



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0211MN-1 for Independent School District 196

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Independent School District 196 is a State PreK-12 public school district serving approximately 28,000 students in early childhood programs through 12th grade, the fourth largest school district in Minnesota. The applicant has partnered with Ohio State University and Literacy Collaborative to build a model with a focus on restructuring educational delivery into a data driven instructional model based on continuums that align with the Common Core Standards. The Literacy Collaborative will focus on the literacy practices of New Zealand, Australia, and other high achieving countries that were studied in the international benchmarking study for the Common Core Standards. The applicant demonstrates a reform vision in the following four core educational assurance areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around lowest-achieving schools to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching. The applicant describes how it articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, but it does not clearly describe how it builds on its work in these four core educational assurance areas:

1. Establishing a standards-based aligned curriculum and assessments system: The applicant indicates that the District 196 Literacy Collaborative is built on the Minnesota Common Core Standards. The applicant demonstrates that the proposed model is grounded in genre led inquiry web units, which are both fiction and nonfiction. The applicant indicates that the nonfiction informational units integrate content standards and all units identify learning targets with published learning goals and performance assessments that monitor progress and inform differentiated instruction. The applicant indicates that each unit is based on a synthesis of the Fountas and Pinnell Continuums of Literacy Learning and the Common Core Standards Continuums. Each learner has an individualized learning plan that is monitored by the development of an electronic portfolio of performance assessments.

2. Implementing data driven instruction, data driven coaching, data driven staff development, and data driven individual instruction: The applicant effectively indicates that the Literacy Collaborative District Trainers provide the initial 350 hour training course and coach each RtI (Response to Intervention) Lead Teacher. The RtI Lead Teacher learns how to implement data driven instruction, data driven coaching, and data driven staff development. The applicant thoroughly describes how the RtI Lead Teachers collect data throughout the year for their high, medium, and low case study students, so that they learn how to differentiate their instruction for each child in their class. The applicant clearly demonstrates how the RtI Lead Teachers are trained in action research coaching to use an inquiry-based action research coaching cycle during the training year. The applicant indicates that Cohort 1 RtI Lead Teachers were trained during the 2012-2013 school year and Cohort 2 Lead Teachers will train during the 2013-2014 school year.

3. Effective teachers and leaders: The applicant describes their reform vision that demonstrates that highly-trained teachers use coaching and reflection data to determine their staff development, but did not clearly describe what they have already done in this area. Staff development is differentiated depending on the needs of the children and staff in each individual school. It is unclear why the classroom implementation will not begin until the second year of the RTT-D project.

4. Turning around the lowest achieving schools: The applicant indicates that Interstate 196 will use improved instructional and data driven decision-making practices to turn around the lowest achieving schools. However, the applicant did not provide data on how the Independent District has turned around the lowest achieving schools.

(b) The applicant articulates a reform vision that provides an approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student interest. The applicant describes the literacy model with an emphasis on learners: knowing that they need information; knowing where to look to find that information; knowing how to check the sources, and authors of those sources, to see if they are valid; researching multiple sources and gathering information from each source; synthesizing the information; creating a source to share their new information; and publishing the information and sharing their research with others. The applicant will use performance standards for every unit that allows for whole group, small group, and

individual sharing of research. The applicant describes a clear approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement through personalized student support that includes common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

(c) The applicant articulates a reform vision that effectively describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. The applicant describes teaching and learning for whole groups, small groups, including participating in centers for managed independent learning, and individual sharing of research. The applicant demonstrates that the classroom experience allows for students to develop a sense of research interests and styles, as well as to develop strong passions for learning in different areas, so that they leave elementary school with their initial college and career goals set.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant articulates an approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. However, it is unclear as to how the proposed project is building on its current work or if the proposed project is just continuing the same work that has already started in the District. The applicant articulates a reform vision that effectively describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. It is unclear why the classroom implementation will not begin until the second year of the RTT-D project.

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

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4

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a description, which is somewhat unclear, of the process that the applicant used to select the schools to participate in the proposed project. The District 196 clearly describes a Needs Assessment, Root Cause Analysis and Gap Analysis, which indicated a need to conduct Tier 2 Leveled Literacy Intervention pilots in 8 of the 18 elementary schools. It was also decided to have a District trainer conduct action research in core instruction in a fifth grade literacy block in the highest needs schools within the district. The results of the pilot indicated a decision by the District to move towards full implementation of the Literacy Collaborative. The District Leadership team decided to train an RtI Lead Teacher for each of the 18 elementary schools in two cohorts. Schools were able to apply to be a part of Cohort 1 and the District selected the schools with the largest achievement gaps to be the Cohort 1 schools. The Leadership team selected, for the RTT-D proposal, five of the lowest performing schools that have participated in Cohort 1; the 6th grade class from the middle school that the majority of the selected elementary schools feed into; as well as Dakota Ridge.

(b) The applicant describes the following schools that will participate in the RTT-D grant activities: Cedar Park Elementary (K-5), Echo Park Elementary (K-5), Oak Ridge Elementary (K-5), Westview Elementary (K-5), Greenleaf Elementary (K-5), Valley Middle School (6th grade), and Dakota Ridge School (K-6). The applicant indicates that only 16 of the 67 Dakota Ridge School students will be participating in this proposed project. It is unclear if only 16 of the Dakota Ridge School students are in Grades K-5. It is also unclear how the selection of the seven (7) schools will support high-quality LEA-level implementation and school-level implementation of the proposal.

(c) The applicant provides data for the number of participating students (3,655 total); number of participating students at each school; (ranging from 16 to 908); the number of participating high-need students (1,649 total); the number of participating low-income students (1,551); and the number of participating educators (246).

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the medium range of points because the applicant provides a somewhat unclear description of the process that the applicant used to select the schools to participate in the proposed project. It is not clear why only 16 of the 67 Dakota Ridge School students were selected to participate in the grant activities and it is unclear how the selection of the seven (7) schools will support high-quality LEA-level implementation and school-level implementation of the proposal.

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

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2

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant recognizes the need for LEA-level implementation of the proposed project, but provides an unclear plan as to how it will build capacity to implement the Literacy Collaborative District-wide for all schools; a specific plan for Cohort 1 (the schools that will participate in the proposed RTT-D proposed project); and a specific plan for Cohort 2. The applicant provides a plan for scaling up implementation to include all schools PreK-12. However, it looks as if the plan for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 already began in 2012-2013. The plan for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 are almost the same for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The applicant did not provide a plan for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. The timeline indicates that the four-year proposed plan is for the following period of time (2012-2016), rather than the RTT-D grant period (2014-2017).

This criterion is scored in the low range because the applicant did not demonstrate how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support District-wide change beyond the participating schools. The applicant provides an unclear plan as to how it will implement the Literacy Collaborative District-wide for all schools. The applicant did not describe all of the components of a high-quality plan (key

goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) on how the reform proposal will be scaled up. The timeline indicates that the four-year proposed plan is for the following period of time (2012-2016), rather than the RTT-D grant period (2014-2017).

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

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3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(4)(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth): The applicant indicates that proficiency rates for District 196 Race to the Top Implementation will come from the District 196 Read Well by Third Grade Benchmarks (text leveling for K-6). The text leveling data is based on national norms and the benchmark/text leveling data will be used to determine proficiency status for all RTT-D schools. The applicant will also use MCA III benchmark data. The applicant did not demonstrate that the annual goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall, because the State ESEA targets are not described. Therefore, it is not clear if the annual goals are ambitious yet achievable, without comparable State data.

