



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0228TX-1 for DeSoto ISD

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>DeSoto Independent School District has proposed an ambitious plan that would provide personalized learning for every student in the district. They understand that their students come from different backgrounds, have had different pathways, and have different learning needs. This program will build upon the four core educational assurance areas in unique ways. The proposal mentioned that it has established "non-negotiable" expectations, which include, among others, that all children will take and pass Algebra I in the 8th grade, and that there will be no retention. There was no discussion as to how teachers would prepare those students in 7th grade who do not indicate algebra readiness, or what happens to students who have not demonstrated the ability to move on to the next grade. While it took reading through the entire proposal to truly understand the full program, it provides opportunities for all students, all teachers, and all administrators. The proposal also did not include a detailed description of the classroom experience for students, which might have made the proposal easier to digest.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Planning team held many meetings to select schools to participate in this program and eventually chose to include all schools, grade levels, subjects, and teachers. Parents were given ballots in the early stages of the process and they agreed that all schools should be included. This proposal might prove to be fully embraced by all stakeholders had they been involved in the earliest discussions to help form the proposal, allowing buy-in from all participants.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal is a high quality plan, but because it includes all students in the district, it has no room for scaling up. Despite this, the proposal includes goals that will be scaled up, including graduation rates and college enrollment rates. The proposal states that tools and resources will be provided to every teacher to create what they label as 21st Century Learning Environments. Evaluations will be changed to reflect this new standard of teaching and teachers will have prescribed professional development. It was unclear if teachers have any input or voice in this process, which should be expected at this level. Community reinforcement was also questionable as the only community involvement described in this section is opportunities provided by outside organizations not directly related to this proposal. It was also clear that while the campaign for students is titled "My Future: I Own It", students did not have input into writing goals or helping establish the proposal.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal includes many goals that are extremely ambitious for this smaller sized district. The application includes these goals subdivided by the same categories as the application and includes tables to demonstrate their expected growth over the years of the grant period. All of their academic goals are in the 90% or greater range, which would be unheard of for many districts, but this is achievable for this district because they are started at an average of approximately 70%. The goals, similar to the project, span all of the grades that are measured by standardized testing and for all subjects included therein.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Probably more than most suburban areas in recent years, DeSoto, Texas has experienced two major waves in demographics. The first was the result of a high technology project that did not live up to its promises and resulted in what is described as "white flight" in which Caucasian families fled the area. This was followed by the flight of "Black middle class" as the economy of the area continued to decline. The result is a completely different demographic than the district had in recent years, and they knew they needed to take decisive steps to help. With only twelve schools in the entire district, it is very impressive that DeSoto became a state recognized district with a gold performance level, the 2nd highest possible. In the last few years a new superintendent was named and he immediately began to take action to ensure that all students were performing up to the standards expected. His parameters were especially demanding, and yet this leadership has led the district to increased performance. The narrative regarding change in the district was excellent, however more substantial proof is needed here. More evidence is required showing student performance improvements over the span of these changes.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>DeSoto ISD has created a webpage with between two and five years of records of all financial transactions, including budgets, check registries, payroll registries, taxes, and audits. This Financial Transparency webpage was awarded the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Gold Circle Leadership Award for financial transparency for the last two years.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The State of Texas has rules and regulations about how testing will be accomplished and what curriculum will be taught at each grade level. The local education agency has complete autonomy in all other areas, which enabled DeSoto to recreate their learning process and create this program. It is clear that all of the components of this proposal fall within the guidelines of state and national laws.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section of the application describes the various stages in which different stakeholders were invited into the proposal writing process. While it states that all stakeholders were engaged in the development of the proposal, it continues in the same paragraph how the groups previewed the proposal and provided feedback. This would not be engagement in the development, unless their ideas were solicited and considered throughout the process. Students were surveyed about their technology interests, but they were not invited to listen in to stakeholder meetings and offer solutions. Comments were also sought from the community at large and from established partnerships.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This high quality plan will revolutionize the way learning happens in DeSoto Independent School District. Beginning with its youngest learners at Pre-K and elementary grades, students will be provided the technology and instruction to learn at their own pace and following their own interests. Students at this age will even be involved in college and career-readiness training as they explore their interests and how they relate to careers. Project-based learning and differentiated instruction are apparent in every aspect of this proposal. The projects listed include science and higher level math programs in the middle grades, but does not specify any programs planned, which implies that they have either not been planned yet or not chosen, both of which need to be in place to move forward. The iSTEAM3D program in the middle grades sounds</p>		

especially innovating and it would be helpful to include more descriptions of how many students applied for the program and what accommodations will be made for students not selected.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

One of the most unique components of the Teaching and Leading section is the TRIBE, which is a group of members of the district's Instructional Support Center staff who will be randomly visiting schools and evaluating teachers. While the plan is very different from most other options, the application needs data and narratives to validate its operation. Since many teachers, especially new teachers, feel nervous and off guard by unannounced evaluations, data that shows effectiveness could support this proposal in a stronger way.

