



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0196NJ-1 for Hammonton Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application articulates a vision focused upon student learning and strategies that support that vision. The overarching vision of all students can learn has supporting goals aligned to the RTTT-D core educational areas including a curricular approach that includes problem-based learning, technology infused curriculum, and a personalized learning path that includes student choice that deepens and extends the learning for example. The district wide plan will include all students and all schools providing a systemic approach to changing the culture and climate of the teaching and learning process. This is a strength that facilitates changes that are comprehensive as well as sustainable. A common and shared vision that builds concerted efforts towards shared goals is a promising and valuable approach to reform efforts.</p> <p>Specified goals (e.g., creating personalized approaches and strategies for students and educators) support student achievement though a highly effective cadre of educators with reinforcement through extended professional development, collaborative teaching and learning opportunities, targeted focus upon subgroup performance. The proposal describes a plan that is centered upon improving teacher effectiveness with a direct link to student achievement an outcomes; this is a strength in that this plan aligns to the stated goal of all students can learn and achieve. Although the vision provides an overview and sets a general perception, it lacks a level of precision and specificity that connects the ideas into a well-developed and thoughtful articulation of the vision.</p> <p>The vision did not mention graduation improvement or college and career readiness in the articulation of goals. This omission is a missed opportunity to extend the vision with a deeper and more in-depth articulation of student outcomes as well as ensure that all criteria in the RTTT-D notice is met.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal is a district wide plan that includes all schools, all students, and all educators encompassing the entire district. There was no overt strategy in the selection of participating schools since all schools are participating. The data provided on the district and schools indicates that 3600 students are impacted as well as an instructional staff of over 300 educators. A plan directed towards all schools and all students has the potential to facilitate the kinds of change needed to improve the quality and depth of learning and thus, student outcomes.</p> <p>The plan outlines a process to phase in the professional development training for each of the 4 schools for a cohort of 8 teachers per school per year over the grant period. A cohort will be added each year; therefore, most of the teaches in the district will participate in the formal professional development training which is a cornerstone of the proposal. The plan to develop teacher leaders to train other educators can be useful in very larger divisions; however, it was not clear as to why this proposal would not include all educators in this small district. All teachers would benefit from the professional development delivered consistently and provide continuity of delivery and a broader scope of implementation.</p> <p>The proposal provides data on the student population, which is largely low income with 16% of the population classified as students with disabilities thus establishing a clear need. Resources directed towards improving the achievement of students considered at-risk through implementation of strategies and support mechanisms is a strength of the plan.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides an excellent model of educational change citing the work of Heifetz. The model makes evident that change occurs along two dimensions - that which is known and doable, and change that requires deeper paradigm shifts</p>		

with respect to beliefs and attitudes; the applicant provides examples that make evident their understanding of what will be more readily accomplished and those efforts that will require greater attention to accomplish. This applicant understands the level of change required for aspects of the plan implementation including resources that will be needed and sustained to make the longer lasting systemic changes.

There are limited details with respect to how the plan will go from a theoretical foundation to full implementation centered upon the articulated goals. The narrative is loosely constructed with regard to this point with a lack of details on how the plan is implemented into meaningful and authentic reform. There was no specific or succinct information given that fully articulates what will drive the personalized approach and deeper learning. The proposal is a district wide effort; full implementation or district wide scale up is not made evident as to what will occur and when using a definitive timeframe for implementation, training, monitoring, and evaluation. Efforts that indicate that meaningful reform would occur and support longterm student achievement is not made clear with supporting evidence or documentation,

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides data tables that establish a baseline level of academic performance by grade bands with targets for future performance. The data is disaggregated by subgroups as well students with disabilities and SES. The applicant did not provide a narrative or information that clearly articulated if the assessments were state assessments or not; one assumes the data is referring to state assessment measurements. The targets goals set for achievement improvement are not clear; for example, the overall baseline performance for all students on HSPA LAL proficiency in 2012 and 2013 is 96% with future goals in grant years set at targets of 90%. This is not clear as to why targets are lowered. The lack of explanation limits the quality of the proposal. As well, targets that are set for future performance as a result of the grant activities are not overly ambitious; for example, growth of 2 percent per year for subgroups does not seem to target resources for those students with the greatest needs.

There is no information or data provided for specific grade levels or content areas for specific subgroups. How the achievement gap will be decreased for specific groups on specific measures and tests is overtly missing. The appendix information compares data but does not provide the details with respect to closing the achievement gap for subgroups on specific content areas and grade levels.

Graduation rates and college enrollment data are provided along with targets for grant years. The level of projected growth is not substantial or overly ambitious. For example, for graduation targets, overall growth is approximately 3% over the grant period of 5 years. The performance goals are low with little change thus limiting the quality 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	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides data that demonstrates a level of performance with respect to student achievement that is commendable in many areas. For example, Hispanics and special education have shown growth on state performance within the district over time although the improvements are not always sustained. This indicates that efforts for targeted assistance may be implemented to varying degrees and not consistent in approach. District data compared to state data finds achievement gaps in all populations and contents; while the gaps have been reduced within the district comparative data to state shows a persistent lagging in achievement. The applicant did not overtly address with any specificity low performing areas or students. The applicant articulates a plan to improve achievement but does not provide specific information on subgroups, ELL, or low-income students.

Reform efforts within the district have included the implementation of professional learning communities; there were no details as to how the use of PLC's have directly impacted student achievement or learning outcomes. The charts provided in the appendix provide a list of committees, role, and schedule. It was not evident how this information linked to access to student data for parents and students in any meaningful manner.

The narrative describes in a general way some of the data and strategies but is limited in scope and details. The lack of details does not provide a clear picture of the extent and depth of the current status of the district nor does it provide a clear map as to what will be done in the future. It would have been useful to have the data summarized and described in a clear and cogent presentation along with the strategies that have been implemented and shown improvement in