(4)(b) Decreasing achievement gaps: Independent School District 196 provides annual goals, overall and by student subgroup, in Reading Grade K (benchmark reading assessment; text leveling); Reading Grade 1 (benchmark reading assessment; text leveling); Reading Grade 2 (benchmark reading assessment; text leveling); Reading Grade 3 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 4 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 5 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 6 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 7 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 8 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 10 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Math Grade 3 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Math Grade 4 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Reading Grade 5 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Math Grade 6 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Math Grade 7 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS); Math Grade 8 (all State accountability tests, including MCA); Math Grade 11 (all State accountability tests, including MCA, MCA-modified, and MTAS , MCA-modified, and MTAS). The applicant did not demonstrate that the annual goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall, since the ESEA targets are not described for all goal areas. Therefore, it is not clear if the annual goals are ambitious yet achievable, without comparable State data. The gaps are not clear, as the comparison group is White, not of Hispanic Origin, but the applicant indicates that there is no gap for the subgroups, Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian, for some of the grade levels.

(4)(c) Graduation rates: Independent School District 196 describes its annual goal, overall and by subgroup, to provide individualized instruction for every student so that 90% of their students will graduate from high school. The applicant demonstrates that the annual goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall.

(4)(d) College enrollment: Independent School District 196 describes its annual goal, overall and by subgroup, to significantly increase the percentage of students who enroll in postsecondary educational programs to 90%. The applicant demonstrates that the annual goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall.

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the medium range because the applicant did not demonstrate that LEA-wide annual goals (performance on summative assessments and decreasing achievement gaps) will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall, since the State ESEA targets are not described for all goal areas. Therefore, it is not clear if the annual goals are ambitious yet achievable, without comparable State data. The applicant demonstrates that the annual goals for graduation and college enrollment are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA, overall. The gaps are not clear, as the comparison group is White, not of Hispanic Origin, but the applicant indicates that there is no gap for the subgroups, Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian, for some of the grade levels.

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	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(1)(a) Independent School District 196 demonstrates practices and strategies for improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, but the applicant did not provide data for evidence. The applicant indicates that eighteen years ago, the District began to use the key components of

the Literacy Collaborative model as a diagnostic tool. The applicant describes the following results in practices, but did not provide student data to support the 2010-2011 pilot: interventionists and classroom teachers used data to align instruction which caused an increase in student achievement; District Leadership teams were built; a five year plan was developed; and an initial pilot of Tier 2: Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) was implemented. The applicant did not provide a clear record of success in the past four years in raising high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

(1)(b) Independent School District 196 indicates that their lowest-achieving schools have advanced student learning and achievement, but the applicant did not provide raw student data, or other evidence, except for graphs that indicate mixed achievement results.

(1)(c) Independent School District 196 demonstrates evidence of student performance data being made available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. The District, in 2011, established the Strategic Planning Task Force, which is a 60-member group, including parents, staff, school board members, and leaders from the business, civic, and faith communities, charged to establish a shared base of knowledge about District enrollment and demographics, school finance, teaching and learning, community and partnerships, and educational trends. The District has invested in informational technology systems, such as the North Star Data System, to keep parents connected by having access to their child's Dashboard and electronic portfolio, to monitor their student's learning.

This criterion is scored in the low end of the medium range because the applicant provides evidence of practices and strategies for improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, but the applicant did not provide district-wide data for evidence. Independent School District 196 indicates that their lowest-achieving schools have advanced student learning and achievement, but the applicant did not provide raw student data, or other evidence, except for graphs that indicate mixed achievement results. The applicant did not provide a clear record of success in the past four years in improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, or data on raising high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates. Independent School District 196 demonstrates evidence of student performance data being made available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Independent School District 196 demonstrates that the District 196 Finance Department is responsible for compiling the District budget, processing payables, receivables, and payroll. The applicant indicates that the results of the annual audit and data regarding (a) personnel salaries and (d) non-personnel expenditures are reported on the District webpage. The applicant did not provide specific information indicating that the applicant already makes available to the public the following categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds: (b) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; and (c) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant demonstrates evidence of transparency in processes and practices in making (a) personnel salaries and (d) non-personnel expenditures available on the District website. The applicant did not provide specific information indicating that the applicant already makes available to the public the following categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds: (b) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; and (c) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only.

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

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6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the state context for implementation, by demonstrating that District 196 was an early adopter of the State of Minnesota Quality Compensation Model. This model includes the following components: IGP (Individual Growth Plan); writing an IGP; components of an IGP (student achievement goal/plan; professional development focus/plan; documentation); writing a realistic student achievement goal (**SMART** - Specific, Measurement, Attainable, Results, Time frame); building site goal relates to the Individual Growth Plan (state mandated); purpose of the IGP checklist; individual professional development goals relate to student achievement goal; expectations of the action plan; peer leader meetings; documentation portion of the IGP; requirement to be a member of a collegial team; collegial team members may all have the same IGP; access to IGP; approval of IGP; compensation for writing IGP; staff are required to write fall IGP using Reciprocity on the District's Intranet; confirmation that individual staff student achievement goal was met; and access to Charlotte Danielson's book and Frameworks to assist in writing IGP. This Quality Compensation Model includes the requirements for District 196 to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. However, the applicant did not provide the State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements.

The applicant demonstrates that the Minnesota legislature just passed a State law that includes 13 components, Building a Teacher Development and Evaluation Plan, which were used by the District team to write the proposed plan: (1) is jointly agreed on by the school board and the local teachers union; (2) includes an individual growth and development plan; (3) includes a three-year review cycle for all teacher; (4) includes three evaluations

annually for probationary teachers, with the first evaluation occurring within the first 90 days of employment; (5) is aligned with the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers. (MN Rule 8710.2000); (6) provides teachers the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community; (7) coordinates staff development and teacher evaluation; (8) includes peer coaching/review by trained observers; (9) includes at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator during the three year cycle; (10) includes an option for a teacher to develop and present a portfolio for the summative evaluation; (11) gives teachers not meeting standards support through a teacher improvement plan (TIP) that includes goals and timelines and disciplines a teacher for not making adequate progress in the TIP; (12) bases percent of a teacher's evaluation on growth data from assessments that are valid, reliable, and aligned to standards; and (13) includes longitudinal data on student engagement and connection. The applicant demonstrates that this law and the proposed plan will allow the District to collect the data on highly effective and effective teachers this year and in the future. District 196 set their target for this year at 50% of highly effective (Moving from effective to highly effective). The eventual goal of the Literacy Collaborative implementation is to get to 100% of highly effective teachers.

The applicant, in the application RTT-D Section (B(3) State context for implementation (state the context for implementation, instead of State context for implementation) provides a description of the process of bringing stakeholders together to formulate an action plan for improvement, including a clear alignment of issue/need, actions, media/stakeholder selection, time, and responsibility. This plan describes the process for shifting to individualized assessment to implement the personalized learning environments that are described in the proposal, instead of providing the State context for implementation in this section.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant addressed how the primary components of this project fit within the current state legislative, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments that are described in the proposal. However, the applicant did not provide the State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. The applicant demonstrates that District 196 was an early adopter of the State of Minnesota Quality Compensation Model. The applicant demonstrates that the Minnesota legislature just passed a State law that includes 13 components, Building a Teacher Development and Evaluation Plan, that were used by the District team to write the proposed plan. The applicant, in the application RTT-D Section (B(3) State context for implementation (state the context for implementation, instead of State context for implementation) provides a description of the process of bringing stakeholders together to formulate an action plan for improvement, including a clear alignment of issue/need, actions, media/stakeholder selection, time, and responsibility.