Professional development is prescribed to teachers based upon these evaluations, and it is not evident that teachers have any say in their own development. This approach of "providing" the instruction that authorities believe is most needed is exactly the opposite of the new approach this district wants to take with its students. The same self-expression and interests that can guide students' learning in the new model would be helpful with teachers as well. Throughout the proposal it is never mentioned who will be providing the professional development, which implies that it might not have been considered or developed yet.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal includes many opportunities for students at all levels to demonstrate mastery of standards in different ways, and to experience adaptable learning practices to meet their needs.

While the student components of this proposal are commendable, this is not a high quality plan in the way that schools and teachers are treated. The application describes the autonomy provided by the State of Texas to districts to operate their district as they best see fit for student learning. In the same section of the application the writers state that the district has the freedom to create their own schedule, but they fail to pass down any of the same freedom to schools. The narrative states that schools have control of their calendars because they can set up parent meetings on their own, which is the most basic level of scheduling. "The central office staff works closely with building principals to determine adequate staffing based on student enrollment" but this states that principals do not have the freedom to do their own hiring on staffing based upon their students' needs as only they can see them.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This application presents a high quality plan in its implementation of technology into learning and providing support at all levels. Last year the district began its program of change by beginning the Bring Your Own Device program. Students were invited to bring in a range of electronic learning devices and support was provided at all schools. Families were also supported by being invited to use the computer labs outside of the normal school day. Homework tutorials are also provided at these sites into the later evening hours. A new website was developed that allowed teachers to set up individual webpages for their classes, enabling them to provide more personalized messages and updates.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A team comprised of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members will be formed to meet regularly to review the progress toward project goals. A Project Manager will be hired with grant funds to lead this team. Other groups will be formed to meet monthly to examine the results of their components of the project. The goal of all of these

committees is to stay focused on the goals, evaluate performance, and keep improved performance at the forefront. The application failed to mention how these findings would be shared with other stakeholders in a meaningful way and how their input would also drive improvement.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan is in place to keep the lines of communication open and keep stakeholders engaged in the project. DeSoto academic and social communities will continue to meet, as they did during the planning of this project, to stay involved throughout the life of the project. District staff will meet regularly with outside stakeholders as well, including local businesses, churches, and higher education, to foster the relationship which provides mentoring, tutoring, and other services.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Many performance measures are listed for each age range, including the rationale for why they were chosen. The number and percentages of students are included in the appendices. Not all of the performance measures are as ambitious as others, and having so many of these goals distracts from the strength of the most important goals. It is unclear how all of these performance measures could be undertaken at once.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal includes a high quality plan to evaluate results and make recommendations for continuous improvements. DeSoto ISD will partner with Dallas Baptist University, including its Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Education, and Directors of Master's Programs in Educational Leadership, Teaching, School Counseling, Special Education, Reading, and others. These members will conduct a formative evaluation in January to guide the program through the remainder of the school year, and a summative assessment in May. Obtaining the viewpoints from so many professionals in the higher education realm is commendable and innovative.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This project is requesting nearly \$20 million to supplement the nearly \$4 million they have obtained elsewhere. The budget includes anticipated costs and explanations of the expenses. The categories of spending are excessive in many ways. The project includes a travel budget of \$348,000 in the first year, with decreasing amounts in subsequent years. While the description includes travels for students and teachers to visit colleges, these funds include visiting Harvard for several days, which at this distance is unnecessary and a huge expense. Another travel listed is international study in Italy, which isn't discussed anywhere in the proposal other than in the budget, and does not fit the proposal. Supplies are listed at approximately \$2 million per year, and while the description includes retrofitting of classrooms to create modern scientific learning centers, it is unclear why the expenses repeat each year, and which schools receive the funding when.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>It is highly commendable that DeSoto ISD plans to complete these project goals regardless of Race to the Top - District funding. The district is hoping these funds can accelerate the project to provide this innovative learning process for all students right away. A number of sustainability ideas are listed, including reusing materials, videotaping professional development sessions to make them accessible to new teachers, training the trainers, reducing staffing expenses, and replacing technology with existing funds. This is not a high quality plan because it has not addressed meaningful ways in which the results of the project will be replicated from year to year, not just the products created.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