student outcomes.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides a copy of the total district budget; salaries of teachers are provided in an aggregated format by grade level; however, it was not clear as to the complete total since other line items had data on special education for example. Actual teacher salaries were listed and expenditures were described; however, the description did not make evident and clear as the process for budget processes. The applicant states all information is available and provides external links. It would have been useful and practical for the applicant to summarize and provide a table that clearly addresses this criteria and provides evidence to support that the process is transparent and available in a meaningful manner.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a district that has staff and teachers involved in professional growth opportunities such as participation and presentations at conferences. The commitment to being involved in conferences that provide the latest research and innovation as well as to share best practices is a strength. This strategy indicates an investment in staff and teachers to both receive as well as to share what works and is effective in effective and quality educator development. In terms of district level readiness, the applicant lists several key points that support their ability to develop and implement the initiative as outlined. The district outlines many strengths with regard to implementation and condition necessary for success including a highly motivated staff, adequate funding, highly trained staff and the district is not under state monitoring. What is not made evident is how and to what degree the district has latitude and oversight to exercise autonomy under state regulations and policies. There is no documentation provided that makes this point clearly evident.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	6
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal narrative describes activities that the district engaged in to develop a strategic plan and to inform constituents of district goals. These are important in that the community has an opportunity for engagement; however, the narrative did not fully describe who was involved, to what degree, and how the specific of the process evolved and input utilized. For the proposal and specifically aligned to RTTT-D, the community had opportunity for involvement; however, the specifics are not articulated. There was no documentation of a meeting schedule, who and how many people attended. No direct evidence or information on how the community was engaged to participate through various forums such as focus group, parent-teacher meetings, committees, or through technology mechanisms. There was no evidence provided that demonstrates how teachers were involved, to what degree, and to what end. There are letters of support provided to endorse this initiative.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes efforts centered around curriculum revision and alignment to Common Core and NJ State Standards in math and language arts, as well, infusing career and technology standards into the curriculum. These efforts are strengths since the first step in reform efforts has to do with what is taught- the curriculum. The training plan describes the use and integration of technology; however, there are no specifics or evidence provided as to what this look like or specific aspects detailed and outlined.

Other efforts to improve instruction and student outcomes begin in PreK using programs to facilitate the skills and achievement in reading and literacy. These are impressive efforts that support efforts to improve student outcomes and the quality of instruction. Professional development has been provided to all teachers to use a protocol to work with ELL students and implemented My Road for high school students as tool for college and career planning. Although many strategies have been implemented that align with the strategic plan and goals of the proposal, it was not evident how the personalized approach was developed as a major aspect of the learning environment. The narrative describes in general

terms some of the current initiatives and strategies and provides good examples such as the curriculum alignment and professional development. What was missing in this description was a thorough explanation with specifics on how this plan would support a deeper approach to the RTTT-D goals. Linking the various components that are described into a cohesive framework centered on student access to a variety of skills and preparation (e.g. diverse cultures, goal setting, personalized approaches to learning and preparation for college and career) are noticeably lacking in details and in scope.

The plan as described does not provide any supporting details, documentation or evidence that the various aspects are connected and are of a high quality. The limited description provides a very general description with many aspects not addressed

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

20

7

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The curriculum aligned to standards such as Common Core and Technology to improve the depth and scope of content and critical thinking. However, the plan does not provide any specific details as to any evidence that supports the demonstration or skills associated with critical thinking or higher order processing of content. The use of technology and other innovative tools and strategies is not described in detail or with any supporting evidence.

The district has invested in training for teachers and implemented strategies and programs beginning in PreK in reading. These efforts support capacity building in terms of professional knowledge and teacher development geared towards student achievement. The district has devised a teacher and administrator evaluation system that utilizes approaches such as walk-through to quickly observe and assess instruction but there is no explanation of how the information is used or conveyed to educators. The use of a personalized approach to the development of professional learning plan for teachers and administrators is an excellent strategy to build upon individual strengths and address individual weaknesses.

The proposal provides a description of the Evaluation Tool used to assess the quality and effectiveness of instruction. This is an excellent resource to address strengths and limitations with regard to instruction and to build and support highly effective educators. What is not overtly described is how these strategies link to student achievement. Although one can assume that highly effective teachers support student achievement this is not overtly made evident with through the direct connections and links. There is no explanation of how student data is collected, evaluated, discussed and analyzed for making changes to instruction or to support individual students through tutoring or re-teaching. Efforts underway such as the Mastery Content program track student performance but does not adequately explain how the data is evaluated in the PLC structure.

There is limited discussion on the feedback process used to inform teachers and students of progress, no overt description of the specific strategies to be developed and implemented that support student success and achievement in the classroom setting, nor any specific strategies to accelerate or personalize learning. Lack of focus on student growth as strategies to assess the forward trajectory of achievement

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes how personalized learning includes curriculum revision and development using Understanding by Design as the framework. The process described includes all educators including special education and ESL to collaborate in the development of lessons, assessments, and units of study; this is strength to include representative educators. There is no mention of curriculum and learning is tailored or meets the needs of students with disabilities or ELL. How this process links to LEA policy and infrastructure is not explicitly clear with respect to implementation and the criteria of RTTT-D. The applicant describes activities that are common to any district and does not provide information as to how this links to central office and leadership. There is no evidence or description as to the role of central office in this process or mention of how students can demonstrate mastery through multiple opportunities and diverse ways. There is no mention of how leadership at the district or school level seeks or is involved in standard operating events such as the calendar, personnel or budgets

