

Quality Counts Charter School Program (CSP Grant)
Summary of Peer Reviewer Scores, Cohort 2, August 2018

Name of Applicant: The Excel Center – Hammond
Overall Ranking: 45.9 out of 71

OPTIONAL COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY (Up to 3 Points)			
0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
Applicant opts not to address this element, OR narrative does not focus upon any of the designated priority areas (Early Childhood, Postsecondary, or Rural)	Area of focus is indicated, but only one of the three required elements is fully described	Area of focus is clearly defined, and two of the three required elements are fully described	Area of focus is clearly defined and <i>all three</i> elements fully addressed: (1) Expected targets and outcomes are clearly described; (2) Targets/outcomes are supported by qualitative or quantitative data or specific measurable and accessible goals; and (3) Unique populations are clearly defined and described
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1.5			
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a description, on page 9 (document - labeled page1), of the postsecondary model used for this program. Dual credit opportunities are offered through Ivy Tech in college-level language/composition and math. Business Professional and Production Technician certifications are also available. As the school staff receives other certification trainings, other options will be available. No post-secondary outcomes and targets were identified in this section. The applicant identified three goals, one of which pertains to completion of college credits. The population is not described, other than stating they are adult high school students. No information is provided about their levels of credit deficiency upon enrollment, the unique needs of seriously credit deficient students, or details regarding career pathways and future employability.</p>			

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

1. CHARTER SCHOOL VISION and EXPECTED OUTCOMES (Up to 6 Points)			
0 points	1-2 points	3-5 points	6 points (1 point per element)
No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application	Only 1-2 of the required six elements are <i>fully</i> described. 1 point per element	At least 3-5 of the required six elements are <i>fully</i> described. 1 point per element	<i>All six elements are fully developed and described.</i> (1) Vision; (2) Need and Communication Plan; (3) Curriculum Framework and Key Evidence-based Instructional Practices; (4) Specific Strategies Support All Students in Meeting/Exceeding Indiana Academic Standards; (5) Development of 21 st Century Skills or Preparing Students to be College & Career Ready; and (6) Sustainability beyond CSP Grant Funding
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 3.8			
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The vision for the school was defined on page 10. The applicant demonstrated community need by providing area high school data (e.g. graduation rates and drop outs), area employment and poverty rates, as well as crime data. In the three cities targeted by the school, 18,000 adults do not have a high school diploma. An appropriate communication plan is provided on pages 10-11.</p> <p>The curriculum includes remediation, college courses and cross curricular classes. Best practices in adult education have been incorporated into the Excel model, including shorter academic terms, year round scheduling, block schedules, simplified registration, peer supports, and embedded remediation. Each student has a unique education plan, including students with disabilities or EL students. No information was provided about how data and screenings are used to identify needs.</p> <p>Students develop skills and earn credentials relevant to workforce demands. Information on</p>			

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credentialing was vague.

The school’s construction needs are financed through its parent organization, although no information is provided about the cost to the school. The applicant specifies that funding will increase as more students graduate but provides no **sustainability** details on specific funding avenues, including State or federal sources.

2. EXPERTISE OF CHARTER SCHOOL DEVELOPERS (Up to 6 Points)

0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	5-6 points
No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application	Key personnel are identified, but descriptions are vague and qualifications not directly aligned to proposed program	Key personnel are identified and solid descriptions provided showing each individual’s qualifications aligned to the proposed program	Key personnel are identified and their strong qualifications are clearly described and relevant to the proposed program. Team members appear to exhibit exceptional expertise and the previous successful experience needed to bring about academic growth and student achievement. Applicants that intend to REPLICATE or EXPAND must also provide data analyses findings to be scored within the 5-6 point range.

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = **3.5**

Comments:

The applicant provides information about the administrative team on page 13. Job titles, education and previous, relevant employment are included. Full bios are not included, nor cited, showing successful experience in prior roles specific to growth and student achievement.

On pages 13 and 14, the applicant provides a narrative of the raw enrollment and number of graduates of the South Bend Excel Center and identifies this project to be a replication of the South Bend school. Data analyses demonstrating strong academic growth or students’ achievement in the replicated school would have generated additional points in this section of the proposal.