DeSoto ISD meets the competitive preference priority by its meaningful partnerships with outside organizations that provide essential services for students and their families. Some of the most meaningful components include the Adopt-A-School Program in which business partners are paired with schools to provide real-life hands-on experiential learning for students in science in math; the GREAT Program that provides funding for a school resource officer to deter crime, teach law enforcement programs, and provide gang resistance education; the iLead Program which provides leadership training to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and many others. While the application describes its performance measures, it does not break them down by year, and it is unclear if the goals are ambitious or achievable without starting measures.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The application for DeSoto Independent School District meets Absolute Priority 1 by seeking to provide personalized learning environments for every student in the district. The project includes computers and tablets that will be made available to all students and training for teachers, to provide individualized instruction. Students will have assignments that they can complete anywhere and at their own pace.

Total	210	159
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0228TX-2 for DeSoto ISD

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- This section is well-written and clear. The applicant provides a detailed description of the LEA's current vision (including tables with 7 current goal areas and specific activities in each area)
- The applicant also provides a clear vision for the RTTD project. It is aligned with the work the LEA has already done, and seems like the reasonable next step in achieving the proposed goals.
- The four core educational assurance areas are specifically addressed, in detail.
- The applicant provides an extensive description of what the personalized learning environment would look like (iSTEAM3D; virtual network; career academies, etc.)

- There is a lack of data to support some of the information in this section. Due to that weakness, the section warrants a mid to high range score.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- This section is very well-written. It gives the reader the process and rationale for including schools in a way that paints a picture of both.
- Participating schools are described in the included table.
- Rationale seems reasonable and stakeholders were involved in the selection process
- Demographic information is also included in the tables.
- Additional buy-in from parents and students would strengthen this section.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant includes a very high-quality plan for implementing and scaling up reform efforts. In the section focused on institutionalizing practices, the applicant shows that the LEA has thought through how to successfully implement the RTTD proposed plan, in a way that is effective and sustainable.
- The section did address each group, but lacked a detailed; comprehensive plan (brief)
- The change model is woven through this section, however it is not quite as specifically addressed as other elements of this selection criteria. As a result, this section warrants a mid-range score.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- All goals are included and the narrative includes a rationale for each goal
- The increased graduation rate (to 100%) seems high
- Some goals for students with disabilities, etc. may be difficult to achieve (large % of growth)
- All goals are ambitious and would close the achievement gap
- All goal areas are addressed in the included tables and narrative
- This section is very thorough and warrants a high score.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	15
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-written section with specific narratives addressing each of the elements in this selection criteria. As a result, this section warrants a high score. • The applicant addresses each of the items in this particular section. Eduphoria more than meets the requirement of making student performance data available • LEA made good progress, in the face of challenging obstacles (changing demographics and economic challenges) 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is brief, but based on the information provided by the applicant, it appears all required items (and additional information) is available on the LEA's website. 		

- This section warrants a high score due to the level of thoroughness and transparency identified by the applicant (through the LEA's website)

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Based upon the applicant's narrative, it seems like the State has sufficient policies in place to provide the level of autonomy necessary for successful RTTD implementation and for local control in able to provide personalized learning environment. As a result, this section warrants a high score.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)

15

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative, and corresponding documents provide clear evidence of meaningful engagement in the grant development process.

(Agendas; letters of support; attendance sheets, etc.)

Student engagement was gained, however, it was in a very basic manner.

Stakeholder involvement was primarily through review of the plan.

As a result of the general way stakeholders were involved, this section warrants a mid range score.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides a clear and reasonable plan to address personalized learning environments. The section meets the selection criteria and includes both a narrative and a table addressing all RTTD requirements. As a result, it warrants a high score. • The narrative does a good job of painting a picture of what personalized learning would look like (by age group) • Table also includes specific information, broken down by age group, of strategies that will be implemented to create the personalized learning environments • Training and support are reviewed - student; teacher; administrator and parent dashboards discussed and training overview provided • TRIBE; teacher training; leadership teams and administrator training is also described • The LEA describes unique, but effective ways to meet the needs of at risk students (students with disabilities; ELLs; etc.) 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of student, teacher and administrator dashboards to provide information and timely feedback • Interventions and training in place to ensure that stakeholders use data and that the RTTD program continuously improves • TRIBE description shows how educators will be trained and continuously improve - with personalized learning as a focus • Leadership teams and team building activities are described • The applicant finishes by providing information about administrator training as well as data-driven instruction • Very good focus in this section - includes a high quality; coherent plan tied to the LEA's vision as well as the RTTD plan • The lack of collaboration and some of the implementation plan (administrators prescribe professional development) are weaknesses in this section. 		

