreement.
- Dr. Austin – VP Research Delaware State University (e85-86)
- Dr. Coffield – Director Early College High School (e87)
- Dr. Fox-Lykens Founding Board Member, teacher (e88) – serve underrepresented students
- Hobbs – Retired Superintendent (e89)
- McDowell (lawyer) and board member (e90-91) low income students
- Prof Sianjina of education (e92) first generation students, underrepresented
- Dr. Wright board member– Education Foundation (e93)

A foundation has given money, but the amount is not listed (e50).

### Sub Question

#### Weaknesses:

While the letters are strong and there is a statement that parents support the school on page e50, there is no documentation of support from parents and students or commitments to enroll. Parents are obviously the ones going to make the decision on sending their students to the school. Is this a project that is dumped on parents or is this something they fully embrace? It is hard to determine whether this project is something parents fully embrace. There is a blank letter of parental support in Appendix C but no indication on how many parents signed this.

Reader's Score: 3

2. (ii) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental and community involvement in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).

#### Strengths:

There is evidence of numerous outreach attempts of thoughtful planning when it comes to parent and community involvement. There is a statement that says many different kinds of families (including military and those in poverty) were involved in the outreach (e51). There will be at least one parent on the board and on the budget committee (e51). The board will have a specific committee for family engagement (e51). Parents will be involved in their students Personalized Learning Plan and through the advisory program (e52). The document mentions the school will visit middle schools, a target advertising campaign (including the Air Force Base), parent information sessions in various parts of the community with free child care, and stories about the school's progress.

#### Weaknesses:

There are vague statements about "a variety" of outreach meetings (e52) and there is no documentation to back up what the level of parent and community involvement was or will be. The statements could have been backed up and with a list of activities and numbers of people who attended meetings during the formation of the school. Because there was such good documentation in other areas of the application and the fact that the school opening was delayed for a year, this reviewer is skeptical that the level of outreach necessary to get students in the door was done.

Reader's Score: 3

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(Please provide your responses in sub-questions 1 and 2.)

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel's skills, experience, and success in the following areas: launching a high-quality charter school; developing an innovative school design; managing or leading a non-profit organization; establishing or maintaining school governance by board of trustees; developing and implementing an effective curriculum; recruiting and evaluating effective educators; and strengthening fiscal management.**

(22 points total)

#### General:

There are good statements in the application about hiring everyone and qualifications of the Innovative Schools team, but not enough specifics about how much time IS will be on the ground.

**Reader's Score: 19**

**Sub Question**

1. (i) **The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (up to 2 points).**

**Strengths:**

There is a strong statement that Innovative Schools celebrates diversity, does not discriminate, and posts non-discrimination notices (e53).

**Weaknesses:**

It would have been nice to see a description of targeted marketing opportunities that would more likely reach underrepresented groups.

**Reader's Score: 1**

2. (ii) **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).**

**Strengths:**

There are many well qualified individuals on the board as evidenced by the charter application statement of qualifications for the individuals below:

- Curriculum and instructional strategies (Thompson, Sianjina, Coffield, Fox-Lykens, Wright, Engle, Hobbs) e210-211
- Business management (Coffield, Hobbs, McDowell, Austin, Mohammadi) e211-212
- Personnel management (Sianjina, Fox-Lykens, Hobbs) e212
- Diversity (Thompson, Sianjina, McDowell, Fox-Lykens, Austin) e213
- At-risk populations (Thompson, McDowell, Austin, Engel) e213-214
- School operations (Coffield, Hobbs, Mohannadi) e214

The project director (Gershman) has had experience with setting up other schools for Innovative Schools, Edison Schools, and NY Dept. of Ed and has experience in school leadership and other positions (e54). The project manager (Coffield) has curriculum experience and was a support person for Delaware Dept. of Education (e55). The Innovative Schools experience in education (e55-e57) and EdWorks (e58) experience in over 50 districts shows a lot of promise.

**Weaknesses:**

It is difficult to determine in the contract who will be managing the actual school and how much time will be spent on this school versus all of the other commitments that Innovative Schools and EdWorks has. There is no clear description of the time and personnel commitments that will be available to the school. It would also have been more convincing to see the statistics and achievements of schools that Innovative Schools has managed.

**Reader's Score: 18**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan**

1. **The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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. (15 points)**

**Strengths:**

It is obvious that the school will get support for the major systems of finance and payroll. The plan is backed by two organizations with education experience – Innovative Schools as the CMO (e58) and EDWorks as a subcontractor (e58). Innovative Schools says that it will place an Operations Manager at the school and charter schools financial specialists will work with the school to develop training and support for the first four years (e59). The specific systems that will be used for finances and personnel are mentioned on e59.

