



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0060TX-1 for Harlingen CISD

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

It is to **some extent** that the applicant has set forth a reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. In this regard, emphasis would be placed on knowledge acquisition as well as knowledge and skills integration across multiple disciplines. Whereas it was mentioned that the reform builds on the four core educational assurances, there was no narrative to support such a claim. The Kuder career planning system was fully discussed versus building on the four educational assurances.

The goal articulated clearly focuses on "making the public schools better for Texas children through the vision of an innovative instructional program." This is a lofty and **unachievable** goal, given the **spare** documentation. In fact, the reform vision proposed is not geared at serving ALL children in Texas. Rather, it is geared at Harlingen CISD that serves 28 campuses. Furthermore, the approaches outlined are not credible in serving all children in Texas.

How student learning will be accelerated was not fully discussed by the applicant. 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 do not simply happen in any given school district. Rather resources have to be identified, procured and allocated.

Four additional measurable goals were listed. However, concrete strategies for goal achievement were blatantly missing from the narrative. Simply adding a quote verbatim from the Secretary of State, with no analysis of the quote did not add any value to the goals outlined.

To **some** extent a **weak** description of what the classroom experience would be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments was provided. For example, it was evidenced that students would cycle through a five-year College and Career Ready Intervention. This intervention starts in elementary school, spans high school and takes students to post-secondary institution of choice. It is a workable strategy to start focussing students early from the elementary grades to help them get ready for college. This focus would take place in a bi-cultural and bi-literacy academic setting. It is both relevant and feasible to meet students where they are in providing the personalized learning environment in a bi-cultural and bi-literacy manner. After all, the students being served come from a bi-cultural and bi-literacy backgrounds. Clearly documented was the fact that students would be offered a vehicle that was user friendly for them to achieve academic success in the four core academic areas.

In sum, a **weak** attempt was made to provide a reform vision that was of a **low-quality** and by no means considered to be comprehensive and coherent. Three separate visions were advanced each differing in magnitude and scope. The goals outlined were somewhat measurable with no indication regarding how they would be accomplished. Having clarified some aspects of the reform vision while leaving out some information led to gaps and an inconsistent and incoherent reform vision. Due to the ebbs and flow in the vision, a **mid-range** score was achieved.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>It is to <b>some extent</b> the applicant has outlined feasible approaches to implementing its reform proposal, that will be of a high-quality for LEA and school-level implementation.</p> <p><i>First</i>, an incomplete description of the process that the applicant used to select the 28 schools to be served was advanced. In the bid to lead the Harlingen CISD schools in a "Transformational Journey" all schools in the district became part of the reform. No justification was provided to strengthen the need for funding. However, all the schools in the district were cited as being economically disadvantaged. Thus, being economically disadvantaged makes the application collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.</p> <p><i>Second</i>, a complete list of the schools that will participate in grant activities are made available. There is a total of 28 schools inclusive of 17 elementary, 5 middle and 6 secondary schools.</p> <p><i>Third</i>, the total number of participating students 12,458 were listed and identified as coming from economically disadvantaged homes and 75% from low-income families. High-need students were not mentioned. Students were identified as being bi-cultural and bi-literacy but not labeled as high-needs. As a result, the evidence does not show students as being high-needs. This is one of the requirements for funding to be awarded to the district. Over 350 educators were identified as serving the school district. This number of educators is proportionate to the number of students to be served.</p> <p>In sum, a <b>weak</b> attempt was made to explain the applicant's approach to implementation. Unfortunately, the description fell short due to missing information. Hence, this criterion has earned a mid-range score.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>A <b>very scant</b> attempt was made to address how the reform proposal would be scaled-up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.</p> <p>Missing from the discourse was <b>strong</b> and <b>convincing</b> arguments to support the overall of goals of the project. Theories of change model was advanced as the theoretical underpinning for implementation of personalized instruction. However, this model was not used appropriately to clearly delineate how it would help with goal attainment. Furthermore, the model was not used effectively to show how student learning outcomes would be improved for the students at Harlingen CISD.</p> <p>Overall, this criterion earned a <b>low-range</b> score because the narrative did not support LEA-wide reform and change. This was not a high-quality plan because essential elements were missing. These elements include: having realistic timelines; achievable outcomes and feasible performance measures. Without these measures in place it is to a very <b>low-extent</b> that the applicant provided evidence supporting a high-quality plan. This plan in general is weak.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>It is to a <b>limited extent</b> to which the applicant's vision as outlined is this aspect of the narrative is likely to result in improved student learning. <i>First</i>, data indicating students' performance on summative assessments in terms of students' proficiency status and growth were not provided as required in table form. <i>Second</i>, specific methodology for decreasing the achievement gap specified for each assessed grade in the core educational assurances also was missing from the table. <i>Third</i>, some data was provided that focused on improving graduation rates over time.</p>		

It is worth knowing that Harlingen CISD high schools do have a high graduation rates of 80% or greater in all but one of the high schools in the district. The proposed increase in graduation rate of 3%-5% over the 4 year period is **modest** and achievable. At Key Academy, which has the lowest graduation rate, a modest 2.9% increase is projected. This is achievable. Interestingly, the subgroup for all these high school is being economically disadvantaged. Missing from the narrative was a justification for the low graduation rate at Keyes . A crucial question to be answered was what are the factors that limit the high school graduation rate to just above 50%, when compared to other schools in the district having 80% and above graduation rates? *Finally*, data addressing college enrollment as well post secondary degree attainment were missing for the table documentation.

