



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0135PA-1 for Greater Johnstown School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant, Greater Johnstown School District (GJSD), has presented an educational reform vision inclusive of building personalized learning environments for every child in the district. Building on a recent Board approved education improvement plan, the applicant articulates an approach to increasing student achievement and learning, despite a challenging local context, that capitalizes on this nascent effort. Although there is strong indication of commitment to a future focus on the professional development of new teachers, the information provided in the proposal notes that professional development has been “sporadic” and “inconsistent” until the current year. Increasing the capacity of data systems and standards is also embedded in future plans but again there is insufficient information provided to determine how rooted the use of data is currently. While three core areas are being addressed now and going forward administrator evaluation is projected but does not appear to be an existing practice. The status of core education assurance areas, over time, is insufficiently described and although plans for improvement are delineated the rating for this section reflects a lack of progress in these areas until very recently.</p> <p>The Personalized Learning Environments, a key goal of the RTTT work, is only vaguely described .</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All schools in GJSD and all 3,166 students and 228 staff will be involved in the initiative. All schools meet eligibility requirements and are listed in the proposal.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GJSD plans a district wide initiative strategically working with community partners and families. The theory of change involves providing support for families pre-birth through high school. The focus on Pre-K and transitions, especially the 9th grade Freshmen Academy, is commendable in view of the needs noted throughout the proposal. The emphasis on serving all students in the district through support of curriculum development focused on career and college ready standards, the provision of tutoring, the implementation of a College Access Center and efforts to build teacher capacity suggest an ambitious and comprehensive plan of district wide change. The inclusion, of a district wide positive behavior system demonstrates efforts to comprehensively meet student needs. Wrap around services, inclusive of early intervention and after school partnerships, coupled with high expectations and academic standards bodes well for the district meeting its goals of improved student learning.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant notes specific annual growth targets for each subgroup with a goal of closing the achievement gap for all students, by 50% by 2016-17. Anticipated annual increases are standard across all groups and subject areas. Graduation rates are proposed to rise equally among subgroups with 96.8% of white students anticipated to graduate by 2018 and 88.3% of African American students graduating in that year. The narrative does not explain this differential nor is there any indication that increased attention, in the pursuit of equitable outcomes, will occur to enable African American students to graduate at the same rate as their white peers. More generally, the systematic approach to growth is positive and notable although in several cases performance goals appear overly ambitious. In Reading Grade 7, as example, a 30% growth for African Americans and an even greater gain for IEP students (over 40%) is projected. Other instances of setting questionably achievable targets appear in the charts presented and a lower than perfect score is thus noted for this section of the proposal.

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	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is indication that the LEA has been successful in the past several years in advancing student achievement in reading with significant gains are reported since 2004. As noted in the proposal, the number of students in dual enrollment and AP courses, as well as the number of students going on to college has increased substantially over the past several years with growth during the 2012-13 school year highlighted. Throughout this section the applicant provides narrative evidence of student growth throughout the district. Attachments 9 and 10 in the Appendix speak to ambitious improvement goals and these demonstrate sound and specific foci. A plan such as that displayed in Attachment 9, even in outline form, for the proposed goals and activities set forth in the application, is not found in the application.</p> <p>Johnstown Middle School, a persistently low achieving school, has all the elements in place for a school turnaround and indicators are that it is in fact in the early stages of marked improvement with the narrative noting that the PVAAS data show marked improvement in academic growth during the last school year. Evidence of growth at GJMS is described in the narrative and supported on the charts provided for (A)(4). As example, in Math Grade 7, in the category of ALL (students) the percent noted as Advanced & Proficient ticked up from 49.8 (2011-2012) to 52.9 (2012-2013) with the subgroup Black (students) advancing from 53.3 to 56.2 percent advanced or proficient. Baseline data for the past years indicate, for many areas and subgroups a generally upward direction.</p> <p>The above demonstrates a strong base for continuing advances as the reform plans are implemented.</p> <p>Student performance data is available to students, educators and parents and reasonable assistance is provided to staff, through professional development though there is insufficient evidence presented concerning the provision of enabling conditions for parental access and understanding of the data warehoused in the GJSD systems.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pennsylvania has implemented the Sunshine Act requiring open records and posting report cards of all school districts in the state. Attachment #4 in the appendix of this proposal provides a snapshot of a typical publicly available budget report. The expenditures are presented in broad categories that meet the requirements of this prompt. Additional communication vehicles are noted and appear to be sufficient for widely sharing district information.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The State's Standards Aligned System (SAS) is, according to the applicant, a primary basis for the districts Educational Design Plan. GJSD has responded positively to a state mandate to implement educator evaluation systems and utilizes the statewide longitudinal data system both in meeting state requirements and district goals. There is unambiguous appreciation in the district of State requirements while acknowledging that "all district-level decision remain at the control of the LEA (p. 54). Given Pennsylvania is a local control state, as per the application, GJSD is well positioned to utilize state tools to their advantage while having sufficient autonomy to implement district plans.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

During the process of developing GJSD’s Educational Design Plan (EDP), the structure on which the grant activities will rest, teachers and administrators were engaged in design and related professional development. The narrative speaks to broad support of educators for this initiative. Specifically the proposal states that a “very high number of teachers” were involved. The phrase “a very high number” is vague. Stating a percentage would clarify the level of educator engagement in the RTTT planning. The narrative references Attachment 5 which includes letters of support. There are two Attachments numbered five in the appendix and while they include supportive documentation from parents, community members, partners and students there is no letter from the teachers association included although the presence of one is referenced in the narrative under B4. Nor are any of the included letters of support from GJSD educators which is discrepant with the statements in the narrative that suggests full support from the faculty. This inconsistency accounts for the mid-level score given.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GJSD, in its second year of a plan which “better aligns” curriculum and assessments, puts forth a multi layered initiative for personalizing the learning environment for all students. GJSD describes an ambitious initiative that rightfully recognizes the need for expanding early learning opportunities, attending closely to transition years and focusing throughout on career (vocational) and/or college readiness.