- This section warrants a mid range score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is missing some of the flexibility and autonomy that is necessary for educators to participate fully. • However, the campus-level leadership described (master schedule, calendar, budget and personnel) are strengths. This section warrants a relatively high score for the way the leadership teams are organized and the flexibility allowed for students (performance based activities; academic labs and research reports) 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant describes current LEA practices (BYOD) that help support personalized learning • This section is brief and warrants a mid-range score due to the lack of a comprehensive high quality plan • The applicant does describe how all of the elements currently implemented, plus RTTD will create a "multi-layered, highly accessible" environment • Selection criteria a was not adequately met (access to devices and tools) • Criteria c and d were met through wi-fi access for parents and visitors; prologic, etc. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is brief, but does contain a high quality plan to continuously monitor and adjust grant activities based upon data and evaluation. As a result, it warrants a fairly high score. • The applicant does a good job of making a case for the need for continuous evaluation. The section includes information about hiring a project manager and having a team meet regularly to evaluate and make adjustments • The applicant also includes using approaches already implemented within the LEA (TRIBE) in order to align with current practices. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant includes a high quality plan for communicating with all stakeholder groups • The applicant uses a variety of strategies to ensure all stakeholders have access to information and can provide feedback - community meetings; campus and district staff meetings; press releases; round tables; annual reviews • The applicant also uses a variety of technology tools to ensure stakeholders have access to information 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All performance measures are included 		

- The table makes information easy to find and the rationale for each is very evident
- The applicant does a great job of including information regarding how each measure is providing timely feedback as well as how the LEA will use the information from each measure to improve performance
- Baseline data was difficult to find. As a result, the section warrants a mid-range score.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides an extensive table that includes a high quality plan that addresses evaluation of RTTD activities - (student evaluation measures (personalized learning; increased student achievement; STAAR growth; ELL gains; dropout rate)
- Dallas Baptist University formative evaluation included
- TRIBE and baseline data eval by in-district personnel
- This section warrants a high score as it meets selection criteria

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section provides very thorough budget information - both about the overall budget and project-specific budgets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The narrative provides a fairly detailed overview. ◦ The budget sub-parts provide extensive information about each project. ◦ Costs/expenses included seem reasonable. ◦ All fund sources were identified (federal; state; local; other) ◦ This section is very strong and warrants a high score. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is brief, but well written and thoughtful. It constitutes a relatively high quality plan and warrants a fairly high score. • The applicant does not include an extensive plan for sustainability, however strategies included are sufficient along with the narrative substantiating that the applicant has thought through sustainability issues • Strategies include best practices (reusing materials; leveraging current resources; realistic staffing, etc.) • The weakness of this section is the lack of information about how the applicant will measure the effectiveness of funds invested and how the applicant will gain additional support for sustainability (from state or local organizations) 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive partnerships described (adopt a school; GREAT; iLead; Parents Step Ahead: Texas TRust) • Partnerships build on Culture of 7 • Partnerships clearly support the RTTD plan • The applicant provides a rationale based on assessment of LEA/student needs • This section includes a comprehensive plan for partnerships that support the RTTD proposal. As a result, it 		

warrants a high score.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant clearly meets all of the requirements of absolute priority 1 - a specific narrative related to this priority is included in the first section of the proposal. Each of the four core assurance areas are addressed in detail In addition, the applicant provides detailed plans and table with appropriate measurable goals; rationales, etc. to address each one of the core educational assurance areas. 		

Total	210	167
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0228TX-3 for DeSoto ISD

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's Culture of 7 program is comprised of seven areas of focus to improve district performance: organizational core beliefs, organizational disciplines, ambitious goals, organizational leadership, development, interim targets, and full involvement. The action premises and key commitments in each of these categories help demonstrate the alignment of this program with the core educational assurance areas that are a part of Race to the Top.</p> <p>DeSoto Independent School District follows state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) as well as Common Core Standards and Texas College and Career Readiness Standards to prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. These standards are a part of daily lessons and various assessments.</p> <p>The district uses several complimentary data systems to manage district information. Eduphoria links teachers to students and tracks student performance against standards. SchoolObjects matches school, teacher, and student data and allows recording of information including parent communication, tutoring entries or interventions, benchmark tests, and graduation plans.</p> <p>Professional development will be provided to develop effective teachers. Performance based compensation will be initiated with Race to the Top grant funding to reward effective teachers.</p> <p>The application does not address recruiting or retaining effective teachers.</p> <p>The application does not address recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective principals.</p> <p>The application states that it is turning around low-achieving schools. However, no data is provided to demonstrate the success with which the district is turning around the lowest-achieving schools.</p>		

Accelerating student achievement will be accomplished through the personalization of learning at all levels in the district: elementary, middle, and high school.