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

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3

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not provide any details or supporting information that explains how students are supported with internal and external resources and mechanism. Access to tools, technology, tutoring, mentoring or other supports is not addressed in conjunction with the development of a personalized learning approach for students. The plan describes communication efforts and meetings that provide parents and students recommendations, expectations, and activities such as a reading night. There is no alignment of the described activities with any evidence that makes clear as to the specifics. Data can be accessed by parents and students as well as to communicate with teachers; training is provided to parents, which is a strength. It is not clear to the level of data sharing and system interconnections- there is only a mention of social networking of teachers with others to exchange strategies and lessons. The applicant has not described in any meaningful manner how and what resources are available and what if any technical support is provided with any depth, and how access to data and other information is available in a multiple formats.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal describes plans to extend teacher professional development to further refine curriculum, develop assessments, and analyze student achievement data. The plan does not provide a timeline, detail what will be collected and evaluated, and how this process will then be used to inform progress towards the plan. The lack of supporting details with respect to the proposal and the role of continuous improvement is noticeably lacking. The proposal states that teacher leaders will be trained to develop a process that includes a timeline and outcomes; however, this is not linked to the proposal in terms of continuous improvement but rather a as strategy for other data that is collected. For example, the plan data on pre and posttests of content mastery; while it is commendable to evaluate the data and use to improve the quality of instruction and thus student outcomes, how this fits within the overall proposal as a benchmark or target is not explained. The plan does not include any specificity with regard to the proposal with regard towards progress towards goals. The general lack of alignment of goals, objectives, strategies and outcomes with a process to monitor and evaluate is not evident. There is no evidence provided that informs how the plan is to be implemented and continuously evaluated for progress or share any information with stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal outlines instructional strategies (e.g., PLC's, School Improvement Process) that focus upon research based best practices as to what will be communicated to stakeholders. A variety of methods include parent meetings, outreach, web based and school board meetings were listed. What is not evident in this description is how communication with respect to the RTTT-D plan will be communicated. The lack of precise goals with target benchmarks is lacking and thus how and what will be communicated is unclear. The proposal outlines some general strategies with no details, no specific ways to assess ongoing progress, and no clear picture of how or what will be continuously evaluated.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal outlines instructional strategies (e.g., PLC's, School Improvement Process) that focus upon research based best practices as to what will be communicated to stakeholders. A variety of methods include parent meetings, outreach, web based and school board meetings were listed. What is not evident in this description is how communication with respect to the RTTT-D plan will be communicated. The lack of precise goals with target benchmarks is lacking and thus how and what will be communicated is unclear. The proposal outlines some general strategies with no details, no specific ways to assess ongoing progress, and no clear picture of how or what will be continuously evaluated.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal states it will evaluate teachers and administrators but does not specify how this aligns with RTTT-D criteria. The plan will evaluate for example the effective use of technology but does not link this to the proposal, outcomes. or to the plan. There is no timeline, list of targets for performance, measures and data collection that is articulated.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget is almost singularly focused upon personnel costs such as professional development training days for all staff for 5 days times 4 years. The information provided did not make clear what training would be covered in each year, how the training aligns to the goals of the proposal in a definitive way, how the training linked to student achievement in an overt manner. The professional service provided was described in the narrative but a detailed explanation was needed to justify the costs. The budget did identify costs that were one-time costs as well as any funding that was of a local support. The budget does describe any efforts associated with personalized learning, college and career readiness, or link the professional development to student achievement and success.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan that is described is not clear in terms of how this project would be sustained including efforts to evaluate the project in an ongoing manner so that changes and adjustments are made as needed. The professional development is the focus of the reform efforts, which is one strategy; however, a comprehensive plan will seek others supporting approaches and tactics in order to address the broad scope of this district level project. Training teachers will not be sufficient to accomplish the goals that were outlined or to meet the RTTT-D criteria. There is no information provided that makes sustainability evident.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlines support systems that will provide afterschool care, tutoring and recreation to students in PRK-5. The goal is to work with students in reading to meet the goals established in this proposal (e.g. increasing by 3 levels in K-3 and one grade level in grades 4-5). The target population is ELL, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged. There is no information provided on selection, how the students are assessed and monitored, and how parents and community will be engaged in these efforts. The plan does call for the support of a partner to provide the before and after care which is strength; however, the plan does not provide any other details or indicate any other community partners or supports under consideration for this plan. There is no description of capacity building to improve the quality of staff or programs.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal does not meet the criteria of high quality plan as outlined in the RTTT-D criteria. Although the plan had areas of strength, overall the plan did not focus upon the four core areas as outlined and required, did not develop the concept of a personalized setting and program, did not articulate how the professional development plans would deliberately reduce achievement gaps and improve the outcomes for students. There was no alignment of goals, objectives, strategies, and data to assess progress of the project towards goal accomplishment; and, there were no clear plans to implement, monitor, and evaluate the program in an ongoing and continuous manner.</p>		

Total	210	74
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0196NJ-2 for Hammonton Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	1
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(1)</p> <p>The applicant failed to present a clear and coherent reform vision. It is unclear to what extent the applicant will build on its work in the four core educational assurance areas. More specific information is needed. The applicant will hire a consultant firm to conduct professional development for teachers and staff. That is not sufficient evidence that the training teachers and staff will receive is applicable to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. To state that staff members "will be trained over a period of eight days in problem based learning strategies and methodology to shift the paradigm of teacher-centered instruction to classrooms." is not sufficient evidence. There is little or no evidence that the applicant adequately described a credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement.. More information is needed.</p> <p>The applicant failed to adequately describe what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in a personalized learning environment. The applicant failed to write to the criteria.. Additional information addressing the criteria would strengthen the application. .</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(2)</p> <p>The applicant failed to articulate a clear approach to implementing a reform project. The schools participating in the the project are named. The total number of students who will participate in the project is "approximately" 3,600. The number of professionals participating in the project is 300. It is unclear how many of the participating professionals are teachers, principals or other school personnel. It is unclear what the rationale was in selecting the participating schools and to what extent the schools meet the eligibility requirements. The applicant stated that 16% of the student population have disabilities. Beyond that statement there is insufficient information about the groups and subgroups in the project.</p> <p>The application would be strengthened by providing additional details and writing more closely to the criteria.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(3)</p>		

There is little or no evidence that the applicant has designed a high quality plan regarding how the reform project will be scaled up. The proposal refers to a plan by stating that, "personalized learning environments where student engagement choice and a deepening of student learning are emphasized". That is insufficient information. The proposal is lacking a logic model or theory of change, which would frame project activities. The applicant states that the project will be implemented district-wide, however the applicant does not present credible evidence that there is a viable plan to scale up the proposed reforms to support district-wide change. There is little or no evidence that project goals are clearly articulated for the participating schools or beyond the participating schools. More descriptive information is needed in order to determine if the applicant will reach its outcome goals.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)

The applicant provided data on a chart regarding summative assessments. Baseline data on academic achievement are presented for overall students and subgroups. Special education students are included. The graduation rate will be 91.8% by 2016-2017, the fourth year of the grant. Data for sub groups are included. The college enrollment rate is presented on a chart, that includes baseline data and incremental increases for all groups through a five year period. The postsecondary degree attainment is not sufficiently explained. More information would strengthen the application.

There is little or no evidence that the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning, performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals for the LEA. Goals are not clear, so they are not ambitious. For instance the applicant stated that there were goals for 4 schools but later in the proposal stated that all schools in the school district would participate in the project. The applicant did not present compelling evidence that the project goals are attainable. More clarity is needed about the formative and summative assessments. The assessments that were referenced were not sufficiently explained. One example is HSPA. Another example is LAL. Without having information about the assessments, it is impossible to track student academic growth and achievement. There is insufficient information provided about the achievement gaps of the subgroups and the supports that will be provided to close the achievement gaps, among all students. The applicant presented a chart that was intended to include data that showed decreasing the achievement gap but the chart was blank.

The applicant included some information on graduation rates for students including the subgroups. The data showed minimal increase in the graduation rates over a 4 year period. Some college enrollment data was included, which indicated incremental increase in the college going rate for the overall student population, including the subgroups, over a 4 year period. The data would have been more convincing if the applicant presented a narrative to further explain the data.

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	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)

The applicant presented a record of success in advancing student learning. Graphs were presented to illustrate the academic levels of students over a three year period. It was not convincing for lack of explaining the data. The applicant presented as evidence of reform over the last three years that the school district responded to the restructuring of school governance as an agreement of No Child Left Behind. One principal, and one superintendent chose to retire. That is change by default. There is no evidence that the school district examined and changed school governance patterns, policies, strategies or policies.