3. CHARTER SCHOOL GOALS & COMMUNICATION PLAN (Up to 9 Points Total)

A. Charter School Goals (up to 7 points for this element, under Part A)

0 points	1-2 points	3-5 points	6-7 points
No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application	Goal descriptions are partial, vague or unclear; <u>or</u> applicant has only identified one or two goals; <u>and/or</u> goals are not aligned to proposal priorities (e.g., STEM, Early Childhood, etc.)	No less than three specific, measurable goals are identified. Some goals may not appear rigorous. Methods for measuring success toward goals described but may be somewhat unclear. Some key proposal priorities (e.g., STEM) do not have aligned goals.	No less than three specific, measurable goals are clearly described. Academic outcomes of all students (all grade levels served) will be addressed. All goals appear rigorous, yet attainable. Applicant specifies who will do what, by when, and based upon what measurement. Applicant MUST include at least one goal aligned to a State Assessment to be scored within the 6-7 point range.

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = **4.8**

Comments:

On page 14, the applicant lists **three specific goals** for the academic outcomes of all students. The goals appear rigorous but a timeline is not provided to show when the applicant expects to be able reach these goals. A **state assessment**, the “graduation qualifying exam” (yet undetermined), is included as one of the goals. Graduation rate references the ISBOE approved, modified, non-cohort based graduation rate.

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B. Communication Plan (up to 2 points for this element, under Part B)		
0 points	1 point	2 points
Communication plan regarding goals not addressed	A communication plan is outlined to describe school goals to some stakeholders (e.g., to staff and students but not to families)	A communication plan that has been well thought out and includes multiple avenues to reach all stakeholders (staff, students, families) has been articulated with specificity
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>A general plan was provided regarding goal communication. More explanation was needed on how staff will be involved in goal communication and development on an ongoing basis. The frequency of staff engagement was not specified. The plan to communicate the goals to the community is vague and does not identify key stakeholders (e.g. local government, business community). Given the nature of the school, it seems imperative that the school have robust relationships and communication with area business and economic leaders.</p>		

4. USE of CSP FUNDING (Up to 6 Points)

A. Detailed Budget Narrative and Budget Worksheet Addressing all Expenditures Aligned to the Proposal (up to 4 points, for Part A)

0 points	1 point	2-3 points	4 points
<p>No budget narrative, and detailed budget worksheets are not attached to proposal.</p> <p><u>OR</u>, budget narrative is unclear and does not align to detailed budget attached and provides very limited or no detail to justify proposed expenditures.</p> <p>There are many discrepancies between the combined <i>Planning & Implementation</i> budget worksheet totals and the <i>Budget Summary</i> worksheet totals.</p>	<p>Many budget narrative descriptors are partial, vague or unclear. Some costs have not been described within the proposal.</p> <p>Several discrepancies exist between the combined <i>Planning & Implementation</i> budget worksheet totals and the <i>Budget Summary</i> worksheet totals.</p>	<p>Detailed budget narrative descriptors are provided for most line items and costs are aligned to initiatives described within the proposal.</p> <p>Most combined <i>Planning & Implementation</i> budget worksheet totals agree with the <i>Budget Summary</i> worksheet totals.</p>	<p>Detailed budget narrative descriptors are provided for nearly all line items and are directly aligned to anticipated initiatives/costs described within the proposal narratives.</p> <p>The combined <i>Planning & Implementation</i> budget worksheet totals agree with the <i>Budget Summary</i> worksheet totals.</p> <p>Applicant MUST adhere to maximum of \$300K in planning year and a maximum of \$900K for total proposal budget to be scored within the 4 point range.</p>
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1.5			

Comments:

Note that the applicant wrote the budget beginning with Year 2, presumably because the school would be in the second year of operation (rather than organize the grant budget as years of funding).

On page 14, the applicant provides a budget narrative including a summary of items to be purchased with the CSP funds and the program year those items will be purchased. The required explanation for how each year's budget plan is **aligned with the proposal's outcomes and the school's program model** is not provided.

Within the **Excel Budget worksheets**, budget narratives for line items are not provided. For example:

- Year 2 Implementation, Line 7, does not specify the number of Chromebooks to be purchased or the length of the contract for the Chromebooks.

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- Line 8 does not provide itemized costs for the “Digital Signage and Media Player.”
 - All implementation years include GoGuardian Fleet subscription license, which is not described or defined.
- The *Budget Summary* worksheet totals agree with the other worksheets. The applicant’s requested amounts do not exceed the allowable amounts.