Engineering is Elementary will be used at the elementary level to foster engineering and technological literacy. MicroSociety will provide business related content that fosters academic growth and societal awareness while enhancing leadership qualities.

ACCUPLACER will be used at the middle schools to improve students' test taking skills to improve student performance and increase the number of students going to college.

The high schools are divided into five career academies: Arts, Health and Sciences, Classical, Professional, and Business and Technology. There will also be an online program. Allowing students to pursue areas of interest will likely accelerate student achievement.

The application describes software and strategies that will be implemented as a part of the proposed project to increase equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. However, the application does not describe how these components provide a clear and credible approach to accelerating student achievement or deepening student learning.

The application describes how the software and strategies that are a part of the proposed program could impact learning and teaching for students and teachers. However, it is not clear how all the proposed items will work together as a part of the daily classroom experience.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The planning team discussed which schools should participate. Four reasons were provided for making the decision to include all schools in the district. The application does not indicate who is on the planning team. Parental input and committee input was solicited about participation. However, there is no indication how this input was used in making the decision to select participating schools.

The applicant provides a list of the participating schools.

The requested data is provided.

Column E lists incorrect data. It lists the number of participating students from low-income families for the school not the number for the LEA. This makes the value listed in column I incorrect as well.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application does not include a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will help the applicant reach its outcome goals. There are no key goals related to this criterion. The application does not define specific activities related to this criterion or provide a rationale, timeline, or parties responsible for implementing activities. Without a detailed plan, it is not likely that the applicant will be able to improve student learning outcomes.

The applicant lists instructional strategies that will be used at various levels in the district. These strategies could help facilitate improved student learning outcomes. However, the application does not describe how these strategies will be utilized to create a functional program to help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides tables listing goals for students on grade appropriate summative assessments.

The application includes data showing annual goals or decreasing achievement gaps. However, the goals are not ambitious. In subgroups where the district is already outperforming the state, there is no goal to increase performance. The goal is to maintain the status quo. While achievable, that is not ambitious.

The applicant provides conflicting information for the graduation rate. The narrative states that the district has set an ambitious goal of 100% graduation rate. However, the table included in the application shows goals of increasing the graduation rate for each subgroup to 95% by the end of the grant period.

The application states that the district has a goal of 90% of the district students enrolling in college by 2017. The table included in the application shows very different information, college enrollment goals vary by subgroup from 10% to 25%. This significant discrepancy is not addressed in the proposal.

The annual goals for Special Education, Gifted and Talented, and LEP do not seem achievable. The strategies listed in the proposal do not target these groups strongly enough to justify 20% increase in percentages achieving desired results on various summative assessments during the first year of the program.

Annual goals are listed through SY 2017-2018 for the STARR M in six categories. However, the applicant states that the STARR M will be discontinued after SY 2013-2014.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The school district was recognized by the state as a Gold Performance school in 2010. However, no evidence was provided to demonstrate how this is reflective of improving student learning outcomes or closing achievement gaps.

One of the schools improved from acceptable to exemplary status in 2011. The application does not include evidence to demonstrate how this is reflective of improving student learning outcomes or closing achievement gaps.

Information is included about student performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. However, the narrative and chart do not clearly explain how the information provided shows a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement.

No evidence is provided that demonstrates the applicant's ability to raise high school graduation rates or raise college enrollment rates.

Overall, the application does not provide evidence that demonstrates a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching that demonstrates the applicant's ability to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps.

In 2011, the district began implementing a district turnaround plan called Academic Excellence by Design.

A Communications Specialist was hired in 2011 to secure partnerships to improve academic achievement through the Adopt-a-School Program.

Information is provide about activities that are occurring in the district, but the application does not connect these activities to ambitious and significant reforms or to persistently low achieving or low performing schools.

Evidence is not provided demonstrating a clear record of success in the past four years in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest achieving schools or in its low performing schools.

Campus administrative teams disaggregate common assessment data and post results for ongoing conversations with teachers regarding trends, deficits, and strengths. Teachers who fail to reach required levels of improvement are placed on growth plans, are reassigned, or have employment terminated depending on the deficit severity and detriment to students.

Eduphoria makes student data available to educators. The data available will allow educators to inform and improve instruction and services.

Parent Portal makes student performance data available to students and parents so they have access to student outcome information at any time.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district makes financial information available online through a Financial Transparency website. The webpage includes annual independent financial audits, adopted budgets, comprehensive financial reports, searchable check registries, searchable payroll registries, property tax information, Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) Reports, and

detailed utility cost data and comparisons.