The applicant stated that they made an effort to share project information in the Annual Budget and Comprehensive Annual Financial Budget. This a weak plan and not likely to support students in attaining their goals.

The applicant failed to present credible evidence directly related to the criteria because the applicant did not provide the necessary specificity in addressing the criteria a,b and c.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(2)

There is little or no evidence that there is a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments. It is unclear to what extent the applicant makes information available to all stakeholders. The Annual Budget and the Comprehensive Budget are made available to the public on a web site and the US Census Bureau's web site. This is insufficient. The applicant will meet with some stakeholders in the education community, but it is unclear that financial and personnel salaries will be on the agenda. It is unclear whether the salaries are included in the budget. The proposal would be strengthened by including more details about a wider dissemination plan that would reach all of the stakeholders. The applicant failed to write to the criteria.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	1
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(3)

The applicant failed to demonstrate evidence of successful conditions of autonomy. The applicant is an LEA. That alone does not ensure successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State law. A statement was made in the proposal that the applicant "has all the necessary conditions and sufficient autonomy". More evidence is needed to support that statement. The information presented did not respond to the criteria.

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

(B)(4)

The applicant presented information on stakeholder engagement. Board of Education members reviewed the proposal. Some evidence is needed to indicate that the Board of Education members submitted comments, statements or suggestions. There is no evidence that there was significant engagement between the School Board and the applicant in the preparation of the proposal. Parents and students will review the proposal. It is unclear when this will happen. Meaningful engagement would mandate complete sharing and feedback from stakeholders prior to submitting the proposal. The prior engagement of all stakeholders would have strengthened this proposal because their feedback would be critical to the successful implementation of the project.

The applicant has collective bargaining. There is a signed assurance document by the union leader. A strong letter of support would have indicated a deeper commitment to the project.

The applicant's letters of support are minimal and come from the Home and School Association, Supervisors Associations, Association of School Administrators and an Education Association. These letters represent a narrow group of stakeholders. Most, if not all, are from internal stakeholders. In order to show broad based support for the project, letters from the business community, civic organizations, community organizations and other groups are needed.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)

The applicant stated that the curriculum has been aligned to the Common Core State Standards. This an education reform with promise. Teachers are being trained to create "technology infused blended units of instruction". There is little or no evidence that the applicant has or will provide the specific training for all teachers in technology which

would prepare them to implement a project of this magnitude. It is unclear how students will be trained to use the technology, tools and resources. More evidence is needed.

There is insufficient data presented that high needs students will be targeted for project services. More information is needed. More information about the implementation of a robust set of project activities and standards that will prepare students to be college and career ready is needed. The existing professional relationship with Rowan University has potential to be expanded so that an articulation agreement would be developed, between the school district and Rowan University. The agreement would admit students from the school district in an effort to improve students' chances of mastering course content at their own pace, so that students who qualify, could take college level courses at the University. The foundation is already laid for developing deeper ties with the University because of the current involvement with the Math Department, Science Department, the Language Arts Center and the Literacy Consortium.

There is little or no information that students will be involved in deep learning nor that they will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

The applicant will hire a personalized student learning coordinator. This is a step in the right direction, but there is no evidence presented that the coordinator will be successful. The applicant failed to describe the personalized learning plan that each student will develop. More information is needed on the kind of technology that will be made available to the students and teachers in the project. The applicant failed to write to the criteria. More information is needed on this section of the proposal. More information is especially needed about the data system and the capability of the system to deliver on time data to the project.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)

The applicant stated that "supervisory administrative teams discuss our expectations and operates in teams..." Also there is evidence that some teachers have received some training and more training will be conducted. The applicant failed to present convincing evidence that all participating educators will engage in this training and in professional teams or communities that support their individual and collective capacity to:

- (i) support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time. References are made to personalized learning environments but more descriptive information is needed to understand what the environment will be like and how it will further meet the student needs so they can graduate from high school and be college and career ready. The information provided was insufficient because it was not enough information provided.
- (ii) adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks. The information provided was insufficient because it was not enough details provided. More information is needed about the curriculum and instruction that will be used in the project.
- (iii) frequently measure student progress. References are made to data and data collection in the proposal. There is a statement that data will be used to "develop building goals and professional learning plans". This is insufficient because it does not include enough information to assess.
- (iv) improve teacher and administrator effectiveness by using feedback provided by using the teacher and principal evaluation system. A reference was made to an evaluation tool and a teacher evaluation form was included in the proposal but there was no further description of the evaluation tool that will be used in the project for principals. So it is impossible to determine whether or not it will assist in identifying and supporting effective or highly effective teachers and administrators.

There is little or no evidence that the applicant will:

- (b) ensure that all educators will have access to training on the effective use of technology and tools that will accelerate student learning and prepare them to complete high school and college. There is insufficient information provided about the use of technology in the project because more information is needed.
- (i) ensure that all staff will have access to actionable information that informs them about optimal learning approaches that respond to individual needs and interests. The applicant failed to present information about optimal learning approaches because the proposal did not address optimal learning approaches.

(ii) ensure that the project will have high quality resources, including digital resources, that are related to career related standards. It is unclear that the project will have high quality resources, especially digital resources ,because the applicant failed to provide sufficient information to make an assessment.

(iv) ensure that the project will implement processes and provide tools that meet student needs and provide continuous feedback on the effectiveness of meeting student needs. It is unclear that the project will implement processes and provide tools that meet student needs because there is insufficient evidence to make that assessment

The applicant failed to describe a teacher and administrator evaluation tool that will be used in the project. More information is needed about the evaluation form and evaluation process. There is little or no evidence that the applicant will implement a training system and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. There is little or no evidence that the applicant has a high quality plan for increasing instruction from effective and highly effective teachers. and principals because it is insufficiently described.

The applicant stated that the school district is currently engaged in a "3rd year of a data collection walk through data collection system". This is unclear. An explanation is needed as to what the statement means and how it is related to the proposed project.