In sum, the applicant was not able to clearly demonstrate how the vision of Harlingen CISD would clearly impact student learning and performance and/or increase equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals. Having a **poor** explanation of how the outlined goals would be measured there is no evidence that the goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup. Furthermore, **sparse** to no data were provided that clearly delineates summative assessments used; how the current achievement gap would be decreased; impact on graduation rates; college enrollment or postsecondary degree attainment. This **lack of data** has resulted in this criterion earning a low-range score. This does not meet the expectations of a high-quality plan.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	15	3
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>It is to a <b>limited extent</b> to which Harlingen LEA has demonstrated a track record of success. Limited evidence was provided that showed this school district had some experiences with federally funded grantees in the past.</p> <p>A description that demonstrates the applicant’s ability to: improve student learning outcomes; close the achievement gap; raise student achievement; increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment were missing from the narrative. What was mentioned was "we have produced and sustained impressive student achievement gains." No evidence of this sustained student achievement gains was produced.</p> <p>Furthermore, evidence pointing to the achievement of ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or in its low-performing schools also was missing. Students' performance data was said to be available to students, educators and parents based on the parallel management strategy called eSchool Plus. When students are flagged, reports are then generated and an audit generated to closely monitor the students performance. What was missing from the narrative was any explanation detailing the 'triggers' for a student to be flagged. In addition, no evidence was provided to substantiate how the audit would inform and lead to improved participation, instruction, and services.</p> <p>In sum, due to the sparse data presented, this criterion has earned a <b>low-ranging</b> score.</p>		

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	5	3
---	---	---

<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>It is to a <b>moderate</b> extent that Harlingen CISD demonstrated evidence of some level of transparency in their processes, practices, and investments. Evidence in the application includes a list of actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff. The actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff was not provided. Conversely, the actual</p>		

personnel salaries at the school level for teachers was provided. No documentation of the actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level was provided.

In sum, this criterion earned a **mid-range** score because some of the evidences asked for were furnished. The applicant has indicated that the community has 24/7 access to the information on the district website. Having the information published on the website constitutes a high-level of transparency for anyone to access.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

No attempt was made to demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments at Harlingen CISD. Hence, no score was earned for this criterion. No reference was made throughout the application to the thestate's context for implementation. Applicants were asked to provide such information explicitly. There is no documentation to provide evidence that there is any degree of autonomy. This section did not exist and throughtot the application, evidence was not provided with regards to autonomy.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

It is to a **very low-extent** to which Harlingen CISD has demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. Stakeholders mentioned in the application were parents, educators, schools in the region and the Dual Language Training Institute.

There was no data evidenced that substantiated: (a) How students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal. No mention was made regarding collective bargaining or the lack thereof; indicators of teacher support across the district also was missing. (b) There were no letters of support from any stakeholding groups mentioned in the proposal or in the appendix.

In sum, this criterion earned a **low-range score** because evidence to support each sub-category was missing.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

It is to a **low-extent** to which the applicant has provided a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college and/or career-ready. This plan is **inadequate** and does not include effective approaches to implementing research-based instructional strategies for all participating students. The **mediocre** plan advanced does not indicate an ability to enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. This **low-quality** plan does not advance evidences that support improvement in college and/or career-ready graduation requirements. The data provided is not convincing that it has the capacity to accelerate learning through proven support strategies for each student to be served.

Even with some high profile researchers names and concepts were included in this section of the application, the narrative was **weak**. This weakness resulted from the **vague** vision and goals of the project were not evident nor sustained throughout the proposal.

*First*, all students with the support of parents and educators would understand their role as being key in their own educational journey. Evidence was not provided to elucidate such by specifically indicating how students would take ownership and responsibility for learning. Furthermore, evidence was lacking to support student's ability to be involved in deep critical and divergent problem-solving activities. The narrative was void of information showing how students would be asked to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. Very little evidence was ; provided that corroborated that true access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives existed in this plan. In essence, the narrative fell short in providing a convincing argument that would indicate the ability for the personalized learning plan envisioned to motivate and deepen each student's learning, by helping them to master critical academic content and develop skills that will make them college and/or career ready. The narrative was inadequate in these respects. In fact, Problem Based Learning (PBL) was discussed in this criterion of the narrative, but no attempt was made to link this research-based proven strategy to the needs of the bi-cultural and bi-literacy students served in the Harlingen CISD.

*Second*, furthermore, it was not illustrated that with the support of parents and educators each student had true access to: a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals; a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments; high-quality content, including digital learning content appropriate and fully aligned with college and/or career-ready standards that lead to the meeting of graduation requirements. This **low-quality** plan did not explicitly address ongoing and regular feedback that was built on frequently updated individual student data in order to determine progress toward mastery. The narrative also was short on making personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge skills and available content, instructional approaches, and supports that provide the needed accommodations and high-quality strategies for the high-need students served.

*Third*, the mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students were identified as the Kuder system, family engagement activities, as well as the AVID system designed to help students understand why they need to be in school, what they need to achieve their goals and how to learn. The extent to which the students truly understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning was not clearly supported in this narrative.

Because so few of the components in this criterion were addressed in an inadequate manner, a **low-range** score was earned. The elements of a high-quality plan were not present. Timelines were vague, performance measures not feasible and learning outcomes unachievable.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

It is to a **low-extent** that the applicant has a plan (not high quality) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. This plan did not provide convincing evidence of a sustained and rigorous course of study needed to prepare the second generation high-needs students served in the Harlingen CIDS.

Specifically, the approach to teaching and leading was **mediocre** because the narrative was lacking in providing students with the knowledge and skills to improve instruction and increase their capacity and progress toward meeting college and/or career-ready standards. Based on the narrative, full implementation of a personalized learning and teaching for all students was not attainable. This was because a budget was not provided that showed the requested funds to be used to purchase and support a personalized learning system.

There was **little evidence** that participating educators would be engaged in "quality and

uniformed" professional development activities. These terms were not defined, hence, it is hard to ascertain what is meant by quality and uniform professional development activities. Furthermore, **little evidence** was provided that showed support for the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs; the ability of educators to adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches; no timelines for frequent measures of student progress toward meeting college and/or career-ready standards; a reliable system to evaluate and improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness also was lacking.

