

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

Status: Submitted

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: TECH Freire Charter School (U282B160031)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	15
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	5
<b>Assessing Achievement of School Objectives</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	10
<b>Community &amp; Parental Support &amp; Comm. Involvement</b>		
1. Community Support	10	10
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	20
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	15
<b>Existence &amp; Quality of Charter or Performance Con.</b>		
1. Existence of Charter	15	12
<b>Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	90
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	2
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments</b>		
1. CPP 3	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	2
<b>Total</b>	108	92

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 6: 84.282B

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

Applicant: TECH Freire Charter School (U282B160031)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices

#### 1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(1)).

**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.**

#### Strengths:

TECH Freire Charter High School is proposing to offer the core liberal arts program of the original Freire Charter High School (FCS) with an emphasis on computer programming and entrepreneurship. The combination of the proven success of the program at the original FCS, combined with its unique emphasis will enable the historically underperforming students of Philadelphia to meet state achievement and content standards and prepare them for their college experience.

The application provides a thorough description of its instructional practices and curriculum. Instructional methods rely on clear learning targets, the collection of frequent evidence of student mastery of content, and student ownership of learning. Curricular materials will include Glencoe Math, Pearson Prentice Hall's Science series, and TCI History Alive. The core curriculum and course work is strategically tied to Pennsylvania, Common Core and Next Generation standards.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

### Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

#### 1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 U.S.C. 7221c(a)(1)).

#### Strengths:

The applicant has designed a sound plan for assisting educationally disadvantaged students in meeting state content and achievement standards. The plan incorporates features of instructional design, supplemental academic support, emotional support, data-driven instruction, professional development, and the integration of technology (p. 14-19). In addition, the school has well thought out methods to "catch students up" when and if they have failed to learn or retain foundational knowledge. These methods include a Writing Center, Science Center, and Math Center, where students can get extra help; each grade has an Academic Advisor; a Family Therapist; and a Peer Mediation Program. These elements, along with a strong commitment to provide special programs for qualifying students (ELL and Special Education), will provide at-risk students with the quality programming they need in order to be successful.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement of School Objectives****1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school's objectives, inclusive of developing 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 Section VI.4. Performance Measures 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:**

TECH Freire presents a comprehensive plan for assessing the school's overall academic and organizational goals. Not only is the plan comprehensive, it illustrates a sound, progressive approach to the type of performance targets to set and when to set them for a school in its early years of operation. For example, an emphasis is placed on student growth in the first two years followed by the addition of academic attainment measures and targets in later years (p. 23). Academic goals focus on the purposes central to the school's mission and charter agreement including, but not limited to academic growth and achievement; graduation rates; college enrollment and retention; and tech proficiency (p. 23-25). Organizational goals encompass the areas of enrollment, staffing, facilities, accounting principles, and stakeholder satisfaction (p. 26-27).

**Weaknesses:**

Although the applicant articulates what it describes as "project implementation goals for the two years of the CSP grant", the measures for these goals do not appear to be measures tied to grant activities (for instance, if grant funds will support professional development for teachers and other staff, the applicant should include measures related to the outcomes for the professional development).

Given the competitive preference priority of supporting high-needs students and the fact that Freire states that its program is designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students with disabilities, the assessment plan could be enriched by the addition of academic goals and measures for sub-group populations of Special Education students.

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement**

**Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The extent of community support and parental and community involvement (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(3); 20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(3)(E)).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score: 10**

**Sub Question**

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--

(i) The extent of community support for the application (up to 5 points);

**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.

**Strengths:**

TECH Freire demonstrates an exemplary level of community support for its charter application through its initial, month-long outreach campaign. Evidence of support includes a petition signed by 1,399 individuals supporting the charter; 56 enrollment forms prior to opening; over 20 letters of support from groups including technology organizations, education departments, and community leaders; and a consortium of 9 extracurricular partner organizations (p. 28-31). This breadth and level of support is crucial to the school's ability to open and operate successfully.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

2. 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--

(ii) How parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).

**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.

**Strengths:**

The applicant has made plans to include parents and the community in planning, program design, and implementation of the school. An example of this plan includes scheduling school design charettees during the pre-operational year to seek input on operations, safety, transportation, and facilities (p.28). Other planned efforts involving parents in school implementation involve participation in employee interviews, membership on the governing board, and membership on school committees (p. 32).

TFCHS has created an impressive plan to inform the community and market the school. The plan includes working

**Sub Question**

with a community outreach strategist as well as a \$15,000 city-wide advertising campaign in both English and Spanish.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The quality of project personnel (34 CFR 75.210(e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3)(ii)).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score: 20**

**Sub Question**

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

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.**

**Strengths:**

No strengths found.

**Weaknesses:**

Although the application states that the school is "committed to providing equal employment opportunity"(p. 41), it is not clear how it intends to encourage 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. Of particular interest would be the school's efforts to recruit employees of color given the fact the founders anticipate that student enrollment will be comparable to the original Freire school that is 98% students of color (p. 2).