The applicant failed to sufficiently address the criteria. There is little or no evidence that the applicant will implement the personalized learning plan. Prior investments are unclear and therefore hard to assess. The learning environment is not conducive to embracing an education reform, such as RTTD. More details are needed.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
(D)(1)		
<p>The applicant failed to adequately address the criteria. More information is needed. An organization chart for central office was included in the application. The central office organization structure is unclear because it does not display typical central office staff. An example is that the organization chart is actually labeled as, the Hammonton School District Professional Learning Committees. More information is needed. School leadership Teams are mentioned but the role the Teams will perform in this project is not adequately described. The Teams will meet monthly. More information is needed. There is little or no evidence that students will have the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. More information is needed. There is little or no evidence that students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. More information is needed.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
(D)(2)		
<p>The applicant failed to adequately address the criteria because the applicant did not provide sufficient and related information. The applicant stated that numerous parent meetings will be held to communicate the project vision. Information about project expectations and progress will be communicated, through open houses, parent meetings, Title I Bilingual Parent Advisory Council meetings, Reading Night. Positive Behavior Events and a March Parent Tech Support Meeting. These are appropriate venues to inform stakeholders about project activities. Even if these meetings will be held, there is no clear evidence that in the meetings, the attendees will receive adequate training to support the project. There is little or no evidence that stakeholders will get necessary training about gaining access to content, tools and other learning resources that will support the implementation of the applicant's proposal. There is little or no evidence that will ensure that parents, educators and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support.</p> <p>Through the "parent portal, parents and students are able to monitor progress and maintain communication with the school through the system". This is a statement that needs further information about the data system and the</p>		

capability of it. From the information provided in the proposal, the hardware and software is not sufficient to support a technology rich environment for students to develop a personalized learning plan. More information is needed.

The applicant stated that there will be a data system used, which is currently in use. Student data are stored in the system. Teachers use the system for social networking and sharing best practices. There is not sufficient information provided in the application to determine that the school district has an interoperable data system. Additional information is needed to make that determination.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (E)(1) The applicant failed to present a plan for a rigorous continuous improvement process. It is little or no reference to a formative evaluation. There is little or no evidence that there will be regular collection and analysis of data by qualified evaluators. A plan for regular and constant feedback is missing because the applicant did not describe an evaluation collection and feedback loop. This is required to identify and correct any problems or improvements that might need to be addressed in order for the project to attain project goals. It is stated in the proposal that "Parents and students are able to to monitor progress and maintain communication with the school through this system". This is not an effective plan for monitoring the entire project. It is unclear who will conduct the ongoing monitoring of the project. The application would be strengthened by providing more details on how the project will be monitored, measured and publicly shared to all stakeholders, not just to the stakeholders in the education community.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (E)(2) The applicant did not present a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. There will be some contact with some stakeholders, but there is no evidence that the contact will constitute real engagement. The applicant will share some project information in open houses, meetings, conferences and on the school district's web site. It is unclear which stakeholders (internal or external) will be in attendance at the open houses, meetings and conferences. It is unclear what type of information will be shared, except for teacher evaluations placed on the web site. There is no rationale stated for publishing teacher evaluations on the web site. There is little or no evidence of how frequently the contact will occur. The proposal would be strengthened by providing more information on the ongoing communication and engagements of stakeholders because that evidence is missing from the proposal.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: (E)(3) The applicant failed to adequately respond to the criteria. The performance measures are not ambitious nor attainable because of insufficient information. The applicant failed to provide a rationale for selecting measures. The applicant provided baseline data for five years of the project. Subgroups were not included, except for low income students. This is useful for laying the foundation for collecting data and analyzing data in subsequent years. The applicant failed to provide a rationale for selecting the measures. The applicant failed to provide convincing information and evidence that the measures used will be rigorous, timely and formative leading information. There is little or no evidence that there will be a plan to review and improve the measures over time. More details are needed.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(4)

The applicant failed to present a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTTD funds used in the project. There is little or no evidence of a formative or summative evaluation. The data and evaluation processes and procedures are not in place and therefore cannot effectively evaluate the effectiveness of RTTD funded activities. For instance the effectiveness of technology cannot be assessed because the technology that will be used in the application is not adequately described. If the technology that will be used in the project is not adequately described one cannot evaluate it. The applicant failed to connect the collected data and the evaluation process. More information is needed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(1)

The applicant identified the RTTD funds that will support the project. The funds are sufficient to support the Project activities. The funds are reasonable based on the high cost of technology, personnel and related costs to conduct a project of this kind. The description of budget items are clearly stated.

The applicant identified funding for the project from the Hammonton Education Foundation. This fund will provide up to \$5,000 to support instruction. This is imprecise because it does not state how much will be contributed in all nor what year of the project the donation will be made. This is not made clear in the project narrative. Also, It is unclear whether the grant is earmarked for a particular part of instruction, In other words what part of instruction will benefit from the grant.

The applicant identified funding for the project from the Bilingual Parent Advisory Community Support to bolster educational opportunities for limited English learners and technical support and support for their families. It is unclear how much this organization will contribute to the project.

The applicant will donate the use of facilities as an in-kind contribution to the project. That contribution will likely support the project. There is no evidence that this in-kind contribution of facilities will be substantial because it is unclear what facilities will be contributed to the project. It is insufficient information to determine the adequacy of the funds. It is unclear what funds will be donated from State and other funds.

The applicant failed to identify strategies that will ensure the long term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

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

(E)(2)

The applicant failed to present a high quality plan for sustainability of project goals. There is little or no evidence that the applicant has a viable plan for sustaining the project. The applicant projects five years of project activities. The funds stated in the proposal will not support the project activities. The plan would be strengthened by showing more substantial funding from diverse sources such as State funds, local government funds and funds from businesses, philanthropic organizations, professional organizations, civic organizations, corporate groups, individuals and other sources. The proposal would be strengthened by developing a strategic financial plan with targets and benchmarks. Potential donors need to be identified, cultivated and asked to contribute.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to describe a coherent and sustainable partnership to support the project. There is insufficient evidence of formed partnerships with public and private organizations such as public health, social service providers, businesses, philanthropists or civic groups. The connection to Rowan University has promise, but there is not enough evidence that the applicant provided sufficient data or information to document that there is a coherent and sustainable partnership to assist the project to successfully attain project goals..

The applicant presented a chart that indicated some desired outcomes for the project. Statements made by the applicant in this regard, include, " increase student achievement " and "increase reading". These statements are not measurable. The application would be strengthened by projecting measurable outcomes.The application would be strengthened by identifying at least 10 population-level desired results for students in the local education agency. More information is needed. There is little or no evidence that there is broad support from families and the community. More tangible evidence is needed. Strong letters of support, substantial financial support and diverse in-kind support would strengthen the proposal.

There is little or no evidence that the current data system has the capacity to track selected indicators.since it is unclear what the capacity is for the current and proposed data system. Because all schools and students in the school district will participate in the project, there is no reason to have a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students.The applicant stated that there was a subgroup of low income students, but little more about the subgroups is presented in the proposal. Because the applicant did not discuss the subgroups with any details, it is not likely that the applicant will target its resources to the subgroups, such as students with various levels of disabilities.There is little or no evidence that the partnership would integrate education and other services. The nearest activity that has potential in that regard, is through the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee, but because no further information was provided beyond a sentence or two, there is no evidence that the partnership will integrate education and social services..