(b) Albeit, **some evidence** was provided indicating that participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress such as the Kuder system. An actionable aspect of the tools was a flagging system that was not clearly explained. There was no evidence of high-quality learning resources presented.

(c) Evidence was **lacking** that fully supported all participating school leaders and school leadership teams having training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable success. The narrative was inadequate to delineate how an effective structure was developed for an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college and/or career-ready standards.

Finally, the applicant did not provide a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas that need added help. Because of the lack of sufficient evidence in this criterion, a **low-range score** was earned. The essential elements of a high-quality plan clearly were missing from the narrative.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	15	0
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> It is to <b>no extent</b> that the applicant has provided a high-quality plan that supports project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system with the support and resources needed. This criterion was not addressed in the application. Hence, an evaluative judgment cannot be furnished. Because this criterion was <b>not addressed</b> , the applicant earned no score.		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	10	0
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> It is to <b>no extent</b> that the applicant has provided a high-quality plan to support LEA and school infrastructure. This criterion was not addressed in the application. Hence, an evaluative judgment cannot be furnished. Because this criterion was not addressed, the applicant earned no score for this criterion.		

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	15	0

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has not evidenced a high-quality plan for implementing a **rigorous** continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. Because there was no evidence to support this criterion, a **low-range** score of zero was earned. No mention was made of specifically how the applicant plans to measure, monitor and share in a public manner the quality of the investments sought. In fact, no funding was asked for.

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

5

0

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

A high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders was not provided by the Harlingen CISD. In fact, no plan for ongoing communication and engagement has been provided. Because of the **lack** of a plan, a low range score of zero was earned.

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

5

0

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

It is to **no** extent that the applicant provided a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans. There were **no** ambitious yet achievable performance measures addressed based on subgroups; **no** annual targets for the applicant-proposed performance measures; **no** rationale for selecting any measures; **no** indication of how each measure would provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and **no** plan indicating how a review would be conducted to improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. Because this criterion was (BLANK) not addressed, a low-range score of zero was earned.

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

5

1

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

It is to a very **low** extent that the applicant provided any evidence for evaluating the effectiveness of the personalize learning system proposed. The narration indicted that both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection would be used to obtain data for the experimental design to be implemented. Missing for this narrative, was a clear plan of how the experimental groups would be determined for only the elementary schools. Furthermore, the process for determining which group would get the treatment versus non-treatment would be beneficial in this proposal. No plan was advanced addressing professional development and activities that employ technology. Hence, this plan for continuous improvement has fallen short and is not of a high-quality. Because of crucial and critical elements including: accountability; realistic timelines, measurable performance measures; and feasible student learning outcomes were all missing, this has resulted in a **low range** score.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	10	0

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

No budget has been asked for to fund this project. All that has been mentioned is "the requested amount of \$XXX for this four year project...is reasonable, cost-effective and adequate to support project goals." With no dollar amounts to evaluate, this criterion has earned a **low-range** score of zero.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Having <b>no</b> budget dollars requested to fund this project, there is <b>no</b> basis supporting the project's ability to sustain itself. Therefore, the probability of self-sustenance is zero. There is <b>no</b> indication of support from other sources, <b>no</b> pre or post budget, <b>no</b> estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant. With <b>no</b> dollar amounts to evaluate, this criterion has also earned a low-range score of zero. A high-quality plan was not described. Therefore, there were no plans in place, timelines, outcomes or performance measures outlined in the narrative.</p>		

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

Competitive Preference Priority was not met in this **low-quality** application.

*First*, the applicant did not provide a consistent argument that demonstrated a coherent and sustainable partnership to support the personalized learning environment envisioned. Partnerships with private and public sector agencies were not evidences as being established. In fact, there were no letters of support from any organizations to support this application.

*Second*, the applicant provided few weak population-level desired results for the students in the consortium. The desire results were not fully aligned with the overall goals and vision of the proposal. The educational results and outcomes were not specific or ambitious to accelerate student learning. It was mentioned that children should leave 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading at or above the grade level but the strategies in place for such to happen were weak and insufficient. Furthermore, family and community supports were missing from the applicant's plan.

*Third*, plans to track selected indicators for student progress using the Kuder system was limiting. A clear plan for helping students with disabilities, ELA learners, mobile students or children living in poverty was missing. There were no effective strategies in place that could be used to scale-up the model beyond participating students. Mechanisms for improving results over time were vague and inadequate.

*Fourth*, there was no plan advanced for how partnership within schools to provide integrated services for students would be addressed. No partnership was described to indicate how students' behavioral and social needs would be met. Services for acculturation of immigrants and refugees were not described.

*Fifth*, this applicant did not provide evidence showing how partnership and LEA would build capacity of staff to include the provision of relevant tools and resources. The strategy for assessing the needs and assets of students were none existent. The needs of the school and community were not clearly identified or aligned with project goals. The decision making process addressing the selection, implementation, and evaluation of the infrastructure was not defined. There was no mention of how parents and families would be engaged beyond the rudimentary parent teacher conference. A **weak** plan was advanced indicating how the personalized learning environment would be assessed.

*Sixth*, the performance measures advanced were not ambitious. Furthermore, effective strategies were not in place that would advance the weak performance measures listed.