**Reader's Score: 0**

- 2. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.**

## Sub Question

### Strengths:

TECH Freire has compiled an impressive team of individuals with significant experience in charter school implementation, teaching, administration, school governance, and financial management. The qualifications of these individuals are evident in all subsets of the team including the Charter Support Organization, hired school administrators, and the founding board (p. 35-40 and Appendix B). Specific examples of the team's experience and expertise include:

- The Director of Operations and Compliance has 13 years of charter school experience including serving on the leadership team of Freire Charter School Wilmington during start-up.
- The Executive Director led Freire Charter School Philadelphia for 16 years; oversaw the opening of Freire Charter School Wilmington; and is a facilitator of an instructional leadership program for the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- The Board Chair holds an MBA (Master's in Business Administration) and works for a business and performance improvement company.

The level of education and breadth of knowledge and experience in charter schools, particularly at the original Freire School, will ensure a smooth and seamless start-up of the new school.

### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 20

## Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

### 1. The quality of the management plan (34 CFR 75.210(g)(1) and (g)(2)(i)).

**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.**

#### Strengths:

TECH Freire has established a vision of a management structure to achieve the overall objective of opening the school in September 2016. The management structure includes a 5-15 member board of directors; a Head of Schools; and Leadership Team that is comprised of the Head of Academics, Head of Academic Supports, and Head of Academic Affairs (p. 41-42). This management structure will be strengthened by the school's contractual agreement with Build the Future Education Collaborative, a charter support organization that also serves the original Freire Charter School and Freire Charter School Wilmington (p. 43-44). The relationship with Build the Future will ensure fidelity of implementation of the model that TECH Freire will be duplicating.

The applicant has also included a management plan for the proposed project as it relates to the funds requested for this CSP Non-SEA (state educational agency) Grant (p.44-45). The management plan is directly linked to the requested CSP funds outlined in the budget narrative (Attachment 1234) and includes project milestones, timelines, and the individual/group responsible for each task.

#### Weaknesses:

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 15

**Selection Criteria - Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.**

**1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency (20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(L)).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

Reader's Score: 12

**Sub Question**

**1. The Secretary considers--**

**(i) Whether a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists (up to 10 points);**

**Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.**

**Strengths:**

TECH Freire Charter School has an approved charter contract with the School Reform Commission of the School District of Philadelphia (p. 47) for a period of three years beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2019 (Appendix E).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

Reader's Score: 10

**2. The Secretary considers--**

**(ii) 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 (up to 5 points)**

**Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the**

### Sub Question

**authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.**

#### **Strengths:**

TECH Freire's charter contract with the School Reform Commission of the School District of Philadelphia addresses how student performance will be measured with regard to the state assessments that are required of other schools.

#### **Weaknesses:**

Although the contract addresses how student performance will be measured with regard to the state assessments that are required of other schools, the contract provides only a limited description using basic methods. Item 3, Section B. Academics, Article X. Accountability of the charter contract (Appendix E) states, "...the Charter School shall use its best effort to achieve a School Performance Profile score of 70 or better...". A description of the extent to which student performance on state assessments is included in the School Performance Profile is not provided. Furthermore, it should be noted that while contract says the school will participate in the authorizing district's new charter school performance framework, neither the application nor the contract describe this framework or performance measurements included within the framework.

**Reader's Score: 2**

### **Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA**

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(2)).**

**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.**

#### **Strengths:**

TECH Freire is granted a large degree of autonomy in areas such as budgeting, curriculum, operating procedures, and personnel under Pennsylvania law. The state's charter school law (24 P.S. §§ 17-1701-A to 17-1751-A) gives the school "all powers necessary or desirable for carrying out its charter". The school's contract with the School District of Philadelphia further supports the flexibility provided by state law. More specifically, the contract ensures the school's autonomy from the authorizing LEA by referring to the law and stating, "the Charter Board shall be responsible for the operation of the Charter School and shall decide all matters relating to the Charter School..." (Appendix E).

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 3**

### **Priority Questions**

#### **Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 1**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners)**

**Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:**

**(a) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies**

- (b) Students with disabilities**
- (c) English learners**

**Note: 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:**

TECH Freire Charter High School (TECH or TFCHS) states that its program is designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students for students with disabilities (p.3). Program elements that are designed to improve academic outcomes for these students include:

- students with disabilities will be mainstreamed in the general education setting with educational supports,
- all instruction will be differentiated, and
- students will have the opportunity to work with an academic advisor.

**Weaknesses:**

While the applicant states that its program is designed to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities, it does not provide a detailed explanation of how the project meets the priority beyond that it will provide federally mandated Special Education and English Language Learner (ELL) services (p. 3-4, p. 20-22).

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes)**

**Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.**

**Strengths:**

The project is not designed to improve academic outcomes for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes, therefore no strengths are noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The project is not designed to improve academic outcomes for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes, therefore no weakness are noted.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments**

**Projects that are designed to improve early learning and development outcomes across one or more of the essential domains of school readiness for children from birth through third grade (or for any age group within this range) through a focus on including preschool, whether offered in school or community-based settings, as part of elementary education programs and systems in order to expand opportunities for preschool students and teachers.**

**Strengths:**

The project is not designed to improve early learning outcomes, therefore no strengths are noted.