This comprehensive vision for personalization commendably proposes obtaining accreditation from the NAEYC for early childhood programs and “industry-recognized certification” for each vocational program offered. The addition of career counselors and behavior specialists adds another dimension of appropriate attention to student needs. Students will be “consistently monitored” and their “assessments analyzed” to determine “difficulties” particularly at transition points. Notable is an investment in a technologically based early warning system to identify students at risk. It is anticipated that progress, or lack thereof, toward goals will be communicated in a timely way to educators, parents and students and interventions will be set in place quickly. The narrative convincingly documents pathways, programs and personnel in support of individualized student learning. What is less clear however is what will be occurring in the classroom, or in multiple other settings, to facilitate students setting lofty but achievable goals and truly understanding how to structure their learning to achieve these goals.

This section does not present a complete “high-quality plan” as defined by the RFP for RTTT. That is, the narrative is conceptually fluent, providing a vision and speaking to activities to be undertaken (e.g. articulation agreements with institutions of higher education; installation of “career cruising software”) but absent timelines, persons responsible for implementation and only vaguely presented deliverables, this cannot be considered a complete plan or plan outline of high quality.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates a clear conceptual understanding of what makes professional development (PD) for teachers effective. As example, GJSD has, for the last year, appropriately tiered PD based on teacher need, assigned mentors to new teachers, and introduced the widely praised and nationally implemented Danielson Model for evaluation. These and other particulars of the district’s training and development model provide a real potential to improve classroom instruction and student learning. That principals have been trained in the Danielson model demonstrates sound practice.

While this section of the proposal discusses in some detail the specifics of PD for new teachers, as example, they study effective teaching strategies, receive training in Reading Recovery and Success for All (programs that the applicant suggests are highly effective in their context) there is only brief reference to the content of training for other teachers. An emphasis on PD to assist educators in utilizing various data systems and “tailoring instruction to meet student needs” is appropriate given the applicants goals although the details are scarce and further explication would be helpful.

Principal/Leader development is less clearly articulated than that for teachers, although the applicant describes several

sound developmental opportunities (e.g. the PIL; SchoolNet) either mandated or provided for school leaders. Mentioned in another section (A) is PA “new principal evaluation system.” Principal evaluation and a development system for leaders are inadequately described in this proposal.

There is no mention of a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective teacher and principals, nor any indication of how hard to staff schools and subjects will be addressed. As noted in C1 above, a complete “high-quality plan” as defined by the RFP for RTTT inclusive of timelines, persons responsible for implementation, and deliverables receives little or no attention.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GJSD application sufficiently describes the hierarchy that allows schools, given appropriate district support and services, to progress individually. The superintendent and Board roles changed, as per information provided, in the last 16 months such that principals have more authority in their buildings and voice in district decision making than they previously held. Executive School Teams are part of the new governance structure and these have authority and engagement, as per the narrative, in decision making. These changes in structure strongly suggest reasonable opportunity for flexibility and autonomy at the building level.</p> <p>Student progress and mastery of standards is assessed and, as per the narrative for this section, " allowed "great flexibility... (given) multiple measures" that are available. There is limited detail provided (examples noted include Credit Recover and web-based learning) to affirm this assertion. Moreover, given the vocational/career focus as relates to personalizing learning, the absence of work experience as credit is discrepant with the applicants intent to allow great flexibility regarding methods of credit earning and measuring of student progress.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A district website and a social media presence are described as ensurance that stakeholders have access to pertinent information. Descriptions of SchoolNet and Powerschool, two student data systems, are impressive in terms of the data they provide that will allow for personalization of intervention and instruction, as PD keeps apace. Accessibility for parents is not well described and the strategies to support this demographic are not covered here, nor is the availability of "interoperable data systems" mentioned. Not addressing these criteria reduces the score in this section.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Individual school improvement plans are required of each school in the district. In the districts' educational design, on which the current proposal vision is based, there are four major initiatives. The applicant notes that as each of these strategic plans are developed, they will be “continually revisited, reviewed and discussed” by teachers and administrators including district office who ensure alignment with overall district strategic plans. A sample plan is attached in the appendix (Attachment 9 & 10) and presents evidence of the elements of a high quality plan inclusive of a structured assessment timeline, deliverables/ annual goals and benchmarks, and persons responsible. These attachments provide evidence, in support of the larger narrative, that a rigorous and continuous improvement process is currently in place in the district. In this section of the application an outline of a plan to ensure that a continuous improvement process is in place is provided. However it provides a sense of activities to be undertaken as opposed to being inclusive of the elements of a high quality plan as defined in this competition.</p> <p>A reasonable plan is laid out in the narrative assigning communication responsibilities generally to teachers, building level administrators and the Superintendent. The applicant describes a comprehensive media presence inclusive of a contractual relationship</p>		