The plan is detailed in the appendices:

- See e198-202: includes multiple pages specific assignments by person, indicates assignments completed for first year, will continue for subsequent years.
- See e267 for list of contracts e.g. CMO, facility, food services, speech/hearing/psych.
- See e275 timeline for hiring.

**Weaknesses:**

It was not clear in the discussion of the Innovative Schools commitment how long the Operations Manager or Finance Specialists will work with the school (e.g. minimum hours per week) or how the support will be determined. Because Innovative Schools is managing other schools and there is not enough detail about the additional school's impact on the entire organization, it is difficult to determine the capacity to handle a new school .

**Reader's Score:** 13

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design****1. Existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency.**

**The existence of a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency and the extent to which the charter or performance contract describes how student performance will be measured in the charter school pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school. (15 points)**

**Note: The applicant is encouraged to submit a copy of its approved charter or performance contract. If the applicant has had an application for a charter denied, the applicant should describe the circumstances surrounding such denial and how it plans to revise the charter application before resubmitting it to the authorized public chartering agency.**

**Strengths:**

See signed contract on e203 (school started in August 2013 with grade 9) and see e303 charter modification for delay of opening until August 2014. Goals 1-5 for student performance adequately measure impact on e220-e222.

**Weaknesses:**

There are no apparent weaknesses in this document.

**Reader's Score:** 15

**Selection Criteria - Adequacy of Resources**

**1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school. (3 points)**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to describe the flexibility afforded under its State s charter school law in terms of establishing an administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency, and whether charter schools are exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools.**

**The Secretary also encourages the applicant to include a description of the degree of autonomy the charter school will have over such matters as the charter school s budget, expenditures, daily operations, curriculum, and personnel in accordance with its State s charter school law.**

**Strengths:**

There is a detailed statement about Delaware's law for charter schools that gives a high degree of autonomy and flexibility to achieve performance in exchange for accountability (e63) and the section of the law and details manage education program, budget, property, debt, gifts, contracts, personnel (with no collective bargaining agreements), discipline, admission (e64).

**Weaknesses:**

Because the CMO in a way replaces the school district in terms of control, there was no discussion of the degree of autonomy and flexibility that the CMO would give the school to solve its own problems or how disagreements between the school and the CMO would be resolved.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Improving Achievement and High School Graduation - Competitive Preference Priority 1**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Improving Achievement and High School Graduation Rates [Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners]**

**This priority is for projects that are designed to address one or more of the following priority areas:**

**(a) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students in rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice).**

**(b) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for students with disabilities.**

**(c) Accelerating learning and helping to improve high school graduation rates (as defined in the notice) and college enrollment rates for English Learners.**

**Note: The Department encourages the applicant to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) to which it is well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or more of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this Competitive Preference Priority.**

**Strengths:**

The Competitive Priorities section describes IEPs (e23) which are required of all SPED students. However, the application goes further in stating that EDWork has a history of success with disadvantaged students and that two special education teachers, that are highly qualified in at least one more discipline, will be hired (e23-24). Students with Special Needs are mentioned in the Charter Contract (e251-e258). An understanding of English Language Learners is evidenced by the mention of the Home Language Survey, WIDA-ACCESS, and testing out of the Tier C Level (e25). There is mention of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model (e25). Students will also be setting up their own language acquisition

goals (e26).

**Weaknesses:**

While this section describes a bit more than minimum requirements, actual statistics of EDWorks previous success rather than a general statement would be warranted here.

**Reader's Score:** 3

**Support for Military Families - Competitive Preference Priority 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Support for Military Families.**

**This priority is for projects that are designed to address the needs of military-connected students (as defined in the notice).**

**Note: To receive points under this priority, an applicant's project must target military-connected students who are current or prospective public charter school students. The applicant's recruitment and admissions policies and practices must comply with the State's charter school law and CSP program requirements (for information on admissions and the lottery under the CSP, see Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance at (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/charter/nonregulatory-guidance.html>)).**

**Strengths:**

The application mentions that the school is located less than five miles away from Dover Air Force Base and that there was a student recruiting and enrollment event held (e26-e26).

**Weaknesses:**

There is talk about the challenge of reassignment and relocation and a description of the schedule (which is typical of all schools). The application brought up the issue of mobility and that schedules would accommodate this but didn't describe how or propose a significant solution.

**Reader's Score:** 2

---

**Status:** Submitted  
**Last Updated:** 08/25/2014 10:20 AM