The comprehensive financial reports contain personnel salaries at the school level for all personnel as well as non-personnel expenditures.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The state regulates what standards must be taught, but schools have autonomy as to how the standards will be met for curriculum and instructional practices.

The state endorses a Personal Graduation Plan which the applicant will utilize to personalize instruction.

The applicant indicates that the district has the autonomy to redefine the instructional day and to determine how credits are earned. The proposal does not clearly define how the proposed project will utilize this autonomy.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Students were surveyed regarding technology interests, activities, and level of technology needed to extend their learning. Discussions were held with the 30 member Superintendent's Student Advisory Council and with student representative at grade-level student council meetings. The RTTT-D goals align with student expectations. The application does not describe how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

The proposal was shared with parents at campus PTA meetings and with the district PTA Council. The Superintendent met with the district's Parent Advisory Committee (comprised of parents from each campus). Suggestions from parents were incorporated into the proposal.

Teacher input was solicited at several different types of meetings. Suggestions regarding implementation of projects and grade level activities were provided. The applicant does not state if these suggestion were incorporated or how the application was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

The application does not describe how principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

The applicant states that 516/580 educators are in support of the RTT-D proposal.

The applicant provides letters of support from key stakeholders including parents, students, and community members.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not present a high-quality plan or improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. There are no key goals related to this criterion. The application does not define specific activities related to this criterion or provide a rationale, timeline, or parties responsible for implementing activities. Without a detailed plan, it is not likely that the applicant will be able to implement instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs.

All activities that will be a part of the program should be described as a part of a comprehensive, well-developed plan that clearly explains how each project is integral to the success of the proposed project. There are activities listed in the budget that are not described in the application. It is not clear how these activities, such as the mobile learning lab, will be implemented as a part of the proposed program.

The proposed strategies for PK and Elementary do not address how students will understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

The proposed middle school strategy of Exploring Careers will culminate with the creation of an individualized learning plan which students can use as a road map which could arguably empower learners to understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. Specific connections between this strategy and this criterion are not addressed in the application.

The proposed strategies for high school student do not present an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners to understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

Strategies specifically addressing high-needs students reach this understanding are not included.

No strategies are listed indicating that elementary students will identify learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

Middle school students will create individualized learning plans. This process will allow them to identify learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. It is not clear how the proposed strategy will help participating students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals. The application does not explain how students will measure progress toward these goals.

High school students choose from one of five academies at the high school. This provides them with opportunities to pursue learning linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

Overall, the proposal needs more strategies at all grade levels that will allow students opportunities to identify learning goals.

Several strategies that will be incorporated at the middle school level incorporate solving real world problems and using critical thinking skills. This will allow students at these grade levels to be involved in deep learning experiences.

Students at the high school level will be pursuing areas of academic interest, but the application does not provide evidence that they will be experiencing deep learning experiences.

The application does not describe what strategies will be used to ensure that PK and elementary students will be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

The applicant proposes two strategies that will be used at both the Pre-K/Elementary level and the middle school level that will expose students to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. Digital World Languages Program provides information about various cultures. The Global Network uses project-based learning to expose students to diversity.

The Global Network strategy will also be utilized at the high school level.

At the Pre-K/Elementary level, strategies such as Personalized Interventions and Reading Support will provide students with opportunities to master critical academic content.

The strategies presented for Pre-K/Elementary do not address developing skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

Traditional and Digital Math Tools will be utilized to help Middle School level students develop critical thinking skills.

Middle Schools will implement strategies such as Digital Math and Digital Science to address the need for students to master critical academic content.

AP Courses will allow high school students to develop important skills and traits. They will also allow participating students to master critical academic content.

Strategies are not presented that address this criterion for high school students other than AP courses. Not all students take AP courses.

Overall, many strategies are presented at each grade level. However, the application does not describe how these strategies will be incorporated as part of a comprehensive plan to ensure students master critical academic content and develop important skills and traits.

The application describes how data is available for educators to personalize instructional content and skill development to enable the student to graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

A variety of instructional approaches and environments are described as a part of the application. No evidence is provided as to whether or not the strategies presented are high-quality.

The content included in the proposed project is aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. No evidence is provided as to whether or not the content is high-quality.

The application states that progress monitoring assessments are given every three weeks. The data from these assessments is used by all stakeholders to determine progress toward mastery and guide personalized learning recommendations. The application does not indicate what these assessments measure or which student populations participate in these assessments.