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

15

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) It is unclear how the stakeholders have been involved in the development of the RTT-D proposal, since the applicant only describes the process in 2011. Independent School District 196 describes the review process in which they engaged students, families, teachers, and principals in the development of this proposal. The applicant describes the process, beginning in 2011, when District Superintendent established the District 196 Strategic Planning Task Force to develop a vision for education that will guide District goals for the next five years. This 60-member task force included parents; staff; school board members; and business, civic, and faith community leaders. The applicant indicates that during multiple meetings, a timeline and a list of resources were generated and communication needs for stakeholders were discussed. The District Superintendent met with the District trainer in 2011 to review a draft Return on Investment (ROI) project using needs assessment and gap analysis data. The applicant indicates that the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative model was formed from data gained from the needs assessment and gap analysis.

(a)(i) The applicant did not indicate, other than a signature from the union president, evidence that teachers from participating schools support this proposal.

(b) The applicant provides letters of support from key stakeholders (mayors; business community, civic and community-based organizations) in the appendix.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because Independent School District 196 did not demonstrate evidence of stakeholder engagement in the development of the RTT-D proposal, since the applicant only describes the process in 2011. The applicant did not provide evidence, other than a signature from the union president, of direct engagement and support for the proposal from teachers in participating schools. The applicant provides letters of support from key stakeholders (mayors; business community, civic and community-based organizations) in the appendix.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that the District 196 infrastructure supports personalized learning by shifting towards a capacity building model for training, instruction, and learning. The applicant provides a clear description of the paradigm shift of the Literacy Collaborative, with a comparison of the traditional model to the capacity building model, which is the model for implementing the RTT-D proposed plan.

(a)(i)(ii) The applicant did not describe an approach to learning that includes high-need students, in an age appropriate manner, to be able to understand that what they are learning is key to their ability to accomplish goals. The applicant demonstrates that the District has invested in informational technology systems like North Star to keep parents connected by having access to their child's Dashboard, to not only monitor their student's learning, but to be involved as a parent. The applicant describes a plan for students to identify and pursue learning and development goals to understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and to measure progress toward those goals.

(a)(iii)(iv)(v) The applicant describes a plan for students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The applicant clearly demonstrates that performance standards are integrated into genre led inquiry web units, both fiction and nonfiction. All units identify learning targets with published learning goals and performance assessments that monitor progress and inform differentiated instruction. The applicant describes a comprehensive plan for students to master critical academic content and to develop skills and traits such as goal-setting and critical thinking. The applicant did not describe a plan for students to have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

(b)(i) The applicant indicates that each student will have access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals, but the applicant did not describe how the District will ensure that students will be able to graduate on time and college- and career-ready. Each student has an individualized learning plan that is monitored by the development of an electronic portfolio of performance assessments. The applicant indicates that parents can log in any time to monitor student growth.

(b)(ii) The applicant provides evidence that students will experience a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments. The applicant describes instructional approaches and environments that include whole group, small group, and individual sharing of research. The applicant effectively demonstrates that students will develop a strong sense of research interests and styles in which they know they need information; know where to look to find that information; know how to check the sources, and authors of those sources, to see if they are valid; know how to research multiple sources and gather information from each; know how to synthesize the information; know how to create a source to share their new information; and know how to publish the information and share their research with others. The applicant indicates that parents, teachers, interventionists, coaches, and administrators can log into student dashboards at any time to monitor student growth and to read the team action plans.

(b)(iii) The applicant did not describe a clear plan for students to be involved in high-quality content, including digital learning content aligned with college- and career-ready standards. The applicant clearly indicates that each genre led inquiry unit is based on a synthesis of the Fountas and Pinnell Continuums of Literacy Learning and the Common Core Standards Continuums. The applicant describes how the North Star Educational Tools Capacity Building response to Intervention Model will be followed to track the growth of all learners. The applicant indicates that data will be used to drive instruction, to inform professional development, and to determine the direction of action research coaching.

(b)(iv)(A) The applicant indicates that dashboards will monitor the student achievement growth over time against national norms.

(b)(iv)(B) The applicant describes plans for students to receive personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant indicates that students will be able to choose their interest areas and parents will be able to observe multiple performance measures throughout the units. This process will ensure that students are mastering college- and career-ready standards so they are prepared for the 21st Century.

(b)(v) The applicant describes a plan to provide accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The electronic system, North Star, will generate team meeting notices for any student who is below the 20th and 50th percentile range. The applicant indicates that the teams will design action plans and all data will be stored in the North Star electronic portfolio system. The applicant describes the interventions that will be implemented, when needed, to a student's Individualized Learning Plan. However, this is a reactive plan, and only targeted at lowest performing students. There is no plan for making accommodations and high-quality strategies for all high-need students, such as English Language Learners, or other students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support.

(c) The applicant describes mechanisms that are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. The applicant has been using North Star Educational Tools for three years and effectively demonstrates that this tool allows for notes and data to be entered into the student dashboard daily, allowing all stakeholders to have Asynchronous communication. The applicant describes the student-based technology initiative in which schools participating in the grant will increase their use of technology to enhance learning and open up the community as a learning lab. The applicant demonstrates that devices will be used to integrate technology into inquiry, research, publishing, and performance. The applicant indicates that students will learn how to do screen casting, blogging, research, writing and publishing, ebooks, listening centers, smart notebook pages, MP3s, photo collages, and electronic graphing of data.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant indicates that the proposed plan will improve learning and teaching, but the applicant did not provide all of the details as to how it will occur. The applicant effectively describes how the North Star Educational Tools Capacity Building response to Intervention Model will be followed to track the growth of all learners. The applicant indicates that data will be used to drive instruction, to inform professional development, and to determine the direction of action research coaching. The applicant did not describe all of the components a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the 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 applicant did not describe a clear plan for students to be involved in high-quality content, including digital learning content aligned with college- and career-ready standards. The applicant did not describe an approach to learning that includes high-need students, in an age appropriate manner, to be able to understand that what they are learning is key to their ability to accomplish goals. The applicant did not describe a plan for students to have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i)(ii) The applicant describes the strategic planning process in which District 196 set equity and access as a priority. The applicant recognized a need to align RtI, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), professional development, and leadership development to ensure all students, staff and leaders develop to their highest potential. The Literacy Collaborative is the model that proposes to develop local capacity for individualized learning for all learners to raise student achievement for all learners. The applicant indicates that training in learning teams will support their ability to support the implementation of personalized learning environments, but the applicant did not describe the details on how this will occur. The applicant indicates that the District Leadership Team is using the Literacy Collaborative model, to remove instructional silos, and to monitor their goal for a unified team focused on learners and learning.

(a)(iii) The applicant describes the Capacity Building RtI Model, with interventions, based on the North Star Educational Tools data that is entered into the student dashboard daily, that are added to the student's Individualized Learning Plan.

(a)(iv) The applicant indicates that training will be developed to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness through professional development, PLC work, and action research coaching, but the applicant did not describe how recommendations, supports, and interventions will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness.