In sum, the Competitive Preference Priority was **NOT** met in this application because of **missing** data, goals that were not ambitious or achievable, poor performance measures, weak learning outcomes and vague timelines.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The Harlingen CISD application, did not coherently or comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create an effective learning environment for the bi-cultural and bi-literacy students they serve. From the outset of the proposal, the four educational assurances were not used to anchor the plans. As a result, the plan put forth was: **weak and of a low-quality**; lacking in evidence that support its own vision and goals; poorly designed to significantly improve learning and teaching in general; inadequate to provide the strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and/or career-ready standards; not fully conceptualized to effectively accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; does not increase the effectiveness of educators; provided very little access that is restricted to the most effective educators; does not clearly shows how achievement gaps across student groups would be decreased; and does not show unequivocally how the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers would be increased. Because of all the short comings listed above, this applicant has **NOT MET** Absolute Priority 1.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>35</b>
--------------	------------	-----------



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0060TX-2 for Harlingen CISD

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

In section A(1) the applicant establishes a vision that is rooted in the four core educational assurance areas because it describes its use of assessment and data systems and its efforts to recruit, develop, and retain educators. The applicant addresses less effectively how it has (or will) turn around its lowest achieving schools because the applicant indicates it will turn around its lowest-achieving schools, accelerate students achievement, and improve graduation rates with the use of career clusters. However, the applicant does not convincingly demonstrate that the use of career clusters will turn around its lowest performing schools because it does not directly address the correlation between using career clusters and producing higher achievement.

The district demonstrates its sound use of assessments because it promotes a combination of summative assessments, such as the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR); formative assessments, such as the district's curriculum assessments; and project-based learning experiences. The district takes a comprehensive approach to

implementing standards because it adheres to state standards but also explores the alignment of its curriculum and assessments with the Common Core State Standards.

The district appropriately uses digital data systems to assess student growth and to inform educators because it employs TANGO, which integrates benchmark attainment and progress monitoring. The district tracks student progress and achievement through additional measures because it also uses portfolios that contain student work, transcripts, and assessment results.

The applicant uses various approaches to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers because it offers digitally-based staff development and technology-based communities as well as extra stipend pay to fill hard-to-staff positions. Similarly, the district uses various evaluation strategies to develop teachers because principals perform walk-throughs and teachers engage in self-assessments as well as peer-teacher observations.

In response to A(1)(a), the applicant reasonably explains how the district will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning through the four components of its vision because the components address college- and career-readiness, dual language efforts, rigorous curriculum design, and extended educational opportunities for students who have dropped out. The applicant also demonstrates how it will personalize learning because it will utilize a career-planning system called Kuder to expand students' awareness of postsecondary options and to explore career choices. The applicant appropriately justifies the use of Kuder because it asserts that students who are aware of postsecondary options are more likely to consider college "an achievable goal." The district's reliance on career exploration to individualize and personalize students' learning experiences is reasonable to a certain extent because forward thinking will keep students focused on their goals; however, the district's requirement that young students declare career pathways in elementary school may lead to a discrepancy between comprehensive student academic preparation and personalized learning environments because young students will need a great deal of support if they are to choose their career paths when they are young, and the applicant does not provide convincing evidence that it will counsel students through this decision-making process.

The applicant convincingly explains how it will deepen student learning experiences because it will increase students' access to Advanced Placement courses and will expand its AVID program. Additionally, teachers will receive professional development opportunities to help them support students in their pursuit of rigorous coursework and to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students. The applicant also provides evidence that its plan will support "rigorous, relevant, and results-drive Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs" because student will have opportunities to gain "industry certifications or licensure and postsecondary certificates or degrees" as high school students, and the district will facilitate CTE exploration by establishing a 9th grade academy.

In response to A(1)(c), the applicant articulates what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers because it documents various types of classroom environments. Teachers and students will benefit from a combination of teaching/learning experiences that are structured around the components of dual language and early literacy academies; college- and career-readiness, college connections and Advanced Placement coursework; and extended learning opportunities and drop out resources. Some of these experiences will be unique for students. For example, students in the dual language early literacy academies learn language arts and math in English and science and social studies in Spanish. As a result, "students become bilingual and bi-literate while developing cross-cultural awareness and high academic achievement."

The applicant earns a high score for this section because it articulates a comprehensive vision that addresses the core educational assurance areas and that accelerates student learning. The applicant also provides a reasonable description of the classroom experience.

Score: 8

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

**10**

**3**

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

In A(2) the applicant provides some appropriate elements of its approach to implementation because it includes a basic timeline that articulates how the district will implement two of its components throughout all four years of the plan ( Component 1: college- and career-ready and Component 3: college connections and preparation), and it will implement the other two components starting in the second year (Component 2: Dual Language Academy and Component 4: Parent University).

In A(2)(a) the applicant provides an inadequate explanation of how it selected the schools that will participate in its plan because the narrative explains elements of the plan's structure ( the "components have been carefully selected to support our existing journey of providing a quality and rigorous education opportunities [sic] for our students") and provides a proposed implementation schedule that includes some of the schools by name, but the applicant does not explain the process used to determine which schools would participate.

For A(2)(b) the applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate including the number of students at each school who are economically disadvantaged as well as a general timeline that outlines when individual schools will implement the components of the plan. For example, the high schools and middle schools will implement components 1, 3, and 4 throughout the four years, and the elementary schools will implement Components 1 and 3 only in the first year and components 1, 2, and 3 throughout all four years. However, the applicant does not explain why it will roll out its components according to this timeline. The list most likely includes all of the district's schools because it contains all school levels as well as Keys Academy and the Secondary Alternative Center, but the applicant does not explicitly state whether all of its schools will participate in the plan.

For A(2)(c), the applicant includes a partially complete table because the table includes all of the schools listed in A(2)(b) as well as the number of participating educators and students from each school and the number of high-need and low-income students from each school with the exception of the 9th grade academy and the district's School of Health Professions. The 9th grade academy is included in A(2)(b), but the applicant does not identify the School of Health Professions in A(2)(b). Therefore, there are some inconsistencies between the individual parts of this section. Furthermore, the percentage of participating students in the school (column G) is not consistent with the raw data in columns B and F because if it were, G would be 100%. However, for every school, the percent participating is only 95%. Similarly, the percent of participating students from low-income families (column H) is inconsistent with the raw data for total participating students and participating students who are from low-income families. For example, the first school listed, Austin Elementary, has 393 students, 332 of which are from low-income families. Therefore 84% of participating students are from low-income families, but the applicant inaccurately indicates that this percentage is 75%, which is the same percentage the applicant lists for every one of its schools regardless of the raw data. Additionally, the applicant does not provide the percent of the district's total population that is from low-income families.