with an advertising firm and creatively tasking an administrator with preparing news features.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Absent from the discussion in this section is the actual "extensive communication and engagement plan" noted in the narrative. Speaking in the present tense the applicant describes a plan that appears adequate to address both internal and external communication needs. However, a sample of that plan would add to the completeness of the presentation in this section of the application. As the narrative moves into future tense "all internal and external communication will be specific to reform goals" or "internal communications ...will be ongoing" there is evidence that intentions are ambitious while some of the details of the plan, (e.g.responsible personnel, benchmarks) remain vague.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance Measures for all students and all grade levels and sub groups are clearly displayed, as per proposal criteria, in a chart at the end of Section E. Overall the performance measures presented appear ambitious and in several instances achievable although evidence to justify several of the targets is not convincingly presented. The applicant presents a "narrative" for the chosen performance measures within a column of the chart and often that description provides only limited information as to the rationale for selecting the measure, how the measure will provide formative information or how its use will be reviewed. As example, in Pre- 3 the Reading Recovery Program is anticipated to bring all participating students to 100% proficiency but there is inadequate explanation for this very ambitious goal. In another instance where 35% of students currently are enrolled in Advanced Placement courses the applicant anticipates that by 2016-17 this will increase to an enrollment of 80% of the student body. These are very ambitious targets and without convincing explanation and documentation they present as not imminently achievable.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Currently GJSD uses the States school improvement framework data system to identify performance gaps and potential solutions. The applicant is in contact with a research and evaluation firm that has past experience in implementation evaluations. This represents a reasonable initial step to ensure that a strategy specific plan for continuous improvement and evaluation will be developed.The projected strands of the evaluation design, as presented in this section appear sound. The ultimate goal of providing "continuing guidance to the GJSD's four schools and partners throughout implementation" is appropriate.

The plans for evaluating the effectiveness of the investment are nascent and therefore incomplete with, for example, general reference to "regular meetings" and "frequent formative feedback" serving to outline intended strategies. This section represents very early thinking and provides some evidence of a quality approach to continuously improve implementation but absent is a high-quality plan inclusive of the elements described in the RFP for this competition.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)

10

5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

It is difficult to discern if a budget narrative under sub-head (F)(1) has been included. A section entitled "Budget Subpart2: Overall Budget Summary Narrative" is paginated after the sub-head (F)(2) and does adequately identify, in conjunction with the Budget Summary Tables, the funds that will support the project.

Under the budget table heading "Funds from other sources..." there are four sources identified. These same sources are noted

in several sections of the budget table. While the budget as presented appears reasonable and sufficient for the plan described, the dependence on these few entities does not present as an exhaustive or comprehensive effort to develop funding sources.

All expenditures are delineated on an annual basis and with the exception of a STEM contract all appear to extend over the life of the grant. Without a discernable narrative for this section a high score can not be given.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GJSD provides a realistic assessment of the context for sustaining the initiative after grant funds are expended. The candor concerning financial difficulties is appropriate. There is however no “plan” for sustainability included in this proposal. The applicants “guarantee (of) earnest efforts...to secure sustainability funding” is commendable but insufficiently persuasive absent a delineation of credible strategies to achieve this end. Budget projections for the three years after the term of the grant are not included in the proposal.

The initiative does build on current school improvement initiatives and appropriately will use grant funding to build capacity. Sustainable outcomes are a reasonable projection in instances where professional development is a key strategy. There is no indication that, in hopes of sustainability, the applicant considered options such as training the trainer or enhancing district capacity to locate funding opportunities going forward. This section of the proposal is incomplete, as per the prompt. The point score reflects the absence of sufficient attention to planning for sustainability after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

In the proposal the applicant frequently notes the relationship between the district and various partners. Although the Competitive Preference Priority section is not directly addressed, in the application put forward there is evidence throughout of working with partners to ensure students and family needs are addressed. As example, the applicant proposes obtaining accreditation from the NAEYC for early childhood programs, a need addressed by a United Way assessment as noted in their letter of support. The addition of career counselors, who will be working with local business and trades, and district behavior specialists adds another dimension of appropriate attention to student social/emotional.behavioral needs. Specific discussion of the various prompts (1-6) for this section is not noted.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Greater Johnstown School District has presented a comprehensive vision to create leaning environments to improve learning and teaching. This vision builds upon efforts to date to introduce and implement the core educational assurance areas. There are multiple initiatives planned that if funded will accelerate student achievement and increase educators effectiveness. Absent funding, leadership is positioned to increase personalized learning and potentially improve outcomes in relation to how students are prepared for post secondary opportunities.

Total	210	151
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0135PA-2 for Greater Johnstown School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant district has a recently hired new superintendent who has spearheaded a new plan, called the Education Program Design (EPD), which was attached to the application. The vision is built around four strategies that consist of professional development; instruction and intervention; curriculum; and school-wide positive behavioral support. This EPD is closely connected with Pennsylvania's "Standards-Aligned System" that encompasses standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments, interventions, materials, and resources. The appended EPD material, together with the narrative in the application, makes a compelling case that the applicant has a coherent and comprehensive reform vision.</p> <p>However, insufficient attention has been paid to what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. It is laudable that the applicant wants to have "every child known by name, cared for as an individual and prepared to graduate ready for college, careers and citizenship," but what this actually means for the student in the classroom is unclear. That is, the "personal learning environments" called for in the Race to the Top competition are not sufficiently well described.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All of the schools in the district will participate in the grant activities, which is appropriate since all schools are part of the district-wide EPD. The table in this section of the application provides all the information required under this criterion. More than 80% of the participating students are from low-income families.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All of the schools in the GJSD will be participating so that there is no need to "scale up" the work to be supported under the grant.</p> <p>Some components of a "high-quality plan" for translating the program into meaningful reform are somewhat vague. There is no specification of deliverables or exactly who is responsible for carrying out the effort. For instance, "training for teachers in need of additional support" does not specify who will be doing the training, how often, or how it will be determined which teachers need the additional support. More details on some of this appear later in the application, however.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Performance data and goals are provided only for reading at grades 3,4,5,6,7,8 and 11 (Literature) and for mathematics at grades 3,4,5,6,7,8, and 11 (Algebra 1) although the table in section A(2) says that students in grades Pre-K through 12 will be participating. It is not explained why there are no summative academic achievement data for any of the other grade levels.</p> <p>The table in section A(4)(b) gives almost exactly the same information as the preceding table. The aim is to close the gaps by 50% by the end of the grant period; that goal is reasonable.</p>		