(b)(i)(ii)(iii) The applicant indicates that participating educators will have access to tools, data, and resources that will help them identify optimal learning approaches that will respond to individual student academic needs and interests. The applicant did not describe the plan on how educators will receive the training to be able to use the tools, data, and resources. The applicant describes specific processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches. The applicant indicates that the North Star Educational Tools allow notes and data to be entered into the student dashboard daily, allowing all stakeholders to have Asynchronous communication. The applicant describes how the North Star Educational Tools provide visual displays of data to enable teachers, administrators, and parents to make real-time strategic decisions for students' learning needs. The applicant demonstrates how time-series graphs depict trend-lines in relation to the date of specific individualized intervention plans to demonstrate when and how the student is responding.

(c)(i)(ii) The applicant describes the State legislation that was recently passed to evaluate teachers and ensure growth in student achievement. This evaluation system will assess the ability of school leaders and school leadership teams to be able to use their training, tools, data, and resources to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. The evaluations will be revised to be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. There are 13 components of the Minnesota State law that are being used by the District team to write the evaluation plan. The evaluation is required to be aligned with the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers (MN Rule 8710.2000); and bases a percentage of a teacher's evaluation on growth data from assessments.

(d) The applicant indicates that the new licensed staff and administration evaluation plan will allow District 196 to collect data on highly effective and effective teachers. The applicant indicates that the goal of the proposed Literacy Collaborative implementation is to get to 100% of highly effective teachers. If the goal is to get to 100% of highly effective teachers, the applicant did not provide a plan on how they will use this data each year to reach the goal of increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (mathematics and science), and special areas (such as special education).

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant indicates that training in learning teams will support their ability to support the implementation of personalized learning environments, but the applicant did not describe the details on how this will occur. The applicant indicates that participating educators will have access to tools, data, and resources that will help them identify optimal learning approaches that will respond to individual student academic needs and interests. The applicant did not describe the plan on how educators will receive the training to be able to use the tools, data, and resources. The applicant describes the Capacity Building RtI Model, with interventions, based on the North Star Educational

Tools data that is entered into the student dashboard daily, that are added to the student's Individualized Learning Plan. The applicant describes the State legislation that was recently passed to evaluate teachers and ensure growth in student achievement. The applicant did not provide a plan on how they will use the data on effective teachers and highly effective teachers to reach the goal of increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (mathematics and science), and special areas (such as special education).

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant did not provide evidence on how the LEA central office will be organized to provide support and services to all participating schools to facilitate personalized learning. The applicant describes the District 196 Integration and Educational Equity Plan for 2011-2014, to achieve the goals of racial balance and educational equity in the school district. This plan supports the District-wide efforts to eliminate the racial predictability and disproportionality of student achievement. The applicant indicates that after the two cohorts of RtI lead teachers are trained in the training school within the District, and all buildings are through their field year of training teachers, the District will consider becoming a regional training site for Literacy Collaborative Coaches.

(b) The applicant describes the practices that facilitate personalized learning by providing school leadership teams in the participating schools. The applicant clearly demonstrates that the building level Literacy Leadership Team is responsible for guiding the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative at its school. District 196 is developing a training school within the District. This school houses the training site and classrooms open for action research coaching and action research professional development in training RtI Lead Teachers. The applicant described the process that the District went through to change the school calendar to enable teachers to have time at regular intervals throughout the school year for professional learning, when they can analyze student data, collaborate with colleagues, and adjust instruction to address the needs of individual students. This change resulted in converting three student contact days to data analysis and instructional alignment days during the year; each one to be placed in the middle of the trimester. The calendar change also enabled the District to shift the existing two days of professional development to the end of trimester one and two.

(c) District 196 did not describe the practices, policies, and rules that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery through credit by exam.

(d) District 196 did not describe the practices, policies, and rules indicating that students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards by allowing multiple opportunities to meet mastery.

(e) The applicant indicates that learning resources will meet the needs of the students at the following District schools: an Area Learning Center alternative high school for those more successful in a non-traditional setting; a K-12 special education school for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities (Dakota Ridge); and a special education school serving young adults ages 18-21 (Transition Plus and Pathway). However, the applicant did not describe how learning resources and instructional practices will be adaptable and full accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the medium range of points because District 196 did not describe a clear plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and rules, to facilitate personalized learning. The applicant describes practices, but not policies and rules, that facilitate personalized learning by providing school leadership teams in the participating schools. The applicant did not describe how the central office will be organized to provide support for the proposed project to facilitate personalized learning. District 196 did not describe the practices, policies, and rules that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery through credit by exam.

District 196 did not describe the practices, policies, and rules indicating that students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards by allowing multiple opportunities to meet mastery. The applicant did not provide a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) to support project implementation through comprehensive policies.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant did not describe a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student and educator with the support and resources that they need, when and where they are needed. The applicant indicates that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, will have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the proposed project. The applicant describes the following LEA and school District practice and programming to support the Literacy Collaborative at the District level: District 196 Strategic Goals for 2011-2016; District 196 Integration and Educational Equity Plan for 2011-2014; Building-Level Literacy Teams; District Level Continuous Improvement Plan; and Building Level Continuous Improvement Plan.

(b)(c) The applicant describes the North Star Data System that includes tools for parents to have online access to their child's dashboard and electronic portfolio; a closed video site for training on home-work helps and electronic tool use; a new report card system to incorporate Common Core Standards and Performance measures in a continuum; rubrics for performance measures available for downloads, and screen casts of instructions for performance measures will be available for parents and students; tools for teacher to be able to access webinars, samples of charts and performance information.

(d) The applicant did not describe the LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by ensuring that schools use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data. The applicant describes the capacity building data system, North Star Educational Tools RtI system, which captures data and generates comprehensive reports to provide a view of students' academic performance. The applicant indicates that this data enables teachers, administrators, and parents to make real-time strategic decisions for students' learning needs.

This criterion is scored in the medium range of points because the applicant did not describe a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student and educator with the support and resources that they need, when and where they are needed. The applicant did not describe the LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by ensuring that schools use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data. The applicant describes the following LEA and school District policy and programming to support the Literacy Collaborative at the District level: District 196 Strategic Goals for 2011-2016; District 196 Integration and Educational Equity Plan for 2011-2014; Building-Level Literacy Teams; District Level Continuous Improvement Plan; and Building Level Continuous Improvement Plan.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Independent District 196 proposes to implement a few components of a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the deliverables, and the overall credibility of the plan) for continuous improvement that focuses on improving student outcomes.

The applicant did not describe the parties responsible for implementing the activities or a clear timeline for the proposed plan. The applicant indicates that all District 196 elementary and middle schools follow the Human Performance Improvement continuous improvement cycle to plan for rigorous improvement in student achievement. The applicant indicates that the Literacy Collaborative will be monitored through this six-step continuous improvement process. The applicant describes the needs assessment process that will be used to make adjustments and revisions during implementation (aligning the stages of needs assessment with the description of each stage). The applicant describes the eleven-step process for building level continuous improvement. The applicant did not describe how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top-District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the district did not describe all of the components of a high-quality plan for implementing the rigorous continuous improvement process. The applicant did not describe the parties responsible for implementing the activities or a clear timeline for the proposed plan. The applicant indicates that all District 196 elementary and middle schools follow the Human Performance Improvement continuous improvement cycle to plan for rigorous improvement in student achievement. The applicant indicates that the Literacy Collaborative will be monitored through this six-step continuous improvement process. The applicant describes the needs assessment process that will be used to make adjustments and revisions during implementation (aligning the stages of needs assessment with the description of each stage). The applicant describes the eleven-step process for building level continuous improvement. The applicant did not describe how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top-District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Independent District 196 describes a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) identifying strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders throughout this application. However, the deliverables are not clear for the continuous improvement plan for ongoing communication and engagements. The applicant presents a District Results Communication Plan aligning the following components of the plan: project phase (roll out; evaluation planning; data collection; reporting results); stakeholders - target audience; key message; objective; approach; responsibility and frequency; and comments/concerns.