This section earns a score in the medium range because the applicant does not provide an adequate explanation of how it selected its participating schools and because it presents inconsistent and incomplete data.

Score: 3

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant receives a score of 0 for this section because it does not include any narrative or any evidence of a high-quality plan for A(3).

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

For A(4) the applicant only includes information for A(4)(c) because the tables for A(4)(a, b, and d) are blank. To demonstrate its graduation rate goals, the applicant includes baseline data from 2012-13 for the economically disadvantaged subgroups at each of its grade 10-12 schools. The goals are achievable, but they may not be ambitious enough depending on the schools' students populations. For example, the applicant has the same .5 percentage increase in graduation for students at Harlingen High School as it does for students at its KEYS Academy, yet it indicates slightly higher graduation rates at Harlingen High School South without offering any explanation for why the goals differ.

The applicant earns a low score for A(4) because it only provides achievable goals for A(4)(c) and does not include goals for improving student outcomes for A(4)(a, b, and d).

Score: 2

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The district explains that its past successes will benefit its implementation of this plan because the district has seen improvements in student achievement when it has concentrated its resources. However, the district does not provide any evidence in this section or in the appendix that documents these successes.

The applicant more reasonably demonstrates that its previous experiences as a recipient of federally funded grants has provided it with the appropriate knowledge to hire effective personnel, such as a project director and a principal investigator because these employees would be integral in the applicant's ability to successfully carry out the plan. Similarly, it has employees in place to collect, manage, and share data effectively and appropriately because of the capabilities of its data system eSchool Plus and its Research and Evaluation department.

In addressing B(1)(a) the applicant nevertheless provides incomplete evidence that it has been able to improve learning outcomes and close achievement gaps because it does not include evidence of such accomplishments. Instead, the applicant provides weak evidence because it explains that it has determined that success will come to the district as it analyzes what skills and abilities it has not taught to its students as well as how it can address the learning needs of all students in order to teach them essential skills and abilities.

The applicant does not provide evidence of its ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools B(1)(b) or its ability to make students performance data available to stakeholders B(1)(c) because it addresses neither of these components of the section.

This section earns an overall low score because the applicant fails to demonstrate a convincing track record of success.

Score: 2

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
---	----------	----------

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides only a basic explanation of its ability to ensure transparency in B(2) because it explains that information is accessible online at any time and from any place, and the applicant also includes appropriate personnel salaries for teachers as well as pay ranges for instructional support staff. Nevertheless, posting information online is an insufficient way to offer a high level of transparency because not all stakeholders will have internet access.

However, this section earns a medium score because even though the the district posts information online, the applicant does not provide sufficient details about the kinds of information made available to the public. In addition, the applicant does not convincingly demonstrate that it makes available each of the four categories of school-level expenditures.

Score: 2

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant earns a score of 0 for B(3) because it does not provide evidence of any kind that it is able to operate under the conditions and autonomy necessary to implement its plan.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

In B(4) the applicant does not provide any evidence of how it engaged stakeholders and garnered support because the narrative contains no evidence of engagement and the applicant has not included any letters of support.

Score: 0

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant reasonably addresses some of the sections of C(1) because it provides evidence of goals and activities geared towards preparing students for college and careers. The applicant has an appropriate approach to learning in this section because it plans to utilize such models as project-based learning, web-based individualized programs, and adult- and peer-mentoring to engage and empower all learners. The applicant also has an appropriate focus on high-need students because it will target those students who are economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk for dropping out.

Overall, the applicant has an appropriate plan to incorporate digital learning, and the applicant provides evidence that the combination of technology and such approaches as project-based learning will be effective at improving learning results and preparing students because this combination will increase student engagement.

The applicant also presents reasonable evidence that its plan will identify struggling students and will meet their needs because its "Theory of Change Model" will allow for individualized instruction. The applicant does not provide adequate details about its Theory of Change Model, but the model does have effective components because it includes such approaches as Response to Intervention.

In the opening part of C(1), the applicant provides details that demonstrate elements of a high-quality plan because it includes activities such as the implementation of project-based learning strategies, the development of an adult literacy program, and the development of family engagement activities. The applicant does not, however, establish a timeline or clear deliverables, and it does not clearly identify who will be responsible for implementing the plan.

The applicant outlines a feasible curriculum design in C(1)(a)(ii) because it establishes five career and technology-related academies, and the applicant includes seven appendix items that verify the relevance of its design including the top ten local industries that are reporting/projecting growth and the current national economic conditions.

The applicant also convincingly justifies its development of a ninth grade academy in this section because it explains how the academy will provide students with a smooth transition between middle school and high school in an environment that will "embrace, nurture and support students." To support its goals in this part of section C(1), the applicant provides a graphic that effectively demonstrates the transitions students will navigate at each level between elementary school and college or career because the graphic outlines the rationale behind the applicant's plan, especially the progression from understanding (in elementary school) to performance (at the college and career level).

The applicant then continues to convincingly justify its approach because it presents a graphic demonstrating unemployment rates throughout the country that supports the applicant's claim that its students need to work towards the goal of possessing a technical college degree and/or a working job-based knowledge of necessary skills" in order to succeed in a community with a high unemployment rate.

In C(1)(a)(iii) the applicant proposes effective ways to deepen learning experiences because it proposes a five-year learning plan for 9th grade students that will lead either to college course-work "through Advanced Placement/Dual and Concurrent Enrollment/Tech Prep classes" or to an accumulation of twelve hours relevant to a certified career pathway. To support these ambitious but achievable goals, the applicant includes relevant competencies that justify the need for career counseling as part of its plan because the competencies, which are broken down by grade level, include such important benchmarks as students understanding the "attitudes necessary for success in work and learning" (middle school) or students acquiring skills necessary in the process of "preparing for, seeking, obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in a job" (high school).