Project goals are not ambitious because the goals are unclear. For the same reasons the goals are not attainable.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to adequately address many project criteria because there is no coherent and comprehensive plan to a personalized learning environment. The applicant failed to show how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. There was not sufficient information to determine what the new learning environment will look like. It is unclear if the new learning environment will significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools and supports for students and educators.There is little or no evidence that the project will prepare students for high school graduation, college entry and enrollment and career readiness. There is an evaluation form presented for teacher performance evaluation, but not one for administrators. Both evaluations are needed because it is necessary to assess whether or not students will have access to effective and highly effective teachers and administrators in the project. The evaluation form needs to be accompanied with a plan to assist teachers to become highly effective by providing ongoing professional development, rich resources, coaching and other strategies that will support educators in assisting students to reach their academic and career goals. Since personalized learning plans for all students is a relatively new education reform initiative, teachers and other educators need ongoing training and support if they will successfully implement it.

Total	210	46
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0196NJ-3 for Hammonton Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a limited reform vision focused on providing 5 additional professional development days to improve its work in ten areas to accelerate student achievement. Two of the areas are related to the core assurance areas of standards and assessments and data systems. The other eight areas support improved instruction and might lead to improvements in the core assurance areas of effective teachers and principals and turning around low-performing schools but do not represent a cohesive or comprehensive vision that builds on the four core assurance areas.</p> <p>Its approach is a phased professional development model working with a new sub-set of teachers from each school over the four years of the grant. While the professional development may be a valuable experience for the teachers and may lead to improvements in the design and delivery of curriculum units, the applicant does not provide a meaningful rationale for this approach and its potential to improve achievement, deepen learning or increase equity. In addition, the links to personalized learning environments and the intended technology infused classroom are ambiguous. Without a clear connection among the proposed activities and the goal of improved student achievement, the approach is not credible.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe the classroom experience for students and teachers in personalized learning environments. The applicant provides a limited description of some of the professional development activities a teacher might engage in but fails to document how its approach will actually work at the classroom level.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant intends to work in all schools in the district phasing in teachers over the 4 years of the grant. It intends to select the first cohort of teachers based on their willingness and abilities, a selection process for the following cohorts is not provided. The applicant does not describe the process or definitions it will use to identify either "willingness" or "ability" of the first cohort of teachers. Given that these teachers will eventually become the trainers within their schools, additional information on the selection process is necessary. Since this project is focusing on training teachers in specific cohorts over the course of the grant, the applicant's failure to describe its process for selecting cohort participants as well as its failure to describe how the cohort process will reach all teachers will limit the plan's impact. It is difficult to know how the project will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation.</p> <p>All four schools in the district meet the competition requirements with an overall poverty rate of 43%. The applicant provides appropriate data on each of the participating schools, including the number of students and educators to be included in the project and the raw and percentage numbers of students from low income families.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a very limited plan describing how the reform proposal will reach its outcome goals. The applicant presents three goals for the first cohort of teachers which will be achieved over three grant years. The goals reflect general statements on the design of standards based units, extending teacher learning to enhance his/her practice and, in year three, an action research project to identify additional improvements and modifications. These three goals are focused on specific activities and do not include timelines and deliverables with only a vague identification of responsible parties. The plan does not address the goals and activities of the subsequent cohorts or how the project will spread to all teachers within the district given its phase-in model. This is not a sufficient in-depth plan that will help the applicant reach its</p>		

outcome goals.

It should be noted that the applicant does include a strategic plan that focuses on student achievement and technology that provides limited information on the major activities, timelines, and indicators of success over 5 years. This plan does not provide sufficient information in terms of strategies or timelines to measure its adequacy.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that it intends to reach and exceed ESEA targets in math and language arts through its ambitious yet achievable annual goals as follows:

- The HSPA language arts summative assessment goals are trending upward for the subgroups enrolled in the participating schools with the exception of white students which the applicant proposes a decreasing goal of somewhat more than 6% over the life of the grant.
- The HSPA math summative assessment goals are increasing over time for all subgroups at varying rates but again with white student performance decreasing.
- NJASK assessments at the middle school level in math and language arts have a more predictive pattern with all groups progressing over time.
- NJASK assessments at the elementary level follow the goals of the middle school assessments with all groups progressing over time.

It is not clear in the application if the baseline data presented as part of the performance goals matches the data presented as part of the applicant's analysis of results on NJASK. For example, the performance starting point appears to be a combination of scores for grades 6,7,and 8 while individual data are presented for grades 6, 7, and 8. The applicant does not provide an explanation for these differences nor its methodology for determining the baselines in the mixed grades.

The performance gaps are presented for the District Factor Group but do not provide sufficient information on the specific gaps. In addition, the applicant fails to provide annual goals for decreasing the achievement gaps.

As for graduation rates, the applicant has set a moderate goal of approximately 2% per year across all groups over the life of the project. It is unclear why the applicant did not propose a more ambitious yet achievable goal. A similar moderate increase is proposed for college enrollment rates without an adequate rationale.

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	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a mixed picture of student growth over the past three years. It does not explain why 4 years of data are presented only at the high school level. Given the District's access to year to year assessments, the lack of specific charts that show a cohort of students moving through the system over the years does not support its claim that achievement levels rise, or have risen, as students progress through the system.

The data from the state assessments included in the application indicate:

- At the third grade level, math scores have risen and fallen across the general population with no clear growth across any of the subgroups but are generally stable at a reasonable level. Language arts scores have risen from what appears to be a very low point in 2010 to a current rate of 60% passing when all students are averaged together. Sub-group results vary considerably.
- Fourth grade math and language arts scores have dropped across all groups.
- Fifth grade scores have risen in math and language arts.
- Sixth grade math and language arts have risen.
- Seventh grade math has risen slightly while language arts has dropped.
- Eighth grade math and language arts passing rates drop over time.
- High school math and language arts passing rates indicate the same mixed results over 4 years with a slight increase in 2012 results in both areas.
- Improvements in high school graduation rates and college enrollment are not addressed.

The performance gap data presented in the application presents a similar mixed picture with little indication that performance gaps have consistently closed over the last four years.

The applicant cites its restructuring of the school governance based on the retirement of the building principal and superintendent as indicators of ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest performing schools. The applicant fails to provide a sufficient description of the actual reform it undertook as a result of or in addition to the replacement of retiring personnel.