The applicant indicates that participants from all areas of the organization will be able to continuously assess and monitor needs, share best practices, provide feedback, participate in decision-making, and assist in making necessary adjustments to the RTT-D initiatives.

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the high range because the applicant describes most of the components of a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for ongoing communication and engagement throughout the application. However, the deliverables are not clear for the continuous improvement plan for ongoing communication and engagements.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly describes 12 performance measures, overall, and annual targets for the required and applicant-proposed performance measures.

The applicant clearly describes the following assessments that will measure progress toward the required and applicant-proposed performance measures: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA; 4, 5, 6; meets or exceeds proficiency; all increases based on 6% growth per year; ELL increases based on value added research percentages on Literacy Collaborative; Special education 16% per year); Concepts about Print - From an Observation Survey (PreK; all increases based on 6% growth); Benchmark Assessment System Text Leveling (K, 1, 2, 3; must pass comprehension, fluency, and accuracy measures to pass a level - all increases based on 6% growth); attendance (4, 5, 6; once baseline is achieved, the goal will be 100% attendance for target group); and discipline referrals (4, 5, 6; once baseline is achieved, the goal will be 0% discipline referrals for target group).

For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant clearly describes the following: (a) its rationale for selecting that measure; and (b) how the measure will 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. The applicant did not describe the following: (c) how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

All Population (Required Performance Measures): The applicant effectively demonstrate the following performance measures, overall, by subgroup, and the annual targets for the following measures:

- a. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup whose teacher of record and principal are a highly effective teacher and a highly effective principal; and
- b. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal are an effective teacher and an effective principal.

The applicant effectively demonstrates that the eventual goal of the Literacy Collaborative implementation is to get to 100% of highly effective teachers.

The applicant describes the required and applicant-proposed performance measures (PreK a.b.c.c.c.) overall, but not by subgroup, with the annual targets. The performance measures are ambitious and achievable, overall.

The applicant thoroughly describes the required and applicant-proposed performance measures (4-8 a.b.b.b.c.c.), overall, by subgroup, and the annual targets. The performance measures are ambitious and achievable, overall and by subgroup.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant describes the required and applicant-proposed performance measures (PreK a.b.c.c.c.) overall, but not by subgroup, with the annual targets. The performance measures are ambitious and achievable, overall. The applicant thoroughly describes the required and applicant-proposed performance measures (4-8 a.b.b.b.c.c.), overall, by subgroup, and the annual targets. The performance measures are ambitious and achievable, overall and by subgroup. The applicant effectively demonstrates that the eventual goal of the Literacy Collaborative implementation is to get to 100% of highly effective teachers. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant describes the following: (a) its rationale for selecting that measure; and (b) how the measure will 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. The applicant did not

describe the following: (c) how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

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

5

0

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for evaluating the effectiveness of investments.

This criterion is scored a 0 because the applicant did not provide a high-quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments, such as the effectiveness of professional development or the use of technology. It is unclear how the applicant plans to continuously improve its plans when adjustments and revisions during implementation are required.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The funds identified for the application include \$5,254,684 from RTT-D for funds to support the project and \$435,611,484 (from other sources). The applicant did not identify these other sources.

(b) The applicant provides a specific breakdown for personnel (\$2,100,000), fringe benefits (\$413,533), travel (\$97,500) equipment (\$1,096,000 - Year 2), supplies (\$400,000), contractual (\$00), training stipends (\$1,023,360), and indirect costs (\$123,791). The general supplies (literacy initiative instructional materials) are minimal and reasonable for successful implementation. The applicant indicates that the training stipends will be paid for 246 licensed teachers to receive 40 hours of training (District literacy targeted staff development) per year at \$26/hour. The equipment (\$1,096,000) is for the 1:1 technology initiative that is a one-time expense to purchase single user devices, such as an iPad or Chrome book, for each student (3,655 students at \$300/device) to support literacy instruction.

(c)(i) The applicant did not provide a clear rationale for investments and priorities including a description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal. The applicant indicates that District 196 state and federal funds will be used to assist in paying for the literacy coaches, staff development, and 1:1 technology in the remaining 13 elementary and 5 middle schools in the District. However, the applicant did not describe the specific District 196 state and federal funds.

(c)(ii) District 196 did not describe the rationale for investments and priorities for the funding that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. The applicant indicates that the budget for the RTT-D proposal will fund salaries for the Literacy Collaborative that requires the District to hire and support district level trainers, RtI lead teachers, who work at the building level with classroom teachers. All of the teachers and trainers involved in the Literacy Collaborative must participate in staff development and on-going training. The equipment (\$1,096,000) is for the 1:1 technology initiative that is a one-time expense to purchase single user devices, such as an iPad or Chrome book, for each student to support literacy instruction.

Overall, Independent School District 196 identifies all of the funds that will support the project. The funds identified for the application include \$5,254,684 from RTT-D for funds to support the project and \$435,611,484 (from other sources). The applicant did not provide a clear rationale for investments and priorities including a description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal.

District 196 did not describe the strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. Therefore, this criterion is scored in the medium range of points.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

District 196, as a result of its strategic process, included this goal for sustainability: Strategy Four - Develop and implement sustainable strategies to increase sustainable strategies to increase collaboration between the District and the community partners. The applicant will accomplish this strategy by establishing a structure that will support new and existing partnerships; and increasing partnerships by enhancing relationships among schools and

between schools and the community. The applicant demonstrates that the Literacy Collaborative Plan, will build partnerships with business, service organizations, and government entities. The applicant will build strong partnerships and participation in the Inquiry Units of Study. The District has partnered with Ohio State and Lesley Universities to implement the Literacy Collaborative data driven continuous improvement model. The applicant did not describe all of the components of a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant did not describe how District 196 will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

The applicant indicates that District 196 State and federal funds will be used to assist in paying for the literacy coaches, staff development, and 1:1 technology in the remaining 13 elementary and 5 middle schools in the District. The applicant did not describe a specific plan for this support from State and local government leaders and financial support to sustain the project's goals.