**Weaknesses:**

The project is not designed to improve early learning outcomes, therefore no weaknesses are noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: TECH Freire Charter School (U282B160031)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	14
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	4
<b>Assessing Achievement of School Objectives</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	9
<b>Community &amp; Parental Support &amp; Comm. Involvement</b>		
1. Community Support	10	9
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	17
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	12
<b>Existence &amp; Quality of Charter or Performance Con.</b>		
1. Existence of Charter	15	14
<b>Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	82
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	2
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments</b>		
1. CPP 3	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	2
<b>Total</b>	108	84

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 6: 84.282B

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

Applicant: TECH Freire Charter School (U282B160031)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices

#### 1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(1)).

**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.**

#### Strengths:

The school is a replication of Freire Charter High School, with an additional emphasis on computer programming and entrepreneurship. The application uses the success of this school to demonstrate the quality of its educational program (graduation rate of 85% compared to 47% for the district). There is a thorough description of the standards aligned curriculum to be used in each subject, as well as the intervention courses to be taken if students are not meeting standards. There is a comprehensive discussion of how the school plans to use data to drive instruction and how professional development will be provided to help teachers use data to improve instruction. See pages 5 to 13.

#### Weaknesses:

The application does not adequately cite academic research showing the effectiveness of its instructional program. Instead, it relies on the success of the original Freire High School to demonstrate the quality of the instructional program.

Reader's Score: 14

### Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students

#### 1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 U.S.C. 7221c(a)(1)).

#### Strengths:

The application provides substantial details of the research-based strategies that will be used to identify, serve, and monitor educationally disadvantaged students, including English Learners and students with disabilities. Strategies include using scaffolds, providing models and support for every lesson, providing a double period of math in 9th grade, providing assistance after school, and using formative assessment to track progress. Also the application identifies a need for wraparound services for educationally disadvantaged students and plans to provide a comprehensive system of supports such as a Family Therapist and peer mediation. In addition, the application places a high priority on teacher-centered professional development to improve instruction for educationally disadvantaged students through peer collaboration and observation. See pages 3 to 4 and pages 14 to 22.

#### Weaknesses:

The application states that students with disabilities will be provided an Individualized Education Plan but it does not provide examples of interventions and supports that will be provided for these students within the proposed instructional program (pages 20 and 21).

Reader's Score: 4

### Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement of School Objectives

#### 1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school's objectives.

**Note:** The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school's objectives, inclusive of developing 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 Section VI.4. Performance Measures 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 includes a comprehensive system of formative, interim, and summative assessments to track student achievement. Specific annual goals and metrics for 2016-17 through 2019-20 are provided for state and local assessments. These metrics measure proficiency, growth, and compare the charter school to the citywide average. The application provides adequate justification for prioritizing growth in the first two years due to the demographics of the anticipated student population. The application also provides details for nonacademic goals, including student retention and operational goals. In addition, several goals are aligned with the proposed project: (1) the academic goals align with the purchase of curriculum; (2) the school facilities goals align with purchase of equipment; and (3) student enrollment goals align with marketing. See pages 23 to 28.

#### Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide baseline data for the school district or the target population. This makes it difficult to assess whether the goals and metrics are sufficiently rigorous or are too ambitious. In addition, the application provides several years to meet goals but lacks interim goals that would help gauge if adequate progress is being made. It also lacks measures to track the achievement gap between subgroups and the total student population.

Reader's Score: 9

### Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement

#### 1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

**The extent of community support and parental and community involvement (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(3); 20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(3)(E)).**

#### Strengths:

#### Weaknesses:

Reader's Score: 9

#### Sub Question

#### 1. The Secretary considers the extent of community support for, and parental and community

**Sub Question**

**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--**

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

**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.**

**Strengths:**

The application demonstrates substantial community support for the charter school and some support for the project. For the initial charter application, 1,399 individuals signed a petition supporting the new school, 56 students completed non-binding intent to enroll forms, and there were 20 letters demonstrating community support (pages 28 and 29). This application includes one letter of support from a U.S. Senator (Appendix C). The application also illustrates that it has community partners to provide services to students.

**Weaknesses:**

Most of the letters of support were for the initial charter application, not the application for the current project.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**2. 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--**

**(ii) How parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).**

**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.**

**Strengths:**

Parents and community members have a significant role in the planning, design and implementation of the charter school. The application states that parents and community members will participate in design charrettes on school operations, safety, transportation, and facilities. Parents participate in the teacher hiring process, can serve on committees, and help decide the theme for exhibition night. There is also a School-Teacher-Parent-Student contract and two teacher conferences per year. The school is also building partnerships with businesses to provide educational opportunities for students. See pages 23 to 33.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 5**

**Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel**

**1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The quality of project personnel (34 CFR 75.210(e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3)(ii)).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score:** 17

**Sub Question**

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

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant demonstrates that it encourages applications for employment from traditionally underrepresented groups by stating that it is committed to providing equal employment opportunities and by providing an extensive list of protective categories (page 41).