Table A(4)(d), on college enrollment, aims for relatively modest goals. The overall rate is now 50.5% enrolling in college, while the goal for 2016-17 is only 54.7%. Similarly the rate for African Americans increases by 4 percentage points, from 48.2% to 52.2%. No detail is provided about how these specific goals were determined.

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	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths: One clear sign of reform success has been in the district's middle school, which has received a School Improvement Grant. As a result, there is a new school principal, reforms have been put in place, and the school was awarded a second SIG. There has been significant growth in student academic achievement. For the first time in many years, the enrollment is now increasing, as students and parents no longer avoid enrolling, even though the population in the city has been declining.</p> <p>Another sign of success is the increased participation in AP courses, Associate of Arts degree programs in local institutions, and the engineering program for high school students.</p> <p>Weaknesses: 1. The record of success that the applicant describes in this section is mainly in general terms, without any charts or graphs. The applicant has described only a few indices of improved academic achievement (e.g. 6th grade reading) and acknowledges that "we have seen a rather uneven success rate beyond third grade."</p> <p>2. The most significant omission is that there is no information provided about how student performance data are made available to students, educators and parents, as called for in criterion (B)(1)(c).</p> <p>3. There is no discussion of closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is an accounting and budgeting system that is available to any interested party. It includes "Instruction," "Support Services" in seven categories, and "Other non-instructional costs." No information about personnel salaries is part of it, and all the data (in Attachment 4) are aggregated on the level of grade band (elementary, middle, secondary). This data is not broken out even at the building level (there are two elementary schools in GJSD, one middle school and one high school). And all the personnel categories appear to be lumped together. The current salary schedule for teachers was not included as an appendix, so point (c) in the criterion is not addressed.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Pennsylvania is already a RTTT state, and GJSD is a part of that project by virtue of being a city in the state.</p> <p>The GJSD Education Development Plan appears to be in conformance with all existing Pennsylvania education systems, particularly the Standards Aligned System that provides tools, supports, networking opportunities, curriculum advice, assessments, etc. It participates in the statewide teacher evaluation system, as well as in the Response to Instruction and Intervention program. It also participates in Pennsylvania's Information Management System. There has been nothing that GJSD has proposed that is in conflict with any state requirement.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There has been substantial involvement of stakeholders in the original EPD. The RTT-D project is essentially an expansion of the EPD from the Johnstown Middle School to the rest of the district, and teachers have taken large roles in planning the EPD strategies and operations. There is less direct evidence of that involvement in the preparation of the RTT-D application specifically, however.</p>		

The letters of support from various organizations and community programs are heartfelt endorsements. A very serious problem is the apparent lack of a support letter from the Teachers' Association, even though the text indicates that such a letter is in Attachment 5 of the appendix.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to develop programs in six key areas of learning, all of which are directly related to the criteria. These programs (a) early learning programs geared toward specific needs of students; (b) work on the critical transition periods (e.g., 8th to 9th grades -- middle school to high school) so that these transitions are smooth and focused on an ultimate goal of readiness for work or college; (c) an effort directed toward a technologically-based "early warning" system that will alert school personnel to cases in which an individual student is at risk of falling behind; (d) a program directed specifically at STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), including some innovative ideas about engineering in grades 1 through 5 and an Engineering Academy in the middle and high schools; (e) a focus on "multiple student pathways, starting in grade 9, that will allow individual students to pursue academic or career aspirations and goals on a deeply personal level; and, finally, (f) starting in Grade 9, offerings of advanced course work or positions as interns (with a local business), including college-level work in cooperation with local IHEs and certification from vocational or trade associations. Built in to all of these areas will be systems for tracking student progress so that teachers and parents, as well as the students themselves, will understand how these goals are connected with eventual readiness for careers or college.

While all these goals are important and relevant to the Race to the Top competition, the applicant has not provided specific details in some areas. For example, within the "Successful Transitions" program, it is not clear exactly when and how often the monitoring and analysis are going to occur, nor how and by whom the "intensive, aligned and specific remediation, support and intervention" will be provided. As another example, within the "Effective Interventions" program, the applicant plans to hire an "intervention specialist." But there is no mention of the technological expertise that would also be needed to develop such a sophisticated "early warning" system that ties together individual student data from a variety of sources. Further, the timeline for creating such a system is absent; the development of software systems like this one require initial coding, then beta testing, then final rollout, all of which will occur on a schedule that is unspecified.