This criterion is scored in the lower range of medium points because the applicant describes a goal and strategies for sustainability and indicates that the District 196 State and federal funds will be used to sustain the project. The applicant did not describe a specific plan for the support from State and local government leaders and financial support to sustain the project's goals. The applicant did not describe how District 196 will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
The applicant did not address the Competitive Preference Priority. Therefore, this criterion is scored a 0.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Independent School District 196 addresses Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments by describing how it will build on the four core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching:

- 1. Establishing a standards-based aligned curriculum and assessments system:** The applicant indicates that the District 196 Literacy Collaborative is built on the Minnesota Common Core Standards. The applicant demonstrates that the proposed model is grounded in genre led inquiry web units, which are both fiction and nonfiction. The applicant indicates that the nonfiction informational units integrate content standards and all units identify learning targets with published learning goals and performance assessments that monitor progress and inform differentiated instruction. The applicant indicates that each unit is based on a synthesis of the Fountas and Pinnell Continuums of Literacy Learning and the Common Core Standards Continuums. Each learner has an individualized learning plan that is monitored by the development of an electronic portfolio of performance assessments.
- 2. Implementing data driven instruction, data driven coaching, data driven staff development, and data driven individual instruction:** The applicant indicates that the Literacy Collaborative District Trainers provide the initial 350 hour training course and coach each RtI (Response to Intervention) Lead Teacher. The RtI Lead Teacher learns how to implement data driven instruction, data driven coaching, and data driven staff development. The applicant describes how the RtI Lead Teachers collect data throughout the year for their high, medium, and low case study students, so that they learn how to differentiate their instruction for each child in their class. The applicant demonstrates how the RtI Lead Teachers are trained in action research coaching to use an inquiry-based action research coaching cycle during the training year.
- 3. Effective teachers and leaders:** The applicant describes their reform vision that demonstrates that highly-trained teachers use coaching and reflection data to determine their staff development. Staff development is differentiated depending on the needs of the children and staff in each individual school.
- 4. Turning around the lowest-achieving schools:** The applicant indicates that Interstate 196 will use improved instructional and data driven decision-making practices to turn around the lowest achieving schools.

The applicant describes the literacy model with an emphasis on learners: knowing that they need information; knowing where to look to find that information; knowing how to check the sources, and authors of those sources, to see if they are valid; researching multiple sources and gathering

information from each source; synthesizing the information; creating a source to share their new information; and publishing the information and sharing their research with others. The applicant will use performance standards for every unit that allows for whole group, small group, and individual sharing of research. The applicant articulates a reform vision that describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. The applicant describes teaching and learning for whole groups, small groups, including participating in centers for managed independent learning, and individual sharing of research. The applicant demonstrates that the classroom experience allows for students to develop a sense of research interests and styles, as well as to develop strong passions for learning in different areas, so that they leave elementary school with their initial college and career goals set.

The applicant describes the state context for implementation, by demonstrating that District 196 was an early adopter of the State of Minnesota Quality Compensation Model. This model includes the following components: IGP (Individual Growth Plan); writing an IGP; components of an IGP (student achievement goal/plan; professional development focus/plan; documentation); writing a realistic student achievement goal (**SMART** - Specific, Measurement, Attainable, Results, Time frame); building site goal relates to the Individual Growth Plan (state mandated); purpose of the IGP checklist; individual professional development goals relate to student achievement goal; expectations of the action plan; peer leader meetings; documentation portion of the IGP; requirement to be a member of a collegial team; collegial team members may all have the same IGP; access to IGP; approval of IGP; compensation for writing IGP; staff are required to write fall IGP using Reciprocity on the District's Intranet; confirmation that individual staff student achievement goal was met; and access to Charlotte Danielson's book and Frameworks to assist in writing IGP. This Quality Compensation Model includes the requirements for District 196 to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

The applicant indicates that the District 196 infrastructure supports personalized learning by shifting towards a capacity building model for training, instruction, and learning. The applicant provides a description of the paradigm shift of the Literacy Collaborative, with a comparison of the traditional model to the capacity building model, which is the model for implementing the RTT-D proposed plan. Each student will have an individualized learning plan that is monitored by the development of an electronic portfolio of performance assessments. The applicant describes the strategic planning process in which District 196 set equity and access as a priority. The applicant recognized a need to align RtI, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), professional development, and leadership development to ensure all students, staff and leaders develop to their highest potential. The Literacy Collaborative is the model that proposes to develop local capacity for individualized learning for all learners to raise student achievement for all learners. The applicant describes the training in learning teams that supports their ability to implement personalized learning environments.

In summary, Independent School District 196's proposal is focused on building on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students. District 196 will support excellent teachers and leaders through professional development, data training, technology-enabled professional learning communities, and clear career pathways to increase teacher capacity. The applicant demonstrates that the building level Literacy Leadership Team is responsible for guiding the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative at its school. The Literacy Collaborative is the model that proposes to develop local capacity for individualized learning for all learners to raise student achievement for all learners.

Therefore, Independent District 196 has met Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments.

Total	210	92
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0211MN-2 for Independent School District 196

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal articulates many aspects of a comprehensive and coherent vision of their reform. For example, the proposal describes what the classroom experience might be like for students and teachers. For teachers, there is a description of the workshop model describing different modes of instruction. Second, the proposal provides a description of classroom activities from a child named Chase's perspective.

The reform plan of work is based on the work of the Literacy Collaborative and this work builds on the three of the core educational assurance areas. This work is built upon the Minnesota Common Core State Standards. For instance, the professional development model seeks to build teachers' capacity based on data collected by coaches. This proposal's program of work seeks to deepen the student learning experience through the comprehensive model of literacy, which conceives of learners as critical consumers, users and creators of text-based products and resources. Moreover, to encourage accelerated learning for students, the vision presents an approach to teacher professional development that attempts to provide coaching support to improve instruction guided by Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development.

It is not clear from the proposal how the vision of reform addresses school turnarounds or school transformations. Moreover, the proposal's vision does not make evident the approach to personalized learning nor how the design of the program will support personalized learning experiences for students.

Also, although the proposal does mention the importance of data-driven instruction and data-driven coaching to the Literacy Collaborative model, it is unclear from the proposal's vision the extent to which the LEA has been building and maintaining a data system to measure student growth and success.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal suggests that the program approach will lead to an effective implementation by the LEA. For example, the proposal states that the schools that will be selected for this project consist of five of the lowest performing elementary schools from an initial cohort piloting a literacy intervention. This was part of a largest strategic planning process that the school district underwent and through analyses of data, they determined the literacy intervention was a useful strategy to improve student success.

Additionally, the middle school, to which the majority of students from these five schools feed into, was selected to have their sixth grade participate and another school focusing on special education students that has the largest achievement gaps was chosen. The names of the schools are listed in the proposal and the number of participating students for each school and the total overall number of participating students is listed, 3655. Furthermore, of these participating students, a percentage is provided for the number of these students qualified for free or reduced lunch.

While there was some selection criteria described based on the schools mentioned above, it was not clear why the overall selection of schools was focused on elementary and how schools were selected for different cohorts.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides many of the elements of a high quality plan for how they intend the reform to scale up. First, they present this proposed program of work within the context of a district wide improvement process which is anchored by a vision for improving literacy and strategies to realize the vision. These strategies include focusing on teaching and learning, early childhood education, ensuring educational equity and building partnerships.

In addition, the proposal provides a list of activities to promote the scaling up of this work. These activities are grouped by groupings of schools—whether they are in cohort 1, cohort 2 or all of the schools—and some of the roles within those groupings of schools, such as leadership team, instructional coaches and Rtl Lead Teachers in the classroom. Moreover, the deliverables that will come from the activities are provided, such as professional development units of study and the timeline for the activities are provided by the year.

However, the scale up plan does not entirely speak for itself. It is not clearly explained what all of the activities in the plan are nor are deliverables provided for all of the activities. It is also not clear who is responsible for all of the activities since the Rtl Lead Teacher appears to be listed as the prominent actor or actors to carry out much of the work. Finally, it is not clear how the program will scale up beyond the service schools, for example, the middle and high schools.