The applicant provides a chart showing the meetings of its professional learning communities (PLCs) as well as a current list with membership and meeting frequency to demonstrate how it makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. The descriptive information does not include how these various groups use student performance data to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. While the purpose of some of these groups includes discussing instructional issues, there is no specific reference to student performance data as the basis for this work.

There is one group which includes parents and community members, School Advisory Council, whose purpose includes providing stakeholders with current school information. The description of the group does not include student performance data beyond the very general statement of school information. Without an explicit process for making student performance data available, it is unclear how the applicant makes performance data available and useful to parents and students.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant makes school level expenditure data available at the Superintendent's office. It presents no additional methods of making these data available or known to its constituencies. This is not a proactive approach and will not lead to a high level of transparency without additional communication with its community.

The applicant provides a list of the websites that the data are found on and a list of specific salaries of teachers within the district but does not indicate how it makes this information available other than the District office. It does not describe the extent to which it makes the availability of these data known to the public.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that it has an adequate resources and autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments. It provides statements on the conditions of its buildings, staff motivation, and adequacy of local funding. The applicant does not provide any specific evidence in support of those statements.

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

The applicant does not discuss how any key groups were involved in the development of the RTT-D proposal or how the proposal might have been modified based on that engagement. The applicant states that its Board of Education has reviewed and supported the proposal, students and parents will review it, and that staff have been informed. This does not indicate either a high level engagement or meaningful participation on the part of stakeholders on the development of the application. There is a brief mention of a strategic planning process undertaken during the winter and spring that included the goals of this project but there is no specific discussion of the level of stakeholder engagement in that process.

This is a collective bargaining district and the head of the teacher's union has signed off on the application. There is, however, no evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposal from teachers in the participating schools.

There are four letters of support in the application from the District's Home and School Association, Supervisor's Association, Association of School Administrators, and the President of the Education Association. There are no letters from any key stakeholder organization outside the school community. It is unclear if any organization outside the school groups mentioned were engaged in the development of the application.

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

	Available	Score

(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a minimal plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment with supports for all students to graduate college- and career-ready. The District’s Strategic Plan developed in April 2013 provides a very limited description of goals, activities and strategies, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties focused on achievement and technology.</p> <p>a) The applicant’s strategies and activities in support of engaging learners lacks a focus on helping students understand how learning is related to meeting their goals as well as a clear link to college- and career-ready standards. The applicant’s college and career planning tool is not described in sufficient detail to know if it provides a strategy for students to understand how to structure their learning and a data based process to measure their progress.</p> <p>The applicant does not articulate the specific activities it intends to implement to deepen student learning or develop or improve non-cognitive skills and traits. The applicant does not address access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives with the exception of an email project with foreign students.</p> <p>b) The applicant’s approach to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development is not addressed beyond a very brief mention of problem-based learning with teacher designed authentic learning units. The applicant does not provide a sufficient description of how these units are personalized for students nor their alignment with college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements. In addition, the applicant does not address how it will ensure that these units are high quality instructional activities.</p> <p>The applicant provides a limited description of the range and variety of high quality instructional units it intends to implement beyond its early reading programs which do appear to be effective. The applicant cites achievement data indicating that approximately half of their pre-K students are currently reading on grade level. However, it is unclear in the application how much progress that represents.</p> <p>The applicant does not address how it will provide regular feedback beyond a mention of formative assessments the timing and alignment of which is not explained. The applicant does cite two days of training it had in Fall 2012 in data-driven processes to focus instruction but it does not discuss how that training is being used at the student, teacher, classroom, school, or district level to determine mastery of standards or progress toward graduation. It does provide an appropriate goal for this data training.</p> <p>The applicant intends to have a personalized learning coordinator to ensure that students are updating and reviewing their goals but it does not provide a framework for this strategy including the content, instructional approaches, and supports it will provide to students.</p> <p>The applicant has trained teachers in sheltered instruction observation protocols for its English language learners but does not explain how the protocols are being used. The applicant does not discuss its current or proposed strategies for students with disabilities.</p> <p>c) Training and support for students to help them understand, manage, and track their learning is not addressed.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The goal of applicant’s RTT-D proposal is to provide 5 additional days of professional development to improve instruction. The plan to implement that goal is limited to a brief description of five activities, with a basic timeline, and responsible parties. It is difficult to determine given the level of detail provided in the application if this plan will lead to the desired outcomes of improving instruction and supporting student progress toward meeting college-and career-ready standards.</p> <p>a) The applicant does not address personalized learning environments per se but rather proposes problem-based learning that students choose the “most appealing, stimulating learning path.” It is unclear in the application how teachers will actually adapt content and instruction for students to select the most appropriate learning path to meet their academic needs. Problem-based learning may be one of the supports but it is not comprehensive enough to meet the outcome goal.</p> <p>The applicant also proposes its district walk-through as an example of frequently measuring student progress. However, the document included in the application focuses on teacher behavior rather than using student data to inform the individual and collective practice of educators. The form does include evidence of formative assessments as part of the observed/not observed criteria but does not describe how this criterion will be used to improve student outcomes.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to use its current teacher and principal evaluation system rather than the one defined in the RTT-D</p>		
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application. However, the applicant's proposed evaluation system does not include student growth measures as a significant factor. As valuable as the system might be for gauging classroom behaviors, it does not meet the requirements of RTT-D.

b) The applicant intends to implement data teams to capture student data and adjust instructional strategies. The implementation of these teams does not appear to be included in the RTT-D plan. The applicant does describe how running records are used in its K-5 reading classrooms but does not provide examples beyond this one content area and one grade span.

The applicant does propose to purchase a formative and summative assessment tool, Mastery Connect, to monitor instruction and student progress. The applicant does not provide sufficient information on the specifications of this product, its usefulness, alignment with standards and instructional processes, or its ease of use to know if it will support student progress or match district and state requirements.

c) It is unclear in the application how the applicant intends to achieve an effective learning environment to meet individual student needs and accelerate student progress. The applicant provides very limited information beyond the additional 5 days of professional development and a few instructional strategies to support school leaders and leadership teams. The agenda from the new teacher training does not indicate how it actually builds an effective learning environment in one day of training.