B. School’s Capacity to Continue Implementation & Operation (up to 1 point, for Part B)

0 Points	1 Point
Explanation of how school will develop and maintain required capacity to continue the program after grant life is either not provided, inappropriate, or not adequately described	Explanation of how school will develop and maintain required capacity to continue the program after grant life is clearly articulated and sufficiently described

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = .5

Comments:

On page 15, the applicant specifies that funding will increase as more students graduate, but provides no details on specific funding avenues, including State, federal or private sources. Recurring costs in the sustainability budget are absorbed by the general budget. None of the equipment and supply costs carry over into the sustainability budget and the applicant did not indicate which items are one-time costs.

C. Costs are Reasonable, Allocable and Necessary (up to 1 point, for Part C)

0 Points	1 Point
Many costs appear either unreasonable, or unallowable, or unnecessary (as they cannot be directly tied to activities or personnel described within the applicant’s proposal narratives)	All – or nearly all costs – appear reasonable, allocable and necessary

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = .5

Comments:

Costs of accounting services, auditing and payroll are allowable only during the Planning Year or Implementation Year 1 under the guidelines of the grant. Applicant budget includes these services for years 2 through 5. Implementation Year 2, lines 45 and 46, represent \$20,000 for direct mailing which needs to be supported with justification for quantity of mailed items. While supply costs appear reasonable, they are not tied to any activities or programming goals.

\$88,090 is budgeted annually for recruitment-related expenses, 36% of the grant budget in the first year of the grant, 80% thereafter. There is no demonstration of why this amount is needed annually to meet enrollment targets.

Note that iPads are listed as supplies and classroom level consumables, rather than computer hardware/equipment.

5. GOVERNANCE PLAN & ADMINISTRATIVE RELATIONSHIPS (Up to 6 Points)

Six Required Elements (A-F each worth one point, for a total up to 6 Points)
A. All applicants provide description of governance structure of the school. If the school uses an EMO/CMO , applicant <i>also</i> must describe that partnership and why the EMO/CMO was selected
B. Description of how school operates (how charter school leaders are empowered to make daily decisions and how school staff work together)
C. Description of process to select board members and summarize member expectations
D. Description of governance training for board members, current and prospective

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E. Description of relationship between the charter school leadership, governing board, or authorizer with the EMO/CMO to ensure no apparent or real conflict of interest involved. <i>IF the school does not use an EMO/CMO, scored as one point</i>
F. Description of how the charter school will ensure timely and accurate data submission for State and federal reporting requirements.
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 2.3
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Proposal page 15</p> <p>5a) Applicant does not describe responsibilities of the governing board or school leadership.</p> <p>5b) Applicant describes reporting structure of principal, but does not describe specific decisions allowed principal or how the staff within the school works together.</p> <p>5c) Applicant does not provide enough information regarding the <i>process</i> of board selection, e.g., how members are recruited, interviewed, selected.</p> <p>5d) Applicant lists the content of training for board members, but does not discuss the process, e.g., how needs are identified; frequency of trainings; differentiation of trainings for current vs. new board members.</p> <p>5e) Applicant states that there are no conflicts of interest, but does not discuss relationship between EMO/CMO, charter school board, and school leadership.</p> <p>5d) Applicant provides an assurance that reporting will be maintained, but does not reference “how” or who is responsible for submitting State and federal data.</p>

6. STUDENT RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS PROCESSES (Up to 3 Points)			
0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application	Student recruitment plan description is partial, vague or unclear. Evidence to show compliance with IC 20-24-5 is not offered. Public lottery process is poorly described or not present.	Student recruitment plan is described and evidence of compliance with IC 20-24-5 is offered but may not be complete. A public lottery process is adequately described.	A multi-pronged student recruitment plan is clearly articulated and there is solid evidence of compliance with IC 20-24-5 presented. An appropriate public lottery process is clearly described.
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 2.3			
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a description of the recruitment plan on page 16 and includes several methods of communicating to potential students, as well as which personnel are in charge of these activities. Several “communication” items are included in the budget worksheets that are not discussed in this proposal section.</p> <p>The applicant acknowledges that all enrollment practices are in compliance with IC 20-24-5 but does not provide specific evidence. An appropriate public lottery process is clearly described. No students would be exempted from or given preference in the lottery.</p>			