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

The proposal includes a list of performance targets that suggest that the program of work will likely lead to improved student learning. For example, the proposal includes tables with identified goals for grade level performance measures in reading and math. The goals are broken up by student sub group and are listed annually through the 2017-2018 school year. These annual projected goals within the proposal not only guide the work toward overall student achievement, but also the lessening of the achievement gap defined in the proposal. The proposal also includes annual goals for the college enrollment broken up by student population sub group.

However, the proposal does not present goals that would eliminate the achievement gap. Moreover, the proposal does not include graduation rates as one of the indicators of student progress toward success. Moreover, while college enrollment projections are provided in the proposal, these projections appear us to offer goals for the whole district, but those students participating in this program—are those students already committed to the work of teaching.

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	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal describes that the LEA has demonstrated some level of prior success. First, the proposal points out that a focus on literacy as a strategy for school and student improvement has a long history in the district going back years previous to the current program. In 2010-2011, the proposal notes that there was a pilot project implemented and needs were identified for helping the teachers effectively implement the program.</p> <p>Professional development was provided for teachers to implement the Literacy Collaborative program and a focus on reading was put in place to carry out their Response to Intervention program. This suggests that the LEA has experience achieving significant reforms in the past. As part of this work, student data related to diagnostic reading assessments were made available to teachers with the intention of them using the data for instruction.</p> <p>The proposal provides achievement data in the form of proficiency scores over the past four years. In these charts, proficiency data are provided for reading, math and science. In general, these data remain relatively flat suggesting that their previous work has not had demonstrable impact on student performance. Moreover, it is not clear that the examples of graduation data and college enrollment data are provided to further argue for the LEAs prior track record of success.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates evidence of LEA transparency in several ways. For example, the proposal states that the Finance Department is responsible for compiling district budgetary and financial data. Data related to personnel and non-personnel expenditures are made public on a district web page and the web site's URL is provided. Each year, the annual budget is presented to the school board and these presentations are open to the public. Also, these presentations were presented on a local television channel and streamed online.</p> <p>However, the proposal does not make clear that the actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only and instructional staff will be provided.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal communicates the context for implementation and how the LEA has sufficient autonomy to carry out this work. For example, the proposal provides a list of key activities that have taken place in the past three years that have represented a shift to a more individualized or personalized learning environments in the schools. This includes actions carried out by different levels of the LEA such as the superintendent, school leadership and even the union president. And these actions represented activities such as presentations, shifting the school calendar and creating an action plan for implementing the new program of work.</p> <p>The proposal also mentions the recent Minnesota state legislation codifying and supporting teacher evaluation systems. This aligns with the use of the teacher evaluation system presented in the proposal.</p>		

However, the proposal does not make clear to communicate the state educational policy context and how that policy context hinders or enables the LEA to implement their program of work. For example, it does not make evident the regulatory requirements of the state and how the LEA is anticipating these as they seek to implement their program of work.

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

15

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes a variety of ways that the LEA has sought to engage stakeholder support. For example, as this work has been developing since 2011, the action plan for improvement in the proposal demonstrates that the LEA leadership has sought to communicate their plans based on a needs assessment. Moreover, at least one purpose of the presentations has been to receive feedback on the work and revise the program of work based on the feedback.

In addition, a 60-member task force was formed that consisted of parents, staff, school board members and community leaders. These task force members attended informational meetings and planning meetings to ensure that different perspectives would be taken into account for this work. The proposal also notes that opportunities have been created for teachers and administrators to discuss student work and provide testimonials of how instruction is carrying out. Also, it is worth noting that the proposal includes letters of support from a variety of community members expressing approval of this proposed program of work.

However, the proposal does not specifically address the extent to which the staff approves of the plan of work; for example, by providing a percentage of staff that are in favor of the proposed work. Moreover, the proposal does not make clear how parents and community members will be engaged in this work outside of the task force that was formed.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>In presenting the proposal's model of learning, the proposal offers a traditional model of how literacy and literacy instruction has been approached in schools and the capacity building model. This is characterized by literacy practices like reading and writing being tools for inquiry rather than ends unto themselves. This demonstrates that the learners will be guided to learn critical academic skills.</p> <p>In addition, the capacity building model consists of an extensive use of data to guide instruction and a focus on instructional coaching is put in place to ensure that teachers are reflective about their practice and receive the necessary support to improve their instructional practice. This also asserts the role of the teacher in supporting the constructivist learning experience.</p> <p>However, the LEA's approach to learning is not clear with respect to the role parents play in facilitating learning. Also, although the proposal states the importance of student data for the instructional arrangements, it is not clear how these data may support students' interest-based learning nor does it suggest a reasonable approach to sequencing the learners through a personalized learning trajectory.</p> <p>Also, the proposal does not make explicit the ways that students may be exposed to diverse cultures to deepen their learning.</p> <p>Finally, the proposal does not make clear the way in which high-needs students will be provided with appropriate support based on the program's approach to learning.</p> <p>Moreover, the proposal does not include elements of a high quality plan to implement their vision for learning. This includes not making clear what the activities will be to support this vision, who will be responsible for those activities, what the time frame will be to carry out those activities and what deliverables will come from those activities.</p> <p>Finally, the proposal does not make evident what the mechanisms would be to ensure that students can productively use tools and resources to manage their learning.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal conveys an approach to teacher professional learning and development that relies on instructional coaching as the primary mode of support. Based on student artifacts and student performance data, the coaches can provide need-based training to the educators. Moreover, to ensure the coaches are able to provide the appropriate training for the teachers, the coaches also will receive in-depth training.

Guiding the teachers' use of student data for instruction, the proposal states that teachers will carry out an Rtl model based on reading performance data. These data-based interventions will consist of tiers of intervention that provide guides to teachers of how to intervene instructionally.

The proposal also mentions that the LEA has been utilizing the North Star suite of educational tools to support their use of data for instruction. These tools provide data collection, analysis and visualization capabilities.

The use of student data for instruction is augmented by Professional Learning Communities that arrange regular data meetings among teachers. This further suggests that teachers will have support to interpret and use student data for instruction.

The proposal also indicates that there will be school leadership development and social structures to enable principals and instructional coaches to communicate with each other and with teachers about instruction. This includes observing instruction, professional development trainings and coaching opportunities. However, it is worth noting that the primary leadership support is provided from instructional coaches and lead teachers and not from the principals.

The proposal does not make clear how the school leadership will engage with and use student data to improve instruction and / or school processes.

Moreover, the proposal does not include elements of a high quality plan to implement their vision for teaching and leadership. This includes not making clear what the activities will be to support this vision, who will be responsible for those activities, what the time frame will be to carry out those activities and what deliverables will come from those activities.

Finally, it is not apparent how the teachers will have access to and constantly monitor student achievement in the process of meeting college and career standards.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal states that the program of work is tied to the strategic plan established by the school district. This plan is connected to the district's vision of achieving equity for all students.

To support the implementation of this program of work's focus on professional development, the proposal states that a regional training school is being developed to train teachers and build opportunities for professional growth. In addition, the district is committed to recruiting a strong base of teachers and expanding the North Star data system to support teachers' use of student data for instruction.