**Weaknesses:**

The application does not state how it plans to provide outreach to traditionally underrepresented groups.

**Reader's Score:** 1

2. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The application demonstrates that key staff members have relevant experience. Key employees in the Charter Support Organization have substantial years of experience in other Freire schools. The school principal held a leadership position at another Freire school. The head of academics and academic supports also held a leadership position at another Freire school and has an education degree. See Appendix B.

**Weaknesses:**

The principal has not held a previous position as a school leader and does not have a degree in education or an advanced degree.

**Reader's Score:** 16

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

1. The quality of the management plan (34 CFR 75.210(g)(1) and (g)(2)(i)).

**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.**

**Strengths:**

The project management plan is well articulated and will help ensure that the proposed project is completed on time and within budget. The project management plan includes a detailed chart that includes milestones, timelines, and responsibilities for each element of the proposed project, including curriculum, travel, equipment, and marketing (pages 44 to 46). In addition, the application includes a detailed explanation of the difference between the role and duties of the Charter Support Organization, board, principal, and other school leaders.

**Weaknesses:**

The narrative for the management plan focuses on the management structure of the charter school instead of focusing on how the specific project will be managed. The narrative is missing specific details on how the management structure will help ensure the project is completed on time and within budget.

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.**

**1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency (20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(L)).**

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

**Reader's Score: 14**

**Sub Question**

**1. The Secretary considers--**

**(i) Whether a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists (up to 10 points);**

**Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.**

**Strengths:**

A written charter between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score: 10**

## Sub Question

### 2. The Secretary considers--

(ii) 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 (up to 5 points)

**Note:** In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.

#### **Strengths:**

The charter contract includes some details on how performance will be measured (Appendix E). Article IX and X of the charter contract requires the school to submit an annual report to assess performance and operations under a performance framework, which includes academic, financial, and organizational indicators. Article X.B.3. of the charter contract also includes a minimum proficiency goal for a state assessment.

#### **Weaknesses:**

Other than the minimum proficiency goal on the state assessment included in Article X.B.3 of the charter contract, the charter contract lacks specific goals and metrics for assessing the charter school's student performance.

**Reader's Score:** 4

## Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA

1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(2)).

**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.

#### **Strengths:**

The SEA (state educational agency) provides substantial flexibility to charter schools. Pennsylvania law states that charter schools operate independently from the existing school district structure and the law ranks highly against a model law developed by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. The application also states that charter schools have authority over budget, curriculum, and operating procedures. Charter schools are also their own Local Educational Agencies. See pages 47 and 48.

#### **Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses found.

**Reader's Score:** 3

## Priority Questions

### Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 1

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners)**

**Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:**

- (a) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies**
- (b) Students with disabilities**
- (c) English learners**

**Note: 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 project is designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and the school anticipates these students will represent 17-20% of the student population. The application includes a detailed identification process and states that Individualized Education Plans will be reviewed regularly. The project is also designed to improve outcomes for English Learners. The application includes a comprehensive description of the processes that will be used for identification, assessment, interventions, and monitoring for students that reach proficiency. The application demonstrates that the school will place an emphasis on providing interventions in both English as a Second Language classes and in content classes. See pages 3 and 4.

**Weaknesses:**

The application states that students with disabilities will be provided an Individualized Education Plan but it does not provide examples of interventions and supports that will be provided for these students within the proposed instructional program (pages 20 and 21).

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes)**

**Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.**

**Strengths:**

This competitive priority is not addressed.

**Weaknesses:**

This competitive priority is not addressed.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments**

**Projects that are designed to improve early learning and development outcomes across one or more of the essential domains of school readiness for children from birth through third grade (or for any age**

group within this range) through a focus on including preschool, whether offered in school or community-based settings, as part of elementary education programs and systems in order to expand opportunities for preschool students and teachers.

**Strengths:**

This competitive priority is not addressed.

**Weaknesses:**

This competitive priority is not addressed.

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted  
**Last Updated:**   11/09/2015 12:20 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/12/2015 05:54 PM

## Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: TECH Freire Charter School (U282B160031)

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

	Points Possible	Points Scored
<b>Questions</b>		
<b>Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices</b>		
1. Quality of Curriculum	15	12
<b>Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students</b>		
1. Achievement Standards	5	4
<b>Assessing Achievement of School Objectives</b>		
1. Assessing Achievement	15	8
<b>Community &amp; Parental Support &amp; Comm. Involvement</b>		
1. Community Support	10	7
<b>Quality of Project Personnel</b>		
1. Project Personnel	22	18
<b>Quality of the Management Plan</b>		
1. Management Plan	15	12
<b>Existence &amp; Quality of Charter or Performance Con.</b>		
1. Existence of Charter	15	14
<b>Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA</b>		
1. Degree of Flexibility	3	2
<b>Sub Total</b>	100	77
<b>Priority Questions</b>		
<b>Competitive Preference Priority</b>		
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 1</b>		
1. CPP 1	3	2
<b>Supporting High-Need Students - 2</b>		
1. CPP 2	3	0
<b>Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments</b>		
1. CPP 3	2	0
<b>Sub Total</b>	8	2
<b>Total</b>	108	79

# Technical Review Form

Panel #6 - Non-SEA Charter Schools - 6: 84.282B

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

Applicant: TECH Freire Charter School (U282B160031)

## Questions

### Selection Criteria - Quality of Curriculum and Instructional Practices

#### 1. The quality of the proposed curriculum and instructional practices (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(1)).