7. NEEDS of EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS (Up to 6 Points)

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<p>0 points No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application</p>	<p>1-2 points One or two student groups sufficiently addressed by applicant. <u>OR</u> more than two groups addressed but explanation of strategies does not seem appropriate or sufficiently adequate.</p>	<p>3-4 points Three or four student groups sufficiently addressed by applicant. <u>OR</u> more than three groups addressed but explanation of strategies does not seem appropriate or sufficiently adequate for all groups.</p>	<p>5-6 points <i>All five student groups are sufficiently addressed by the applicant (generating 5 points); <u>and</u> the applicant <i>descriptions are viewed as exemplary</i>, demonstrating the school's commitment to ensuring that special population needs are met (generating 6 points).</i></p>
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Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 2.8

Comments:

On pages 16 and 17, the applicant addresses how the specific needs of **students with disabilities** and students with “complicated family and work schedules” are addressed. The applicant does not specify how **low-income** students, **EL** students, **homeless** students, nor **neglected and delinquent** students are serviced by the school.

The applicant does specify that all students have unique education plans, flexible schedules that allow for accommodating identified disabilities or family/work circumstances, and provisions for childcare. However, the application did not describe how data and screening are used to identify needs.

A coaching element has traditionally been a pillar of the Excel model (aimed at helping students overcome short- and long-term barriers, including housing needs). This coaching support has not been described within Hammond’s CSP application. Its inclusion in supporting the needs of special populations would have strengthened this section of the proposal.

8. COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES (Up to 3 Points)

<p>0 points No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application</p>	<p>1 point Evidence of parent, teacher and community involvement in the planning and design of the charter school is partial, vague or unclear</p>	<p>2 points Evidence of parent, teacher and community involvement in the planning and design of the charter school is offered but does not seem fully explained</p>	<p>3 points Clear evidence of the involvement of parents, teachers, and community in the planning and design of the charter school is presented</p>
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Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1.8

Comments:

On page 17, the applicant acknowledges that community members were not involved in the planning of the school, but adult students have formed student councils to address concerns and advance ideas. School staff has attended several community events to engage families. No evidence was provided that business, government and community leaders have provided input on career pathways critical to the region’s economic needs. This seems to be an essential aspect of the school’s design.

9. FISCAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (Up to 6 Points)

<p>A. Internal Controls over Expenditure & Record Maintenance (up to 2 points, for Part A)</p>		
<p>0 Points No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application</p>	<p>1 Point Plan or process for maintaining internal controls over expenditures and record maintenance is generally described, but some pieces are partial, vague or unclear</p>	<p>2 Points A plan or process for maintaining internal controls over expenditures and record maintenance is clearly articulated</p>

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Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The school leader has day-to- day authority for managing expenditures, with an accountant overseeing all processing and record keeping functions. The segregation of duties is not clearly defined in the CSP application. The role of the board in approving expenditures is not defined. (Proposal pages 17-18)</p>

B. Charter School Leadership Responsible for Grant Management (up to 2 points, Part B)

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
No description provided in narrative; or applicant only cites pages in Charter Application	Grant management process is described, but not fully-developed. Charter school leaders mentioned as responsible for grant, but EMO/CMO explanation not fully-developed (if applicable)	Grant management process fully-described for decision-making, budget & tracking purchases. Charter school leaders are demonstrated to be responsible for all aspects of grant, and not EMO/CMO (if applicable).

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1.5
<p>Comments:</p> <p>School leaders are responsible for the management of the grant, although their role in developing the budget is unclear. The EMO is not involved in the management of the grant. (Proposal page 18)</p>

C. Other State & Federal Funds Support School Operations (up to 2 points)

0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
No description provided or cited within Application; applicant only cites pages in Charter Application	Minimal/disjointed explanation for how State/federal funds will support school operations & student achievement	Solid descriptions for how other State and federal funds will support school operations and student achievement

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 1.5
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Funding for grant requests will be sustained through basic State ADM funding. No other federal or State sources were identified, including special education or adult education funding. Applicant indicates that the Excel Center will pursue all available grant funding opportunities for additional expenses, such as child care and transportation, but no specifics are offered as to potential funding sources.</p>