With regard to the sub-criterion C(1)(a)(4), the applicant will be working with a local chapter of the NAACP to offer professional development and curriculum coordination to build cultural awareness and sensitivity in parents, teachers, administrators, staff and students. No further details or timelines are provided about this initiative, although the applicant does state that NAACP leaders have agreed to share the development of these efforts. Again, the schedule and deliverables are important components of a high-quality plan, and should be provided.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	11
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a very intensive and thorough professional development program for beginning teachers during their first three years in the district. This includes a set of experiences (e.g. teaching strategies or university-level content courses) that will be unique to each teacher, determined in cooperation with his or her mentor supervising teacher. Additionally, secondary teachers will be given whatever additional training they need to be sure that Advanced Placement courses are aligned vertically, and AP teachers will participate in College Board training to assure appropriate rigor in the courses.

The applicant also describes a Professional Development Plan, to be undertaken with funds from the grant, that will build a professional staff information management system. This Professional Development Plan is to include student data and evaluations of teachers, principals and the superintendent. This will "provide data to inform planning," but it is not clear exactly how this professional staff information management system will be created, by whom, or according to what schedule; nor does it specify what data will be used to "inform" planning.

All principals are required to participate in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program, which is allied with the

National Institute for School Leadership (NISL). The PIL program ensures that principals are prepared to take on roles as instructional leaders; the applicant cites research that shows that students in schools led by PIL-prepared principals make remarkable progress in reading and mathematics.

Beyond the general aim of increasing teacher and principal effectiveness (by using the Danielson plan, for example) there is no specific plan provided for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, particularly in hard-to-staff schools, in difficult subjects like science and mathematics, or in specialty areas like special education. Missing are timelines, schedules, and deliverables, all of which are important components of a high-quality plan..

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:

The mechanisms that the superintendent has created for managing this project appear to be well thought out. Principals are allowed a large degree of flexibility in hiring, scheduling, and selection of professional development activities. Planning teams have been actively involved in all the proposed activities.

Similarly, students are allowed great flexibility in ways to demonstrate mastery -- for example through independent study, or by retaking assessments. Dual enrollment and "credit recovery" are also available, but the applicant does not explicitly state whether credit can actually be earned through these routes.

But no specific information is provided regarding students with disabilities or learners of English as a second language, which are populations of critical interest. The only assertion in this area is that "The GJSD's program for students with disabilities is leading to a Universal Design model, with commitments to building of a strong supportive, preventative and inclusive set of conditions and practices." It is not at all clear what some of these terms mean (e.g. Universal Design model; preventative practices) nor how this task is to be carried out, by whom, and according to what schedule.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GJSD already has a robust system of portals through which students, parents and teachers can get relevant information, although the interoperability of these systems (plus programs like Discovery Streaming and Defined STEM) is not fully discussed. Even though these various programs are available to parents and students, it is not clear that parents and students necessarily have the technical knowledge needed to take advantage of these opportunities. The applicant states that GJSD "plans to build two parent/student training centers," and that these centers will be staffed "as soon as possible."

However, there is no high quality plan for actually doing this: no details are provided about who is going to build the centers and on what schedule.

While there are mechanisms through which teachers can communicate with students and parents (i.e. PowerSchool and Schoolnet), it is not clear that a student is able to upload his or her own work in a format that would allow electronic tutors or tools that make suggestions for additional learning support to interact with that student.

In reference to criterion (D)(2)(a), it is not clear that merely having internet access available in libraries and community centers is sufficient for low-income families when the students are out of school, and no reasoning to support the idea that libraries and community centers are sufficient is presented