The district appropriately plans to incorporate enrichment opportunities in order that students might master content and develop skills according to C(1)(a)(v) because the district will increase students' access to AVID. Currently, the district only offers AVID at the middle and high school levels, but its plan would incorporate AVID at the elementary level, too. This adjustment is justifiable because AVID will improve students' abilities to persevere and utilize critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The applicant proposes effective measures to provide a variety of instructional approaches and environments because its plan includes the establishment of summer camps for students who need enrichment as well as for students who need to recover credits. Similarly, the district will initiate a sensible approach to exposing students to college-ready expectations as early as 7th grade and will continue with a college-ready emphasis throughout high school.

The applicant will take into account varying kinds of student needs because the district will implement a three-tiered intervention system that will increase students' abilities to develop important skills such as note-taking and the inquiry process. At the same time, the applicant proposes appropriate enrichment for students as well because it will increase the number of teachers who are prepared to teach pre-AP and AP courses and will expand student access to college-preparatory courses.

Finally, the applicant makes an inadequate but relevant assertion about the importance of providing students with high-quality content (including digital content) because the applicant seeks to empower students to "question the questions, search for the solutions, and present their findings in an array of final products." This assertion is reasonable in a general sense, but it does not have enough specifics to provide evidence that the approach will engage and empower students.

The applicant earns a score in the medium range for this section because the narrative presents some elements of a high-quality plan and articulates key elements of effective ways to engage and empower all learners. However, the applicant does not include all elements of a high-quality plan (such as timelines and responsible parties) and does not address all of the components of C(1).

Score: 8

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

**20**

**4**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant includes some elements of a high-quality plan because it includes goals, activities, and timeline estimates in C(2).

Educators will have various opportunities for continuing education and professional development because teachers will be encouraged to pursue advanced degrees through the University Center which partners with colleges and universities to provide professionals with distance learning options. The applicant also explains that it participates in the Teacher University for Advancement (TUA) program, and its participation will improve learning and teaching because instructional coaches and lead teachers will have the opportunity to pursue Masters degrees through the TUA. Such opportunities help the district meet its goal "to build [its] internal capacity to prepare effective leaders in high-need area schools."

The applicant articulates similarly appropriate goals because it plans to develop cadres of teachers and to model and evaluate preparation and professional development programs.

Similarly, the applicant presents evidence of additional professional learning and collaboration opportunities for staff members because instructors will be chosen to take leadership roles and provide staff development. Teachers will also receive training in how to create lesson plans from a district curriculum coach.

For C(2)(a) in particular, the applicant only vaguely references subsections (i), (ii), and (iv) because there is no direct reference to implementation, instructional adaptations, or the direct use of evaluations to improve instructional effectiveness. The applicant addresses subsection (iii) somewhat more directly because it mentions the use of surveys and data assessments, but there are few details related to (iii) and no evidence of a high-quality plan related to (iii).

For C(2)(b) the applicant only very vaguely references the corresponding subsections because it talks more generally about educators having access to and knowing how to use tools, data, and resources.

The applicant does not clearly address C(2)(c) or (d).

Overall, even though the applicant provides some limited evidence of the learning and collaboration opportunities that its educators will have, the applicant also provides confusing details in C(2) because the focus of the narrative sometimes only addresses students' learning experiences without any direct connection to teaching and leading roles. The end of the section also includes a repeated passage from earlier in the section.

This section earns a low score because while the applicant presents some evidence of a plan that will improve student learning by improving teachers, the evidence is limited in some places and is confusing or absent in other places. Additionally, the applicant does not effectively address the subsections of this C(2).

Score: 4

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>This section earns a low score because the applicant does not present any of the elements of a high-quality plan to support project implementation, nor does the applicant include any practices, policies, and rules.</p> <p>Score: 0</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>This section earns a low score because the applicant does not present any of the elements of a high-quality plan to support project implementation through policies and infrastructure that provide support and resources to every student and educator.</p>		

Score: 0

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section earns a low score because the applicant does not present any of the elements of a high-quality plan to implement a rigorous and continuous improvement process, nor does the applicant address how it will share information on the quality of its investments.</p> <p>Score: 0</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section earns a low score because the applicant does not present any of the elements of a high-quality plan to facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Score: 0</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section earns a low score because the applicant does not clearly present any performance measures. The applicant does, however, include examples in E(4) of quantitative data that it hopes to measure throughout the course of the plan.</p> <p>This application scores in the low range for this section because it does not identify clear performance measures with the exception of potential quantitative data markers that the applicant lists in E(4).</p> <p>Score: 1</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides very limited but reasonable evidence of a high-quality plan to evaluate effectiveness in E(4) because the applicant includes methods of evaluation such as pre-and post-test measures to gauge the increase in knowledge experienced by students. The applicant also plans to evaluate its plan using qualitative data such as interviews, questionnaires, and observations and quantitative data such as state assessment scores, end-of-course scores, and SAT and AP scores.</p> <p>The applicant provides limited evidence of a timeline because it explains that students and staff will complete questionnaires at the end of each semester, that the project director will facilitate weekly reviews, and that data will be collected and used to monitor objectives each semester.</p> <p>This section earns a medium score because even though the applicant has included some elements of a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the district's investments, the applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate most of the elements of a high-quality plan.</p> <p>Score: 2</p>		

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant presents a partial budget in F(1) because while it includes a budget narrative, but it does not provide any budget tables. The narrative describes reasonable budgetary considerations, but it fails to include descriptions of all funds, of all fund sources, and of the classification of funds as one-time or on-going, with the exception of a general statement about the "coordination of services with other state and federal grants, such as the 21st Century Community Learning Center program and other state designated funds."

This section earns a low score because the applicant does not include budget tables and provides a limited budget narrative.