10. FACILITIES and TRANSPORTATION (Up to 3 Points)

0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
Applicant opts not to address these elements, OR narrative provided does not focus upon the facility or transportation plan	<i>One</i> of the three anticipated elements is provided, i.e., (a) safe, secure & sustainable facility; or (b) how enrollment impacts facility needs; or (c) transportation plan	<i>Two</i> of the three anticipated elements are provided, i.e., (a) safe, secure & sustainable facility; and/or (b) how enrollment impacts facility needs; and/or (c) transportation plan	All <i>three</i> elements are described: (a) how the facility is safe, secure and sustainable; (b) how enrollment impacts facility needs; <u>and</u> (c) a transportation plan that is aligned with the needs of the school

Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 2.5
<p>Comments:</p> <p>The facility meets the current programming needs of the school, but how future student enrollment</p>

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impacts facility needs is less clear. **Security measures** are in place to ensure the safety of students and staff, including an on-site security office and security cameras. Excel Centers do not provide **transportation**, due to the extended and modified schedules. Bus passes are provided for students with incomes less than 185% of federal poverty guidelines. The school also encourages carpooling.

11. SIGNED CHARTER SCHOOL ASSURANCES (Up to 3 Points)

0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
None of the required signatures have been obtained and submitted with the proposal	<i>One</i> of the three required signatures submitted, i.e., charter authorizer, or project contact person, or board president	<i>Two</i> of the three required signatures submitted, i.e., charter authorizer, and/or project contact person, and/or board president	<i>All</i> three required signatures submitted, i.e., charter authorizer, project contact person, <u>and</u> board president
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 3			
Comments: The applicant provides all three signatures necessary: charter authorizer on page 2; project contact and board president on page 20.			

12. REQUIRED APPENDICES (Up to 8 Points)

Eight Required Appendix Elements (1 point for each element, items A-H below)	
A.	Charter Application to Authorizer (for new or replication proposals) <i>or</i> Amendment to Existing Charter (for expansion proposal)
B.	Budget Worksheet
C.	Most recent <i>Expanded Annual Performance Report</i> (IDOE Compass) <i>NOT APPLICABLE to new charter schools (scored as automatic point).</i>
D.	Proof of Non-Profit Status of governing board, <i>or</i> proof that application for such status has been made
E.	Enrollment or Student Admissions Policy
F.	Agreement/contract between governing body and management organization. <i>NOT APPLICABLE if applicant does not use an EMO or CMO (scored as automatic point).</i>
G.	School's Discipline Policy (promotes retention/reduces overuse of practices that remove students from classroom)
H.	School's Safety Plan is attached in the appendix and evidence that it was submitted to the State Board of Education is present
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 7.8	
Comments: All anticipated items provided in the appendices by the applicant.	

13. OVERALL ORGANIZATION of PROPOSAL (Up to 3 Points)

0 points	1point	2 points	3 points
Information was not provided in anticipated sequence; and/or information was nearly always difficult to locate.	Information requested was provided, but not consistently in the anticipated sequence. OR applicant exceeded 30-page narrative limit.	Applicant followed requested sequence and stayed within page limitations. Generally, information was easily located.	Applicant's proposal narrative clearly presented, following prescribed format, making the location of information and anticipated key elements readily available. Applicant did not exceed 30-page narrative limit.
Averaged Peer Reviewer Score = 2.3			
Comments: The applicant's proposal narrative was organized, followed the requested sequence and did not exceed the 30-page limit.			

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Summary of Averaged Peer Reviewer Scores	Points Possible	Averaged Score of Peer Reviewers
• Optional Competitive Preference Priority	3	1.5
1. Charter School Vision & Expected Outcomes	6	3.8
2. Expertise of the Charter School Developers	6	3.5
3A. Charter School Goals	7	4.8
3B. Goals Communication Plan	2	1
4A. Detailed Budget Narrative & Budget Worksheets	4	1.5
4B. School's Capacity to Continue Implementation & Operation	1	.5
4C. Costs are Reasonable, Allocable and Necessary	1	.5
5. School Governance Plan & Administrative Relationships	6	2.3
6. Student Recruitment & Admissions Processes	3	2.3
7. Needs of Educationally Disadvantaged Students	6	2.8
8. Community Outreach Activities	3	1.8
9A. Internal Controls Over Expenditures & Record Maintenance	2	1
9B. Charter School Leadership Responsible for Grant Management	2	1.5
9C. Other State & Federal Funds Support School Operations	2	1.5
10. Facilities & Transportation	3	2.5
11. Signed Charter School Assurances	3	3
12. Required Appendices	8	7.8
13. Overall Organization of Proposal	3	2.3
TOTAL POINTS	71 Total Points Possible	45.9