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant says that the school improvement plan is constantly undergoing review and adjustment as necessary, with data reported on a quarterly basis. All four schools already have a "Getting Results Continuous Improvement Plan" to develop mechanisms for improvement at the building level. In addition, there will be biweekly meetings at the building level to identify (through the "early warning system") those students who need additional intervention. All of this information is given to parents, the public, external partners, the school board, and so forth, as appropriate.</p> <p>These systems seem to be comprehensive and timely. However, nothing is said about how progress will be monitored and reported after the grant period is over, and there is no high-quality plan that specifies who will be responsible for maintaining this continuous improvement process, on what timeline, and with what deliverable products after the conclusion of the grant period.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plans that GJSD presents in this section seem to be comprehensive. The applicant will communicate everything about the educational design, financial commitments, student and teacher (professional development) outcomes, etc., to a wide variety of audiences through the GJSD web site, radio station, at civic meetings, parent groups, and through many other avenues. The people who will be involved in this are described, as is the frequency of the various communications. Moreover, the applicant plans to institute a series of surveys of the community, parents, staff, and students to get feedback on how well the communication strategies are fulfilling their role.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided all this information in the tables. The choices of the various assessment instruments are appropriate and adequate. For example, the use of participation rates in the Pre-engineering curriculum at the high school level seems to be a particularly good and timely choice, and one that is relevant to the goal of career-readiness. Similarly, the goal of tracking improvements in the student absentee rates will be useful in improving student academic performance.</p> <p>On the other hand, the numbers of students submitting the FAFSA seem very low, with not much change over the course of the grant period. It is not explained how the measure will provide the "rigorous and timely" formative information. (One must assume that the school-year headings of the FAFSA table are an inadvertent error; also the numbers in column P should be integers, not decimals.)</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GJSD proposes to hire an outside firm to do an evaluation of their plan. The applicant states that "GJSD has connected with a research and evaluation firm that specializes' in the kind of evaluation that should be done. That firm's qualifications are not explicitly enumerated. The firm will examine the fidelity of the implementation of the plan, provide frequent feedback, and provide technical assistance to help GJSD to use data for decision making.</p> <p>It is a strength of the proposal that an independent group will be doing the evaluation (rather than doing it with in-house people), but very few details are provided. In particular, there is no definitive timetable for these activities other than "the team will meet regularly with GJSD to participate in data review sessions." There is no description of what use, if any, will be made of formative evaluation findings as the grant progresses, and, in particular, how the evaluation itself might be modified on the basis of initial results.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Much of the required information is provided in the tables. Interestingly, in some cases the table gives more information about exactly what is being proposed than the body of the application provides, particularly about the contract with ASSET to provide STEM support and the STEM module courses in science and engineering in Grades 1-5, in response to criterion (F)(1)(c).</p> <p>The information that the applicant provides in the tables is not fully detailed, however. For example, for "Source of funds and amount of funding from each source" for the "Advanced Courses" component, the applicant lists "State Grants (RTTT), other Federal Funds (SIG, Title I), external foundations (Community Foundation, United Way)" and a total sum of \$200,000. No breakdown of that amount is provided, nor is any indication of what specifically those funds will support, nor why that amount is reasonable and sufficient.</p> <p>There is nothing about a strategy to ensure long-term sustainability in this section, nor about whether the expenditures will continue after the grant period is finished (with funds from other sources). For example, the one part-time professional outside expert for the development of the "early warning system" is budgeted every year for all four years, but nothing is said about whether that person will continue after that, funded by GJSD, or be dropped from the payroll.</p> <p>There is, however, a statement in section (F)(2) that seems relevant. It says, "The GJSD seeks to institute the values, ideas and processes that it develops through this grant so deeply among the school and community that even without funding, behaviors and relationships will remain." No real detail is offered for this statement, though. It is not clear which "behaviors and relationships" that are created through the grant will last beyond the grant period (as opposed to behaviors and relationships that are already in place and are likely to continue with or without grant funding).</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Much of the project's budget is devoted to personnel costs. The applicant cannot guarantee that funds will be found to support those positions once the grant period is over, but will exert "earnest efforts" to maintain those positions. But no detailed high-quality plan is presented for finding other sources of funding – the people who will be making the "earnest efforts," the schedule for undertaking those efforts, the potential sources of additional funds, and the activities that will have to be reduced in case the efforts do not come to fruition.</p> <p>The applicant suggests that funding to hire staff in Pre-K and Reading Recovery will save money later on because the students will be not as likely to require extra help after the grant is completed. The applicant makes no independent estimate of how much in future expenditures will in fact be saved as a result of the implementation of these early reading programs, nor does the applicant present an analysis of how this early investment will ameliorate the effects of a loss of roughly 13 FTEs then the grant period is finished.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No information is provided on this.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant has addressed all components of this criterion. In particular, the applicant has proposed to build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. The plan is based on an expansion and continuous refinement of their existing "Education Program Design." The emphases on (a) professional development, (b) personalizing instruction to that students are treated individually and appropriately to their own needs, (c) curriculum (particularly curriculum that is aligned with the goal of college- and career-ready graduation requirements), and (d) school-wide positive behavioral support are all consonant with the aims of the Race to the Top-District competition. Further, the application gives specific attention to increasing the effectiveness of teachers and expanding student access to effective educators; closing achievement gaps across income and racial groups, and increasing high school graduation rates.

Total	210	135
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0135PA-3 for Greater Johnstown School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant articulates a clear and credible research-based reform vision that has the goal of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. They present four interacting strategies to structure the vision: attention to professional development, the Response to Instruction Intervention (RtII), the curriculum, and support for positive behavior among students. The professional development strategy builds on the core educational assurance area of recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers. The standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and in the global economy assurance area is evident through the applicant's plan for aligning curriculum with both district standards and PA Common Core Standards. The applicant specifies a number of teaching and learning approaches that will be available to teachers and students in classrooms where a newly developed curriculum will be implemented. The applicant describes an online portal where teachers and leaders are able to access resources and tools for improved instruction, and which will facilitate personalized learning for students. The applicant proposes a student performance warning system based on the RtII framework to identify and provide interventions for students who are at risk for low performance.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant proposes to include all students and all teachers in the district's schools in the reform effort. A detailed list of all schools with required demographic information is included in the application. The applicant provides a chart, which clearly indicates that their approach to reform will focus on changes that support improved student performance in math, reading, and science at the elementary, middle, and high school grade levels.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>All schools will be participating in the reform effort at the point of implementation. As a result it will not be necessary to scale up from reform efforts operating in some schools, to all schools in the district. The applicant describes a theory of change based on the implementation of the four strategies described in the vision: standards-based curriculum; educator</p>		

professional development; monitoring and responding to the learning needs of all students (through RtII); and ensuring that students have the behaviors and skills needed to improve their performance while in school and beyond, to include development of resiliency and resolve to overcome challenging situations.

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

10

10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes goals for increases in learning and performance that are ambitious yet achievable for all students and students by subgroups for all grade levels that are assessed using state standardized summative assessments. The model for calculating change in achievement levels over a five-year period (including one post grant year) seems reasonable. The applicant proposes that annual increases of 12.5%, 20.5%, 29.5%, and 37.5% of the differential value will be needed to achieve the proposed goals. The same model was used to determine goals for closing the achievement gap. The annual increases are ambitious in that they anticipate a 50% improvement in performance across all groups over time. Improved student learning and performance are achievable in that they are measured to account for the anticipated positive impact of implemented reform components.