**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.**

#### Strengths:

The applicant's curriculum is based off of another school's curriculum called Freire Charter High School who had 96% of its students enrolled in college in 2015 (p. e17) compared to the district average of 47% in 2015 (p. e17). The high percentage of students who attend college is a positive indicator that the curriculum properly prepared students for college and the culture encouraged students to attend higher education.

Eighty-eight percent of those who enroll in college from Freire enroll return for their second year of college which is a good indicator that students were well prepared by the school for the more rigorous college curriculum (p. e17).

There is a Tech and STEM focus based on a liberal arts core curriculum so the curriculum uses a broad core curriculum yet also offers the more modern educational focus on Technology and STEM which is important for students for global competency (p. e20).

The applicant says it will have high expectations, strict non-violence policy, data driven cycle of instruction, and a focus on computer science which includes all curriculum mapped to PA state standards, Common Core & NextGen (p. e20).

A strict non-violence policy is essential for a healthy school. A data driven instruction will help to identify learning gaps so they can be quickly fixed. Mapping curriculum to Common Core and State Standards is necessary for compliance and achievement on state assessments.

To achieve non-violence the school will outline a 'Code of Conduct' outlined in the student handbook, and will include a peer mediation program, and annual student led workshops about consciousness raising (p. e21).

Active student involvement will be encouraged through student leadership, student representatives attend board meetings, and students accompany parents to parent teacher conferences and complete senior project presentations which will help to teach leadership skills in students (p. 22).

The applicant plans to collect data from student assessments distributed by state and use data to monitor progress and enable lesson adjustment (p. e22).

Vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum will help to ensure that students receive a complete education with fewer gaps in the instructional curriculum so this is a strong strategy (p. e23).

The core subjects will be included along with the enrichment subjects of health and Spanish as a foreign language (p. e23).

The applicant has a strong technology curriculum which includes: Computer labs, laptops, Senior projects with Powerpoints, digital portfolios, working in teams, use of digital media, and creating class wikis which are all innovative techniques (p. e34).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states it will “add in threads of computer programming and entrepreneurship”(p. e20) but it is vague on how many hours and what will encompass the computer programming and entrepreneurship portion of the curriculum. The applicant states it will provide a “safe, friendly, joyous, rich, rigorous college prep education” but fails to adequately describe how this will be achieved and the statement is very broad (p. e20).

The statement “Our teachers create lessons that help students to think and see more than one right answer, encouraging them to speak out, and learn from their mistakes” is vague on how it plans to help students to identify the various components to a solution and 'learn from their mistakes.' The wording in the proposal is awkward (p. e32).

The length of instructional classes are only 55 minutes which is a short amount of time for high school students to learn complicated material such as AP Calculus and AP Chemistry so this is an unrealistic expectation in order to achieve top scores on assessments (p. e33).

The applicant states that classes are “joyous, intentional, safe environments where it is okay to be smart, okay to make mistakes, okay to ask questions . . .” This is non-descriptive of how the staff creates an environment that is joyous and one where intelligence and high achievement is celebrated. The applicant needs to include activities that are incorporated into the curriculum that demonstrate and encourage these traits (p. e33).

**Reader's Score: 12**

**Selection Criteria - Assisting Educationally Disadvantaged Students**

- 1. The extent to which the proposed project will assist educationally disadvantaged students and other students in meeting State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards (20 U.S.C. 7221c(a)(1)).**

**Strengths:**

Admission preference will be given for students living in Strawberry Mansion High School district where 77% of students live in poverty (p. e17). Eighty-four percent of students are considered low income, and 20% of students are in special education. It is expected that 75% of the students who enter the school will be 4-5 academic years below the baseline (p. e17).

Tech Freire is modeling its program after Freire Charter which 75% of its students scoring at or above 75% proficiency in the Algebra Keystone Assessment compared to the district average of only 38% and 77% of its students scoring at or above proficiency on the Literature Keystone assessment compared to only 49% of students in the District, so this shows the program to be effective (p. e29).

The applicant states that it will use fewer lectures and worksheets to teach, but it will encourage increased discussion that will be centered around critical thinking, additional team projects, and scaffolding combined with more assessments to monitor progress and learning gaps. These are all strong methods to use to enrich the education received and to help students score higher on assessments as the curriculum is more readily understood and remembered (p. e30). Also, the

applicant plans to provide a Writing Center, Math Center, and Science Center to assist students who are struggling after school and provide extra instructional minutes. This will allow those who are struggling with key concepts extra time to learn the material which will improve test scores and achievement (p. e30).