The applicant does not address how it uses or will use the information from its teacher evaluations to improve effectiveness. There are elements in the current system that might be used to address climate and culture but the applicant does not address their use.

d) The applicant's plan to increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers is anchored in the professional development it intends to provide. However, given that it is using a measure that does not include student growth as a significant factor, the plan fails to account for the actual number of teachers who do not meet the required definition.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	4
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant presents a limited plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. The plan focuses on providing professional development with one goal, limited strategies and activities, and a vague timeline. Basic information on responsible parties is included.</p> <p>a) The applicant does provide an organization chart for the district that indicates a team structure to facilitate communication and problem solving. It does not, however, indicate the process it uses to identify issues and concerns at the school or classroom level or the range and extent of support services provided at the different organizational levels. In addition, the applicant does not address the degree of autonomy and flexibility available at the site level.</p> <p>The applicant does indicate that students are provided the opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and multiple ways but it is unclear if and when that happens currently or if it will be part of the new project. The applicant provides few details on how this actually works for students and whether or not credit is available for demonstrating mastery.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that special education and ESL/bilingual teachers are included in curriculum review and development projects but does not provide details on the how this work is adapted or made accessible to all students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant presents a very limited plan to ensure that the District and schools support personalized learning. The applicant does not provide sufficient information on its goals, strategies, timelines, deliverables, or responsible parties to evaluate the adequacy of its approach. The applicant describes the number of parent meetings it holds over the course of year with specific reference to a Parent Technical Support meeting for Bilingual parents.</p> <p>The applicant states that it has a data system that houses all student data and is accessible through a parent portal through which they can monitor progress and communicate with the school. This data system also contains teacher</p>		

grades and lesson plans. While the applicant states that the Mastery Connect component may increase communication among teachers, it provides no evidence that any of its current or planned systems will be used to support project implementation.

The applicant does not address how it ensures that:

- all participating students have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources;
- students, parent, educators and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support; and
- interoperability of its systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	2
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not present a high-quality plan for implementing a continuous improvement process to provide timely and regular feedback and make critical improvements to its plan. The process included in the application provides for a one-day quarterly meeting of teachers to discuss student achievement, instructional strategies, technology tools, and instructional materials. While these meetings may help teachers better understand their work, it will not provide timely or regular feedback on progress toward project goals as well as opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. It is also unclear in the application how the teacher developed pre/post tests will actually add to understanding the implementation of the project.</p> <p>The applicant does not address how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share the quality of its investments in clear or high-quality manner.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not present a high-quality plan for on-going communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant does not intend to engage in any additional communication strategies or activities beyond its poorly explained and defined outreach meetings, articulation with receiving districts, and parent meetings. Communication with teachers will be through the professional learning communities. The applicant does not provide for any proactive communication to engage its communities with this project.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has proposed a series of performance measures that vary in their quality and whether or not they are achievable and ambitious. The applicant does not consistently provide a rationale for selecting the performance measures. They measures are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The two teacher and principal effectiveness measures do not use the RTT-D definition but a substitute measure which does not include student growth as a significant factor. In addition, the effective measure should decrease as the highly effective percentage increases. The goal of 95% effective and highly effective is unrealistic if the correct definition were used. 2. The performance measure for grades 1-3 reading appears to be administering an assessment rather than the results of that assessment. The Brigand Screening is also unclear in terms of which screening tool, its purpose, and the meaning of its results. 3. The 2nd grade performance measure for Intervention and Referral is unclear in terms of its purpose and the meaning of reducing one student per year. 4. The math achievement level of 90% is appropriate and achievable given current performance levels. 5. The performance measure for attendance and academic progress recognition lacks an adequate explanation as to its validity as an "on-track" indicator. 6. The performance measure for the benchmark assessment aligned with the state assessments for language arts and math is appropriate, ambitious and achievable. It is unclear why special education students were not included as a subgroup. 		

7. The increase in the student attendance measure (94.76 to 95.5 over four years) is not very ambitious given the current attendance rates.
8. The reading on grade level for grades 4 and 5 is ambitious and achievable.
9. The math performance measure for grades 4 and 5 is ambitious and achievable.
10. The FAFSA indicator might better focus on completing the form rather than on the number of parents contacted as an accurate measure of program performance.
11. The applicant does not indicate what its on-track indicator is for grades 9-12 and a 2% change is difficult to understand and subgroup data is not included.
12. Student growth on pre/post tests is unclear; teacher "SGO's" need explaining.
13. The use of a planning tool is difficult to understand as a performance measure especially given its relationship to retention in HPE.
14. The biology measure is achievable and ambitious and includes all sub-groups.
15. The attendance measure at the high school level is appropriate, achievable, and ambitious.

Taken as a whole the performance measures present a very uneven picture of this RTT-D project and its goals. The measures are not adequately explained, nor is there an articulated process for reviewing and improving the measure.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not have a high-quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the project. It provides little in the area of strategies, no timeline, no deliverables, and no direct responsible party. The applicant's approach of using its teacher effectiveness rubric to evaluate all aspects of the project is inadequate to rigorously evaluate the program. The applicant does not propose a process to systematize its use nor to ensure its rigor.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a reasonable budget based on the scope of the project which is aligned with its goals and activities. The applicant identifies all the funds that will support the project including RTT-D, local budget, the school foundation and the Home School Association.

The budget is comparatively low given the number of students in the District but is sufficient for the limited scope of the project. The RTT-D funds will be used to provide 5 extra days to the calendar for all instructional staff and to pay for the consultants to provide professional development. It is unclear how five extra days of teacher time per year will have the level of impact envisioned by the District.

While the applicant justifies the request on the scale-up of the project within the district and how it will build the capacity of teachers to do this work within the school year and current professional development opportunities, it is difficult to determine if that one time investment of 20 days total across four years will actually build personalized learning environments.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not address this criteria or provide a high quality plan for sustaining the project's goals after the term of the grant. While it argues that only one small cost will continue, it fails to address how the project itself will be sustained. The applicant provides no analysis of possible future investments or a budget and plan to support the long term goals of this project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant briefly describes a partnership it has formed to provide before and after care programs for students in grades PK-5. The applicant describes the program results in terms of increased reading achievement based on after-school tutoring. The performance measures included with the competitive preference priority, however, focus on the language proficiency of English language learners not on increased reading skills. The relationship between this minimally described partnership and the performance measures is lacking. The applicant does not provide any descriptive information on the partnership that indicates its relationship to its RTT-D plan, how the project will integrate its services, build the capacity of staff in participating schools, or any other information that might explain the scope of the project.</p> <p>The applicant also mentions two other partnerships with the its Home School Association and Education Foundation but provides no additional details including performance measures to indicate how or why these two briefly mentioned organizations meet the requirements for a Competitive Preference Priority.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's minimal plan to provide 5 additional professional days to its school calendar does not coherently or comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas, create personalized learning environments, support students and teachers, or accelerate student achievement. The applicant is proposing a minor change in its school calendar without providing a high quality plan to use those days to significantly improve teaching and learning.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant did not adequately address many of the components required of an RTT-D plan including the use of technology, improving instructional resources, and engaging stakeholders in the process.</p>		

Total	210	52
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