The application states that early intervention and explicit instruction are essential when working with students who do not speak English as their first language or have disabilities or developmental delays. However, the application does not describe specific accommodations or high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career- ready graduation requirements. More detail is needed about what constitutes early intervention and explicit instruction at the various grade levels and with the different categories of high-need students.

Animal-assisted therapy will be utilized to provide emotional support to high-need students. It is not clear which schools or students will be participating in the therapy dog program. The applicant does not describe outcomes that will result from this component of the proposed program.

Select high school students will be trained in how to use the data dashboards. These students will then train other students in their respective academies at the high school. Peer mentors and professional staff will be available for students who request or need individual assistance.

Training for students younger than high school is not addressed in the proposal.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Feedback from the LEA's teacher evaluation system will be used to develop a professional development and implementation support plan which will improve teacher's practice and effectiveness by identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement. Workshops will be offered to address these areas as well as helping teachers make the shift to facilitators of learning.

The TRIBE leadership group collects and reports data and provides immediate feedback after conducting classroom walkthroughs. During the walk-throughs, members of TRIBE are able to conduct on-the-spot training for teachers based on observations. The TRIBE members develop personalized improvement/professional development plans for individual teachers. TRIBE members are also available to teachers who request additional support in the classroom. The observations provide data that can be used to inform the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators. TRIBE walkthroughs improve teacher practice and effectiveness by providing feedback including recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

School leaders personalize their own professional development options with input from needs assessments and the principal evaluation system. Training sessions will be made available to school leadership that cover team building and data driven instruction. The feedback provided by the evaluation system will assist principals in improving practice and effectiveness by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

The descriptions of the team building and data driven components of school leadership training need additional clarification about how they will function as a part of the proposed program. The application is lacking a clear description of processes and procedures that will be used by school leadership to facilitate team building and guide data driven instruction.

Assistant Principal Academies have been established to prepare assistant principals to become master principals of exceptional schools. The knowledge, skills, and competencies that are a part of the academy will improve principals' practice and effectiveness.

Teachers will be supported through site-based coaches who will provide job-embedded coaching. Site-based coaches will provide support for developing intervention strategies and helping students set learning goals. Coaches will show teachers how to utilize project based learning or to differentiate instruction.

Teachers will be given time to observe other teachers to identify effective strategies used by their peers for instruction, classroom management, and motivation.

The application does not describe training that will help educators know how to use high-quality learning resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career- ready graduation requirements, and the tools to create and share new resources. The application proposes the introduction of 28 strategies in the district. There is no mention of the training that the teachers will receive related to these strategies.

The application does not describe processes that will be used to match student needs with specific resources.

The data systems in use in the district identify areas in which students need improvement. Teachers could then use the information provided by those tools to match student needs with specific resources.

The application does not describe approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

School leaders will receive training on how to use data-drive instruction to assess individual and collective educator effectiveness for the purpose of continuous school improvement. The application does not describe training for school leaders to enable them to take steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

School leaders will receive training on team building to assess and take steps to improve school culture and climate for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

The application mentions training, systems, and practices that are in place to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. The TRIBE leadership group is an example of such a component.

The applicant does not present a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to- staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas. There are no key goals related to this criterion. The application does not define specific activities related to this criterion on a timeline, provide a rationale, or identify parties responsible for implementing activities. Without a high-quality plan, it is not likely that the applicant will be able to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Personnel, such as Instructional Coaches, have been added to provide support and services to participating schools.

Autonomy with the school schedule is described at the high school level. However, the applicant does not address autonomy at the other school levels.

Staffing is determined based on student enrollment. Building principals recommend personnel for hire.

The application does not describe the flexibility and autonomy that school leadership teams have regarding the roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators.

The budget for each school is based on the number of students attending the school. The building principal has autonomy in budget allocation and spending is aligned with the campus improvement plan as well as student data needs.

The application does not address giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic.

The proposal states that students may complete performance-based activities, academic labs, or student research reports. It is district policy that all students are allowed to be reassessed for any unit assessment on which they did not score 70% mastery. Assessment methods include informal and formal measures, such as portfolios, teacher-made tests, and district assessments.

Resources are allotted on a school-by-school basis based on the distribution of high-need students.

English Language Proficiency Standards in reading and math for English Language Learners are included in lessons.

However, the application does not describe how the proposed strategies are adaptable and fully accessible to students with disabilities and English learners.

The applicant does not present a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. There are no key goals related to this criterion. The application does not define

specific activities related to this criterion on a timeline, provide a rationale, or identify parties responsible for implementing activities.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A Bring Your Own Device program was implemented in 2012. The district made WiFi available through all school buildings to all stakeholders. Library hours have been extended to promote technology useage by parents and community members. Computer labs are open beyond the normal work day. Homework tutorials are offered in the labs two nights a week.