Score: 1

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
---	-----------	----------

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

For F(2) the applicant provides limited evidence of sustainability because it explains how the RTTD funding will supplement and enhance ongoing programs and initiatives. The applicant also explains that it hopes to raise community awareness in order to secure additional funding from community businesses and private donors. Finally, the applicant justifies the sustainability of its professional development investments because it plans to build the capacity of its current teachers and staff members in order to further the impact of professional development by having in-house staff provide learning opportunities in the future.

The applicant provides confusing information towards the end of its narrative for F(2) because it states that it "will most likely go to a fee based system" and will "look to the community for scholarships for participation and attendance once the funding has ended." However, it is unclear what the applicant plans to charge fees for.

The score for this section is in the low range because the applicant only provides limited evidence that its plan will be sustainable beyond the grant cycle.

Score: 2

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant does not meet the requirements of the competitive preference priority because it does not provide any narrative regarding results, resource alignment, or integrated services.

Score: 0

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant does not meet Absolute Priority 1 because the applicant has not comprehensively addressed how it will build on the four core assurance areas or how it will personalize learning environments. The plan includes some project goals, such as increasing academic performance, increasing preparation for post-secondary education, and increasing college attendance rates. The applicant also provides very vague timelines. The applicant also describes the standards and assessments it has adopted to prepare students for college and career success as well as some of the ways it recruits, develops, rewards, and retains effective teachers. However, the applicant does not effectively address how it will build and utilize data systems to measure student growth and inform educators because its discussion of data systems is limited.

In terms of the specific requirements for Absolute Priority 1, the applicant does not effectively demonstrate how it will improve learning and teaching through the personalization of learning and teaching experiences, how it will expand student

access to the most effective educators, or how it will decrease achievement gaps. Alternately, the applicant provides reasonable but limited evidence that it will accelerate student achievement and deepen learning because the district will place increasing importance on preparing students for rigorous coursework (such as Advanced Placement courses) and on preparing students for college- and career-related opportunities. Similarly, the applicant poses reasonable methods to increase educator effectiveness because it will support teachers who wish to further their education and it will develop teacher leaders who will provide on-going training. Finally, the applicant's plan demonstrates evidence that it will increase students' graduation rates and preparedness for college and careers because the district will initiate relevant reforms starting at the elementary level, such as bilingual education and interest- and project-based learning; at the middle school level, such as hands-on investigation and goal setting; and at the high school level, such as increasing access to rigorous coursework and helping students who have dropped out to receive their high school diploma while also earning industry-appropriate certificates.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>35</b>
--------------	------------	-----------



## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0060TX-3 for Harlingen CISD

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant provided a feasible vision for the proposed RTT-D grant proposal. The applicant's vision articulates a credible approach aspiring to reach the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student learning. The plan for reform is grounded in developing performance-based learning for students which encompasses common and individual tasks that are based on ability and interests. The applicant envisions the grant as a means to support the district with their efforts to provide a rigorous and engaging curriculum in a supportive learning environment that ensures high-quality instruction. The proposal program demonstrates that the districts will build their initiatives around the four core educational assurance areas. For example, the applicant proposes to develop learning environments, high-quality teaching, digital learning, and personalizing instruction. Student assessment data indicate students in grades 3-5 are scoring below the state average in reading and math. All of their efforts to develop personalized learning environments will be geared towards helping students to perform better on the State Academic Assessment (STAAR).</p> <p>The district is ambitiously aiming for classroom experiences for students that: (1) will increase academic performance and preparation for post secondary education; (2) will connect curriculum to real world experiences through project-based learning; (3) increase the college-going rate; (4) decrease dropout through drop-out recovery; and (5) increase dual language to accommodate high numbers of bilingual students. While elements of the vision were clear, the applicant did not provide a clear and comprehensive reform vision. The development of comprehensive vision is important for evaluating and determining the applicant's goal for the entire project initiatives.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		

The applicant has provided a reasonably sound description of the process used to select the schools for participation in the project. The applicant selected all schools within the LEA spanning grades K-12 because they are proposing for the creation of personal learning system at all grade levels. The applicant is proposing that Project Gateway is accessible to every teacher, and every student within the district. The applicant provided poverty rates and other figures to support the LEA's collective ability to meet the requirements. The applicant provided a list of schools along with the total number of students being serviced by the grant and the teachers affected. Although the data was present, the applicant did not provide enough justification as to why the implementation district-wide is warranted. The selection criteria was not fully developed. More information and data was needed to make an assessment regarding the high need status of students.

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

**10**

**0**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant did not address A(3). The section of the grant proposal was blank. No other information from the proposal indicates to the reader there is a plan in place to describe meaning district wide change.

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

**10**

**1**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant did not provide data in the section. The charts and tables were blank. However, the applicant did attempt to provide graduation rates data, it was difficult to find any relevance to the graduation data. For example, no goals are aligned with the graduation data or other data. It is difficult to assess this data without any other supporting data and narrative. The information was not available in other sections of the application.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
The applicant did not address the criteria. The short and narrative provided does not provide any evidence to demonstrate a clear track record of success. No other credible information was available throughout the proposal to make a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
The applicant provided very sparse and inadequate evidence to document that the district has a history of providing transparency in Harlingen CISD. The applicant did indicate some assurance that participation in the Race to the Top District grant and expenditure of funds would be well documented and published for public access throughout the funding cycle. Although the applicant indicated in the proposal that they will provide the community with accessible information on the district website and the information hub is available 24/7 for easy access. While informative, this statement did not provide evidence that the online information hub will facilitate effective open communication between community, parents, students, administrators and school board members. No other information was provided.		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
The applicant did not address the criteria for (B) (3). The section was not available in the proposal. No other information was available throughout the proposal to make a professional determination that the district has ensured all legal and regulatory conditions for reform have been addressed.		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
The applicant did not address the criteria for (B)(4) in the application. The section was left blank. No other information was found to make a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided sparse evidence to document that a high-quality plan is in place for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The proposed plan does not include a credible approach as to how the district would implement instructional strategies for all participating students and enabling participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. The applicant does not seem to be fully aware of the complexity involved in developing all of the components in the outlined in the selection criteria. For example, the applicant indicates that it plans to build a learning management system and a student learning matrix to cover all of the Grade Level Expectations/Course Level Expectations. Apparently the district does not currently have a student learning matrix based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The learning management system will not be able to facilitate appropriate personalized learning environments until the district aligns the curriculum to standards (i.e., develops a current, appropriate, and high-quality student learning matrix).