Each grade will be assigned an Academic Advisor who will assist students with papers, homework, college applications, and notify parents when students are struggling so this will help to keep students on track and progressing meanwhile limit the number of students falling below the baseline metrics (p. e31).

Ninth grade is given extra instructional minutes to ensure that students grasp the curriculum and when needed students will be given two math classes to ensure that they remain on target to graduate and reduces the learning gap. Both of these goals will help struggling students to reduce their learning gap and quickly attain proficiency on state assessments.

The applicant states that it will offer a family therapist and a full complement of counselors along with peer mediation which will help students who are disadvantaged to be able to overcome emotional intelligence challenges so that they can stay on track with the academics (p. e31).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states that 98% of students are of "color." This is non-descriptive; the application lacked detail about the breakdown of the various sub-groups (p. e17).

The applicant states that teachers meet weekly to "trade information and suggestions for helping each child succeed." This statement is vague and sounds like it could be perceived as gossiping about the student. It is poorly worded (p. e31).

The applicant frequently mentions its Code of Conduct, but it was not included this in the Appendix. There is very little detail about what exactly the Code of Conduct entails and how it will be enforced (p. e34).

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Selection Criteria - Assessing Achievement of School Objectives**

**1. The quality of the strategy for assessing achievement of the charter school' s objectives.**

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to propose a comprehensive plan for assessing the achievement of the charter school s objectives, inclusive of developing 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 Section VI.4. Performance Measures 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 assessments the applicant plans to use is: Commonwealth's Keystone Assessment, graduation rates, ACT performance, State & Local Accountability Systems to measure student growth and college readiness which is a comprehensive plan for measuring growth (p. e38).

The chart beginning on page e39 sets several reasonable and attainable project objectives such as: "will meet standard for PA Academic Growth in at least one subject" and "At least 60% of 11th grade students will score proficient or advanced on the Keystone Assessment in 2018-2019 (p. e39).

The applicant also provides adequate evidence of non-academic goals that it has set for itself such as: achieving 90% or higher on the parent satisfaction survey and achieving an average score of 3.75 on the teacher satisfaction survey with it

based on the likert scale of 1-5 (p. e42).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant fails to mention its goals for its students in relation to the SAT assessment and this should be included especially if the plan includes students attending a four year university after graduation.

There is a veritable lack of baseline data provided by which to determine the strength of the program.

**Reader's Score: 8**

**Selection Criteria - Community & Parental Support & Comm. Involvement**

**1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The extent of community support and parental and community involvement (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(3); 20 U.S.C. 7221b(b)(3)(E)).**

**Strengths:**

See answers in sub-questions below.

**Weaknesses:**

See answers in sub-questions below.

**Reader's Score: 7**

**Sub Question**

**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--**

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

**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.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant attached a letter of support for its project from [REDACTED] demonstrating strong political support for the school (p. e97).

Applicant sufficiently mentions number of applicants (1399) and students who are willing to sign agreements to attend (56) which proves the interest in the school from parents and students (p. e43).

There is adequate support from the community with letters of support from the Philadelphia Education Fund (p. e44).

The applicant has engaged an outreach strategist and marketing firm to target their demographics in the Strawberry Mansion district which includes the high poverty subgroups (p. e47). This outreach includes placing ads in newspapers, radio stations, and placing ads in Spanish, and on local bus lines along with attending local fairs, meetings at community groups, visiting supermarkets and churches. The strategy of asking students to speak on

**Sub Question**

behalf of the school will effectively market the school (p. e48).

According to the applicant, marketing materials and advertisements will be translated into Spanish which will appropriately market to the correct demographic (p. e48).

**Weaknesses:**

Once the school is in operation, governance will continue to be driven by a combination of parents, board and community members, staff, and students;" however, governance should not be driven by parents and should include mostly include educators, community professionals, and local politicians (p. e43, e103-125).

**Reader's Score: 4**

**2. 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--**

**(ii) How parents and other members of the community will be involved in the planning, program design, and implementation of the charter school (up to 5 points).**

**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.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has provided the community with opportunities for planning and implementation including an outreach to neighborhood college Temple University to assist with planning. The applicant also specified that the number of applicants was 1,399 and the number of students who are willing to sign agreements to attend was 56 which proves the interest in the school from parents and students (p. e43).

The efforts combined with letters of support from the community from the Philadelphia Education Fund demonstrate that the community was involved with the planning and does want this school (p.e 44).

The applicant also plans to continue with community involvement once the school is in session with the following outreach events: Back to School Night, Parent Teacher Conferences, Grade Level Exhibition Night, Family meeting to highlight specific aspects, etc (p. e46). So this demonstrates adequate continued involvement by the parents and community once the school is in implementation.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states that parents will be invited to participate in the interview process for staff members which will set the expectation that teachers report to parents, instead of the principal, and thus teachers will have a difficult time grading students appropriately (p. e47).