A technology helpline is available during district work hours.

The application does not describe information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems.

The district software packages are interoperable. The systems include human resources, fiscal management, and student management functions.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A project team with representative from various stakeholder groups will meet regularly to review progress. The team will be led by a Project Manager and an administrative assistant. Data will be gathered to measure the impact of intervention across the district. Modifications will be made if goals are not being fully met. Progress monitoring will be collected and shared monthly by class and grade at the elementary level and by subject and grade at the secondary level.</p> <p>The application contains many of the components of a high-quality plan for components related to this criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application describes several activities that will result in ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The proposed project will incorporate community meetings, campus and district staff meetings, press releases, Superintendent Round Tables, and annual reviews.</p> <p>The application does not include all the components of a high-quality plan. The application does not include a timeline for the identified activities or identify parties responsible for implementing the identified activities.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant identifies various performance measures that will be used to demonstrate progress. The designated annual targets are ambitious yet achievable.</p> <p>A table is included in the application that describes the performance measures, the rationale for selecting each measure, how the measure will provide information, and how the district will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. Performance measures are identified for elementary and secondary students.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant lists areas that will be evaluated. However, these areas are all student performance measures. The application does not describe how it will evaluate the 28 strategies that are a part of the proposed program. It is not clear how the applicant will determine which strategies are responsible for increases in student achievement and which strategies are not effective and should be modified/replaced.</p>		

Annual evaluations will be conducted by the district's accountability director. The position already exists. The application does not describe how the director will accommodate the extra work of analyzing program data for grades Pre-K – 12.

Faculty as Dallas Baptist University will conduct formative and summative evaluations.

The district has established baseline measures and annual goals for RTTT-D. Evaluations will allow the district to identify strategies that are working and areas in need of improvement.

Yearly evaluations will be shared with all stakeholders.

The application includes many components of a high-quality plan. Key goals have been identified to measure student performance. The application describes activities that will be undertaken and parties responsible for conducting those activities once or twice a year. The application does not incorporate evaluation of instructional strategies. Because the instructional strategies are the primary components of the proposed program, it is critical that the district be able to identify which strategies are effective in increasing student achievement.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant indicates that local funds and Title I funds will be used to supplement grant funds.</p> <p>For Project 1, the numbers for personnel, fringe benefits, and travel in the four year budget table do not match the numbers for those categories in the itemized cost table. For Project 2, the numbers for fringe benefits and supplies do not match across tables. For project 4 no explanation is provided about why there are costs listed for fringe benefits even though there are no salaries associated with this project.</p> <p>The information included about personnel in the proposal does not seem reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.</p> <p>A sizeable portion of the budget is designated for technology. Many of the components listed in the budget are not addressed in the description of the proposed program so it is not clear why these expenditures are needed to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. For example, the budget narrative mentions Engineering labs and math stations. No information is provided about which participating students will be using these, what materials are a part of an "Engineering lab" or "math station", or how these will be used as a part of the proposed program to increase student achievement.</p> <p>Project 4 and Project 5 are not described in the proposal. They are not mentioned in any section other than the budget. It is not clear how they fit into the proposed project.</p> <p>The math in the supplies section of Project 4 is incorrect.</p> <p>Projects 2 and 5 include expenses for individuals to provide training. However, there is no money included to provide stipends for teachers.</p> <p>The application identifies funds that will be used for one time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application indicates that the district will pursue future grants to be able to add additional technology.

The applicant has included some components of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant has identified strategies that will be used to sustain the project as well as rationale for these strategies. However, goals, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementing the strategies for sustainability are not included in the application.

The plan includes support from State and local government leaders.

The application does not describe how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a description of partnerships. Partnerships are with a variety of community organizations.

The applicant identifies six population-level desired results that align with the broader RTTT-D proposal. Desired results include educational outcomes and family/community supports.

The applicant has identified how each partnership will track the selected indicators.

The applicant identified how it will use data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students.

The application does not describe specific strategies that will be implemented to scale the model beyond participating students.

The applicant has identified how the partnerships will improve results over time.

The applicant describes how each partnership will integrate education and other services for participating students.

The application does not describe how the proposed partnerships will build the capacity of staff in participating schools to assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership; identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant; create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results; engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs; and routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems.

The application describes desired results for students. The partnerships identified correlate to the ambitious and achievable performance measures identified in the proposal.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes strategies that the district is using to address student achievement. However, the applicant does not present a coherent and comprehensive plan to build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.



Total	210	133
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