The applicant fails to address how they will provide exposure to diverse cultures throughout the project. It appears there is just a focus during the Pre-K learning activities which is a concern. It appears there are no plans to provide assistance to parents who will use technology monitor academic progress, and to facilitate the growth and development process in the home. Content and learning is limited to the school environment.

There is very limited discussion regarding the specific content to be used for learning. The applicant does not discuss the frequency of the feedback. There is no accommodation/engagement for parents with poor literacy skills, technology skills, or for those who are unable to access this technology using internet services within their own homes. There is no mention of specific hands-on tutorials teaching parents on how to best access and utilize the information regarding their child's progress.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>
--	-----------	----------

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant did not provide evidence of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan did not include a credible approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that will enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards. Additionally, it was difficult to review the selection criteria because the proposal did not clearly outline goals and objectives for teaching and leading that would have provided some needed guidance for the reader.

There is some evidence in the narrative that the applicant will attempt to help educators to improve instruction and increase capacity to support student progress. For example, the district intends to strengthen Professional Learning Communities to include the Teacher University for Advancement program to provide support and flexibility to enroll in courses at one of seven colleges that offer advanced degrees through the University Center at the local Texas State Technical College campus. Providing this opportunity is a great idea because due to the rural location of the school district options for pursuing a graduate degree is limited. The programs will strengthen help the district strengthen Master Teachers in specialized content areas. Teachers will also be able to pursue school leadership certification, thus increasing capacity for a cadre of trained school leaders. Although the program will provide good opportunities, the applicant does not indicate how the graduate programs and professional development will help teachers and leaders become more efficient in delivering course content and managing schools that are implementing personalized learning environments.

### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not address the criteria for (D) (1). This section of the proposal was blank. There was no other available information throughout the proposal to make a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not address the selection criteria for (D) (2). This section of the proposal was left blank. No other information available to make a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not address the selection criteria for section (E) (1). This section was left blank. There was no other relevant information available in the proposal to conduct a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not address the selection criteria for (E)(2). This section of the proposal was left blank. There was no other relevant information available in the proposal to conduct a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not address the selection criteria for (E) (3). This section was left blank. There was no other relevant information available in the proposal to conduct a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant provides a reasonably high-quality plan to examine and monitor continuous improvements. The applicant indicated that a combination of evaluation methods will be utilized to gage success of the project and evaluate RTT-D funded activities. For example, metrics will track the number of teacher and student participants in the proposed program and each component. Pre and Post tests will measure the increase in knowledge of content related topics and student interest in college and career pathways. Laboratory, field investigations, and personal interviews will measure engagement in digital integration and Project Based Learning for both teachers and students.  Students and staff will complete questionnaires at the semester's end and after critical activities. Feedback will provide improvement areas and benchmarks. The Project Director will facilitate weekly reviews with staff to track objectives. At the end of the first semester, project will staff will conduct an assessment of the project objectives and accomplishments using the following evaluation instruments. Reallocation of resources will be determined and made as needed based on progress monitoring feedback.  While the applicant's plan is reasonable, it is very difficult to award full points because there is still a lack of alignment with missing key project goals, a timeline for implementation and rationales to substantiate a rigorous evaluation of continuous improvements. The plan will provide some oversight, not enough information was given to determine when and where to		

make adjustments and revisions.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not provide a budget for the proposal. The budget was not included. There was no other relevant information available in the proposal to conduct a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not provide a high-quality plan to demonstrate sustainability of the project's goals. The plan did not include timelines, rationales and key goals for how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past and future investments. Some existing funds have been secured for the district, but the applicant does not have a clear sustainability plan after the RTT-D funds because the applicant indicates clearly that after grant funding they will definitely have a reduction in some staffing positions. The applicant indicated that they will try to continue building on the capacity of training teachers and staff in best practices so that they can work the program after grant funding ends. Without a quality sustainability plan any accomplishments made by the district will be impacted.  There is some evidence that the district has a small track record of securing funds for programs for students. The district has been the recipient of the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant the Texas 21st CCLC, Cycle 2 grant serving 10 centers for five years covering three high schools, five middle and two elementary schools. The programs provide students with safe environments after school. Additionally, the district was awarded supplemental funding for a pilot program called <i>STAAR Pilot Program</i> through the state education agency. All of the external funding have provided resources to help the district improve or expand innovative services for at-risk students. There was no other relevant information available in the proposal to determine sustainability of the project.		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b> The applicant did not provide a narrative for the Competitive Priority. This section was left blank in the proposal narrative. There was no other relevant information available in the proposal to conduct a professional evaluation of the selection criteria.		

## Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b> The application proposal was incomplete and key sections were left blank and unaddressed in the narrative. With so many sections left blank and unaddressed, the applicant was not able to comprehensively address in the narrative how the district will build on the four core educational assurance areas. The applicant did not include a budget, which also would have provided key information regarding the resources needed to create learning environments.		

While the applicant did provide some details about how each student will have access to personalized instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and to ensure he or she can graduate on time and college-and –career ready. None of this information demonstrated evidence that the district will be able to accelerate and expand student achievement. Many of the key sections of the proposal were left blank, thus leaving the reader unable to make a fair assessment on the proposed project.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>38</b>
--------------	------------	-----------