Proposed goals for increases in the graduation rate for all students and for student subgroups are also reasonable. Although the applicant currently exceeds the college enrollment rate set by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, projected increases were presented in this area as well. Baseline graduation rates overall of 50.5 are projected to rise to 55.8 overall during the post grant year (with comparable rate increases for all subgroups). These rates potentially maintain the applicant's position of exceeding rates set by the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center.

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 applicant demonstrated improved performance among third graders as a result of changes in the curriculum, a shift in the focus of professional development, a change in school culture, and open enrollment in preschool. They report a shift in performance of students who attended preschool from 57.25% scoring below basic levels on PK-K assessments by the end of third grade to 61.91% and 54.76% of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level in reading and math respectively by the end of third grade. The applicant's reform efforts demonstrate a clear record of success for students able to have a preschool experience.

The district's middle school was identified as a Persistently Low Achieving School by the state. The applicant initiated significant reforms in the school to include a change to administrators with a history of success, and the enlistment of staff to change course offerings, programming, and content sequencing. The applicant also ensured that professional development at the school changed so that there was a match between school transformation objectives and the professional development needs of staff to ensure that objectives were achieved. Although the applicant reports only one year of achievement data, a positive impact of the reform efforts was evidenced by the 60% growth index in students' performance in reading and math over the previous year

The applicant has made significant progress to ensure conditions of reform exist by training all district staff on the district's data systems and data warehouse. This positions staff to access student performance data as a means for planning data informed instruction.

Although the applicant presents important and significant evidence to demonstrate a record of prior success in student achievement and performance, as well as efforts to ensure the conditions for reform, most of the evidence does not cover the required four-year period as required by criteria under section B (1).

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the process for tracking and maintaining district and building level expenditures. A high level of transparency is evidenced by the multiple ways in which the applicant makes this information available to the public, to include information given at school board meetings and posted on the district website. Parents, community members and other stakeholders are presented expenditure reports upon request. While the applicant presents evidence of grade level expenditures (e.g., elementary, high school, junior high) specific school level expenditures, where possible (e.g., expenditures specific to each elementary school) are not presented.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes state reform efforts that align with and/or that are supportive of district level efforts and plans for reform. For example, the state developed the Standards Aligned System that facilitates the ability of teachers to develop standard-aligned curriculum, assessments, interventions, and professional development. The state legislators also recently passed a statewide teacher evaluation system where student achievement is a factor in teacher performance ratings. The state however awards local control to districts to determine how funding will be distributed within the district, as well as the authority to decide on programming, staffing and services offered by the district. As a result, the applicant has sufficient autonomy and support to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents letters of support for the proposed reform plan from a variety of sources to include educational organizations such as the local educational service agency and ASSET STEM Education, in addition to social service agencies; student organizations; parents; churches; and post secondary institutions. While no letter of support is available from the president of the local teachers union or association, the president's signature appears on the Application Assurances page of the notice, as sign of support. The applicant describes a process where teachers were instrumental in developing the plan, and were responsible for receiving student and community input at their respective schools as the plan developed. The organization of Strategy Committees and Operational Planning Committees that consist of teachers, administrators, parents, and students reflects an innovative approach to ensuring stakeholder engagement and commitment to reform efforts. Teachers and leaders provided meaningful support to the development of the reform plan, as evidenced by their role in the development of all components of the reform model; participation in developing strategies for the reform effort; involvement in the operational planning for each component of the reform model; and leadership in the initial professional development associated with the model.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides detailed descriptions of six areas meant to support learning, which include Pre-K and Early Education; Successful Transitions; Effective Interventions; STEM emphasis on Engineering Initiatives; Multiple Student Pathways; and Advanced course Offerings/Intern Opportunities. Together, they make for a comprehensive approach to learning.

While the applicant describes activities associated with implementation of each area of learning; rationales for the importance of the activities for their overall reform efforts; and expected outcomes or deliverables as a result of implementing these initiatives, they do not consistently identify other elements that are a part of a high quality plan. Insufficient information is provided for key goals that will guide the plan overall and of activities for individual learning areas; persons responsible for implementing or monitoring the activities; and timelines for implementation of the activities as required for high quality plans.

Several indicators listed as important to engaging and empowering all students are not explicitly addressed within the applicant's six areas to support learning, to include providing students with training and support to use tools and resources to track and manage their learning; ensuring that students have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and

perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning; and exposure to digital learning content. Lack of discussion in the former two areas overlooks important areas of learning that engages and empowers all learners, and lack of clear discussion in the latter leaves a question of the extent to which students will have access to high quality content via technology.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes professional development activities for teachers and school leaders, with a special focus on new teachers in order to ensure that they receive adequate training and support as they enter the teaching profession. The applicant does not however present a high quality plan that includes key goals, rationale for activities, timelines, clearly explicated deliverables and parties responsible for activities listed that address indicators under the Teaching and Learning criteria. The lack of these elements of a high quality plan makes it difficult to determine how the applicant will ensure that the activities described will be focused on goals for improved teaching and learning as articulated by the applicant; ensure that the activities are implemented in a timely manner so that they have the most benefit to the overall goals of the reform project; and how it will be will determined that goals have been met based on a set of anticipated deliverables. The applicant also lacks a high quality plan for increasing 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:

The applicant describes a governance structure where principals have limited autonomy and flexibility in making some decisions that potentially impact implementation of the reform proposal. For example, principals make recommendations for hiring decisions but the district level Board of Directors make final hiring decisions. The level of autonomy and flexibility to make school personnel decisions and to determine roles and responsibilities for educators appear to be limited. Principals do however have the authority to set professional development activities and calendars. A district-wide Executive School Team made up principals will have responsibility for leading implementation of reform based on the four strategies that structure the reform effort. The applicant mentions that this group will be responsible for operational plans. A more precise explanation is needed to determine if operational plans include responsibility for ensuring that students and educators will have needed support and resources. The applicant describes a number of flexible measures students may use to demonstrate mastery that allows them to earn credit.