"The parent/teacher/student contract for excellence will set expectations," according to the applicant, but a contract implies something that can be enforced. The applicant is vague about how it plans to enforce the standards that it has set for students and parents.

**Reader's Score: 3**

## Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Personnel

### 1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.

The quality of project personnel (34 CFR 75.210(e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3)(ii)).

**Strengths:**

**Weaknesses:**

Reader's Score: 18

#### Sub Question

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

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant mentions on page e56 that it commits to being an equal opportunity employer.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant does not provide enough detail about how it plans to reach diversity in its hiring practices and fails to outline its recruitment marketing strategy for reaching the various sub-groups such as race, color, national origin, gender, age, and/or disability (p. e56).

Reader's Score: 1

2. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel (up to 20 points).

**Note: The Secretary encourages the applicant to provide evidence of the key project personnel 's training and experience in activities related to the planning, program design, and initial implementation of a charter school.**

**Strengths:**

The project director also holds the title of Director of Operations and Compliance (p. e50). She has worked for 13 years in charter school sector. In September 2015 she opened a new charter school. She earned her Masters Degree in Government Administration, and previously held the position of director of operations and compliance (p. e69-70). Her credentials and experience are sufficient to ensure that the charter school and the project will be successful.

The applicant's Head of School worked as the Head of Academics at Freire Charter for six years so this demonstrates sufficient experience leading a charter school (p. e52). He earned a Bachelors of Arts from Columbia University and also worked as an Assistant Professor at Drexel University. He worked as Head of Academic Support for one school for 6 years, and was previously in charge of Philadelphia's Dept of Public Health. He has the credentials necessary to successfully run a high achieving school.

## Sub Question

### **Weaknesses:**

The project director works for the Charter Support Organization so the delineation of roles and responsibilities is a concern and could cause confusion between her role and the Head of School.

The application is confusing about which organization the Director of Performance Management reports to and works for. Additionally, it is confusing exactly how her role will work in collaboration with the project director and the principal (p. e74).

The administration of the project seems top heavy and it is not clear how all of the functions will complement one another in order to ensure that the project is successful.

The head of school does not have an administrative credential which would help to strengthen the school as the credential provides training that is critical for leading a successful school operation.

**Reader's Score:** 17

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

**The quality of the management plan (34 CFR 75.210(g)(1) and (g)(2)(i)).**

**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.**

### **Strengths:**

The applicant's goal is to open September 2016.

It outlines a proper reporting structure with the principal reporting to the board of directors and the staff reporting to the principal (p. e56).

The hiring schedule for teachers is adequate as the applicant plans to have all teaching positions filled by July 2016 (p. e41).

The applicant's goals are reasonable for attendance (85%), and the goal to have all school facilities equipped by 8/15/2016.

Student satisfaction goals of 75% in 2016-17 school year are reasonable and within a positive range for the first year of operation. The applicant did an excellent job detailing out goals and including dates and percentages of achievement it plans to attain (p. e42).

The role of the Head of School as outlined on p. e57 is consistent with what a principal should be responsible for such as reporting to board president, supporting leadership team, working with the controller to ensure financial obligations are met (p. e57).

Travel monies requested for personnel to develop curriculum which directly impacts student performance, travel to CSP

Conference, travel to visit top schools to gain additional knowledge which will positively impact the education being taught at the school. (p. e200).

The applicant requests funds for cafeteria tables and equipment of \$20,000 and \$50,000 for student desks which is a reasonable amount and the request impacts the students directly.

The applicant requests funds of \$20,000 for curriculum, science lab materials, and for a student information system to collect assessment data and all of these items are directly related to improving student achievement so are reasonable requests.

Professional development request by the applicant of \$3,000 is a reasonable amount and teacher training and professional development is directly related to student achievement (p. e202).

Curriculum development stipends for Year 2 of \$10,000 for personnel are reasonable and a strong curriculum will help to enhance the educational experience for students (p. e202).

The request for funds for cafeteria tables (\$30,000), student desks (\$25,000) and science lab furniture (\$5,800) are reasonable and directly impact the students and help to further their education.

The monies for salary requests look reasonable for instance, \$52,000 for the Head of Academics and \$37,000 for Director of Information Technology (p. e205).

The monies requested for technology such as laptops \$7,000 and netbooks with carts of \$33,000 are reasonable and necessary for student assessments (p. e207).

The monies requested for phone system of \$20,000 and a security system of \$30,000 are reasonable amounts and necessary for student safety (p. e206).

The monies requested for nurse supplies of \$3200, safety supplies of \$4340 and facility supplies of \$7000 are necessary for student safety and a safe environment will help to increase student scores.

#### **Weaknesses:**

The application is confusing about which organization the project director reports to and how her role will work in collaboration with the project director and the principal (p. e74).

The applicant states the "Board of Directors will be linked to daily actions..." however, a proper board of directors does not involve itself with daily actions, but ensures proper governance of the school and is involved with strategic decisions (p. e57).