While the applicant describes a number of policies and practices currently in place, they do not present a high quality plan to support reform project implementation that includes key goals, activities, rationale for activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties for carrying out aspects of their plan. A coherent plan that focuses existing practices is lacking.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not have a high quality plan with all required elements for a district and school infrastructure to support personalize learning. They do however describe how they are incorporating technology as a learning resource both during and after school for students; providing access to technology for both parents and students; ensuring that parents, students, and educators have access to educational information; and ensuring that technical support is available for students, parents and educators.

The applicant does not provide a well-defined statement of how parents and students will be allowed to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. Missing from the applicant's discussion of a plan for a school infrastructure are key goals, rationale for activities, timelines, deliverable, and in some instances persons responsible for activities described. The lack of these elements of high quality plan makes it difficult to

determine how the activities collectively address objectives and anticipated outcomes for a school infrastructure, as they relate to the overall reform plan. Since a timeline and consistent identification of persons responsible for activities have not been addressed, it is unclear when the activities identified will be implemented and who will make sure they are executed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not present a high quality plan to ensure a rigorous continuous improvement process that includes key goals, rationales for activities, timelines, and deliverables. A description is presented of activities that would effectively contribute to continuous improvement efforts. The applicant details personnel who would be responsible for the activities listed. For example, building, grade level, and content area teams are required to meet quarterly and have ongoing data dialogs to review progress toward milestones and benchmarks. There is a process for teachers to analyze data on student performance and communicate student needs to parents, tutors, and other relevant individuals. The superintendent would be responsible for communicating changes in implementation of the reform plan to the school board and parents. These individual activities have not been combined however into a high quality plan for continuous improvement of the reform effort. Without elements of high quality plan such as key goals, timelines, or deliverables it difficult to determine how the applicant intends to measure and monitor the continuous improvement process.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant notes that an extensive communication and engagement plan has been developed, but the elements of a high quality plan are not evident in the discussion of the plan. The applicant describes a number of communication activities, but does not include associated key goals, rationales for all activities cited, timelines, or deliverables. Persons responsible for the activities are included. Without all elements of a high quality plan, it is difficult to determine how the applicant will ensure that activities are addressing communication goals identified as important to the overall reform effort; whether or not there are timely implementations of communication activities; and whether or not desired outcomes or deliverables for communication activities are being met.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies performance measures overall and for subgroups as formative assessments of components related to the proposed plan and theory of action. For example, there are measures of to determine the extent to which students will be have effective and highly effective teachers and leaders (professional development component); measures of the percentage of students engaged in pre-engineering learning experiences (curriculum); the extent to which students increase non-cognitive skills (support for positive behavior among students) and measures of rapid acceleration of student outcomes and academic growth (Response to Instruction Intervention (RtII)). There is no discussion of how the measures will be reviewed and improved (if needed) over time.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies a state developed framework for educational evaluation, but does not articulate how this framework constitutes a high quality plan for evaluation of the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities. While the applicant also mentions four key components for evaluating the grant, these are not structured into a high quality plan for evaluation that</p>		

would include key goals, activities, a rationale for activities, timelines, or deliverables. The applicant notes that an outside research and evaluation firm will be responsible for developing an evaluation plan. The applicant states that the evaluation would include three strands: case study, implementation study, and achievement and attainment student. It not clear how the four aspects of evaluation discussed (e.g., the state framework; four key components for evaluating the grant; the outside evaluator; and the three strands of evaluation) fit together to form a high quality plan for evaluation of RTT-D funded activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant presents a responsible and sufficient budget to support implementation of the reform proposal presented. Rationales for expenditures are clearly articulated and appropriate for activities associated with the applicant's overall reform vision. There is no clear delineation of funds from other sources, nor does the applicant identify funds that will be used for one-time investments.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant identifies the anticipated benefits of implementation of their reform agenda using RTT-D funds. They do not present a high quality plan with key goals, activities, rationale for activities, timeline, deliverables, or responsible parties, as these relate to the sustainability of reform efforts. The applicant does not include a discussion of support from other sources such as state and local governments or community organizations, nor is there a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use these data to inform future investments. There is no discussion of potential sources or funding after RTT-D funds expire. The applicant anticipates that RTT-D funds will ameliorate current issues and/or allow them to build the capacity among faculty to address them.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant did not address the Competitive Preference Priority.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a clear and coherent vision for reform that builds on previous work in the core educational assurance areas (i.e., recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers; adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, and in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform educators with data about how they can improve instruction; and turning around lowest achievement schools). The vision and theory for change was developed with the unique needs of the community in which the applicant's schools are located in mind. The applicant's vision for creating learning environments designed to significantly improve learning is sound. The four components/strategies that serve as foundation for the vision, when combined, potentially portends learning environments that attend to both the academic and non-academic needs of individual students; expose them to effective educators; and support students' efforts to graduate high school prepared for college and careers.		

Total	210	144
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