The applicant fails to state which position will be in charge of the special education department which is a key department at schools and important to limiting liability and servicing an important sub-group.

The applicant's request for funds for marketing which will be used to produce branded materials and t-shirts do not correspond with the project's goals (p. e201).

CMO request of \$50,000 should not be included in the grant as these are the cost of doing business and should be taken from average daily attendance funds as they are not directly related to student achievement and are indirect costs (p. e202).

Legal Service are also a part of the cost of doing business and the handbook template should be something provided by the CMO. Legal services should not be covered by grant funds but rather by average daily attendance funds (p. e202).

The applicant requests funds of \$60,000 for office furniture, conference room furniture, and lobby furnishings and these

are NOT directly related to the project goals and/or student achievement (p. e203).

The monies requested for moving costs should be removed as moving costs are a cost of doing business and do not directly impact student achievement and are indirect or administrative overhead (p. e204).

The applicant requests \$1000 for a TV monitor for the lobby are not directly tied to the goals of the project (p. e206).

Facility soft costs are high of \$325,000 for lawyers, project managers and architects. These are construction costs and should not be included in the grant (p. e206).

**Reader's Score: 12**

### **Selection Criteria - Existence & Quality of Charter or Performance Con.**

#### **1. Please provide your responses in the sub-questions.**

**The existence and quality of a charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency (20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(L)).**

**Strengths:**

See answers in sub-questions below.

**Weaknesses:**

See answers in sub-questions below.

**Reader's Score: 14**

#### **Sub Question**

##### **1. The Secretary considers--**

**(i) Whether a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency exists (up to 10 points);**

**Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer 's approval process under applicable State law.**

**Strengths:**

The applicant submitted application on 11/14/2014 and was issued a conditional charter on 2/18/2015. TECH FREIRE was granted a 3 year charter (p. e63).

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 10**

##### **2. The Secretary considers--**

**Sub Question**

**(ii) 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 (up to 5 points)**

**Note: In considering whether there is a written charter or performance contract between the charter school and its authorized public chartering agency, the Secretary will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether the school has received preliminary, conditional, or other intermediate approval to operate from the authorized public chartering authority, if applicable. An applicant should submit documentation regarding the status of any such approval and clearly describe the authorizer's approval process under applicable State law.**

**Strengths:**

The charter agreement states, "If the Charter school achieves in the bottom two levels on the School District's academic accountability performance system . . . during any year in the term of the charter, the School District may require that the Charter School meet certain specific achievement targets and participate in ongoing reporting . . ." (p. e183).

**Weaknesses:**

The charter agreement is vague about what assessments will be used to monitor progress.

**Reader's Score: 4**

**Selection Criteria - Degree of Flexibility Afforded by the SEA/LEA**

- 1. The degree of flexibility afforded by the SEA and, if applicable, the LEA to the charter school (20 U.S.C. 7221c(b)(2)).**

**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.**

**Strengths:**

Pennsylvania's charter law allows for fiscal and legal autonomy on a scale of 12 to 12 (p. e62).

**Weaknesses:**

The agreement is vague about whether the charter school's teacher will be allowed to be union.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Priority Questions**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 1**

- 1. Competitive Preference Priority 1 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Rural Students, Students with Disabilities, English Learners)**

**Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for one or more of the following groups of students:**

- (a) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies**
- (b) Students with disabilities**
- (c) English learners**

**Note: 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 plans to mainstream students with disabilities immediately which will help reduce the stigma attached to students who are diagnosed with learning disabilities (p. e19).

At the founding charter school, which will be the basis for TECH FREIRE's program, 100% of its special education students indicated plans for post-secondary study, 89% plan to attend college, and 11% are entering workforce training which indicates that special education students who graduate from Freire are ready to transition to college or workforce (p. e19). So the curriculum and instruction is one that promotes secondary education.

If applicant enrolls EL students it plans to follow the guidelines recommended by the US Dept. of Ed – 6 steps for its EL educational plan (p. e36-37) which is a strong strategy to follow.

The applicant states that 84% of students are low income and 20% are in special education (p. e17).

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant states that 98% of students of color. This is non-descriptive and vague, and it should have listed out the various demographics (p. e17).

This applicant does not serve rural agencies.

**Reader's Score: 2**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Supporting High-Need Students - 2**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Supporting High-Needs Students (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes)**

**Projects that are designed to improve academic outcomes and learning environments for students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.**

**Strengths:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score: 0**

**Competitive Preference Priority - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments**

**1. Competitive Preference Priority 3 - Improving Early Learning Outcomes and Developments**

**Projects that are designed to improve early learning and development outcomes across one or more of**

the essential domains of school readiness for children from birth through third grade (or for any age group within this range) through a focus on including preschool, whether offered in school or community-based settings, as part of elementary education programs and systems in order to expand opportunities for preschool students and teachers.

**Strengths:**

No strengths noted.

**Weaknesses:**

No weaknesses noted.

**Reader's Score:**     **0**

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**Status:**           Submitted

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