The proposal also states that building level literacy teams will be established to monitor the goals on an ongoing basis and make the necessary decisions and actions to ensure that the program of work is on track for success. This culminates in an end of year report to reflect on the implementation.

Yet, the proposal does not make clear how this program of work will support students earning credit based on mastery of content or skills. In addition, the proposal does not make certain that students have the possibility to demonstrate mastery through multiple assessment modes and opportunities.

Although the proposal communicates that there will be building based literacy leadership teams, it is not apparent what sort of autonomy the school based leadership teams will have to implement the program of work.

It is worth noting as well that the proposal does not make clear the resources and adaptations of curricula that will be made available for students with high needs such as learning disabilities and English Language Learners.

Finally, the proposal does not include elements of a high quality plan to implement their vision for project implementation support. This includes not making clear what the activities will be to support this vision, who will be responsible for those activities, what the time frame will be to carry out those activities and what deliverables will come from those activities.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal does not make clear the ways in which parents will be provided with IT support. Although the proposal states that the North Star Data system would be expanded through this work, it is not evident if the data system will be interoperable with other forms of data or other data sources. Moreover, it is not clear the extent to which parents and students will be able to export their information in an open data format. Yet, the proposal does point out that parents will have access to the data system as well as online support with information on students' units of study.</p> <p>The proposal provides some examples of how teachers will receive support for use of the North Star data system, which would include webinars, blog entries and guest instructors to support teachers in their integration of the data system and the Literacy Collaborative model of instruction.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the proposal does not include elements of a high quality plan to implement their vision for an infrastructure to support personalized learning. This includes not making clear what the activities will be to support this vision, who will be responsible for those activities, what the time frame will be to carry out those activities and what deliverables will come from those activities.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal conveys that continuous improvement processes are important to this program of work. For example, the proposal provides district level and building level continuous improvement into steps of actions that inform a process of collecting data, analyzing data and acting on the data. These processes are framed by a specific approach to a needs assessment and a methodology of root cause analysis. It is worth noting that each staff member, at the end of the building level continuous improvement process, must share what they have learned through their improvement process by sharing a case of one learner.</p> <p>Nevertheless, despite the steps of the continuous improvement process being explicated in the proposal, it is not entirely evident when or at what frequency these steps would take place, who would carry out the steps and what deliverables would come from the activities. Moreover, it is not clear how what is learned from the continuous improvement process would be shared publically.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal has included a district results communications plan that possesses many of the attributes of a high quality plan. For example, the plan includes various activities intended to communicate different aspects and phases of the project. For instance, the district trainer communicated to the superintendent and the school board about the program of work at a school board meeting. Other examples include monthly opportunities for the district trainer to communicate and gain support for the project from the participating schools' principals. Overall, the plan includes the activities that make up the communications plan, who will be responsible for those activities are and whom their audience is. Also, the timeframe or frequency of the activities is provided in the plan. However, it is not clear what the deliverables might be from the communication plan's activities.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal states that for performance measures, the program of work will include the QComp system. This system includes a reflection on practice as well as student achievement data.</p> <p>The proposal includes the required performance measures. Specifically, the proposal includes performance measures related to student achievement and students' exposure to highly effective teachers and targets are broken up by population subgroup. In particular, the proposal focuses on reading performance measures and also includes attendance and</p>		

discipline referrals as part of the proposed work. For all of the measures except for attendance and discipline referrals, the proposal provides baseline data. This suggests that the targets are realistic in their ability to show incremental improvement.

It is not clear from the proposal how the measures will provide leading information that may be adapted for furthering the implementation's goal. Moreover, the proposal does not make evident how the measures will be modified over time to ensure that the measures are gauging the progress of the implementation.

Finally, the proposal does not include a clear description of rationale for all of the performance measures.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: It is not clear that there is a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the investments within this proposal.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The proposal identifies the funds from other sources that will be used for the budget. Although the specific sources are not named, the budget does list extra expenditures to cover literacy coaches, staff development, and technology devices. The proposal provides a reasonable list of expenditures to ensure that this project will be implemented successfully. The budget specifies that some of the expenditures are ongoing expenses, such as literacy initiative instructional materials, and some expenditures are one time expenses, such as technology equipment. While the budget provides an explanation and partial rationale for the expenses, it is not always clear what the expenses are for and why they are worth the expense. For example, technology equipment is listed, but it is not clear how these tablets specifically support the literacy work and what additional infrastructural elements would be necessary to ensure that the tablets would be usable and useful for the instructional environment.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The proposal does not specifically make clear what the high quality plan is for the financial sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The proposal does not specifically address this competitive preference priority.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The proposal does not meet the absolute priority of personalized learning environments in several ways. However, the		

proposal does not meet all of the needed elements to support their vision of a personalized learning environment. For example, the proposal does not comprehensively address how the work builds on the core educational assurance areas. In addition, the proposal does not provide a coherent plan for how student access to the most effective educators will be expanded.

Despite this, it is worth pointing out some of the strengths with respect to the absolute priority. For example, the new learning model that the program of work envisions focuses on generative learning skills, such as having aspects of literacy like reading and writing being tools for inquiry. This positions literacy as a context for developing critical thinking and problem solving skills. Moreover, throughout the proposal the program of work emphasizes instructional coaching to ensure that teachers develop the capacity for improving student learning. Through a gap analysis and display of population subgroup data, the proposal highlights the need to address the achievement gap that exists in their school district. Finally, as evidenced by one of the performance measures, the proposed work seeks to expand students' access to the most effective educators.

Total	210	92
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0211MN-3 for Independent School District 196

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(1)

The applicant has described a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. In 2010, MN District 196 developed a strategic plan with the goals focused on providing students with the supports they needed to achieve. As a follow up, the district conducted a needs analysis which ultimately led to the district partnering with the Literacy Collaborative to help bridge the identified needs. The Literacy Collaborative focuses on data driven instruction. Using this model, the district indicates that each learner has an individualized learning plan through only a little is provided to allow the reviewer to understand how this learning plan is developed to be individualized to each student. Students are strongly encouraged to pursue research opportunities that match their interests.

Through this partnership with the Literacy Collaborative, educators are trained in Response to Intervention (RTI) which supports data driven instruction and interventions.

Through this new partnership, the district hopes to increase student achievement.

The applicant does not refer to the four core assurance areas in this response but the narrative does address these areas to an extent. Using data to inform instruction is discussed when explaining RTI. The district explains how/what professional development will be provided to support teachers with RTI, but the district does not fully explain how it is recruiting, supporting, and developing effective teachers and principals beyond this mention of PD. The narrative mentions that the district has chosen to support some of its lowest achieving schools but does not explain if these schools meet the definition of low-performing or persistently lowest-achieving defined in the Notice. Finally, the narrative makes little mention of adopting standards and assessments that will support student in preparing for college and career.

The district provides a description of a classroom experience through the point of view of a student. It offers an interesting

perspective on the district's approach to this work. Through the implementation of independent learning centers and independent writing, it sounds as if the applicant is beginning to personalize the classroom but it is unclear how much the student is owning and buying into what he/she is learning based on this narrative.

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

10

6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

District 196 serves approximately 28,000 students. Of these students, 76.7% are white, 7.9% Asian, 9% black, 5.7% Latino, and .7 percent American Indian. 15.9% are qualified for special education and 4.8% are English language learners.

For purposes of this grant, the district chose five of its lowest performing elementary schools, the 6th grade class from the middle school that most students from the selected elementary schools feed in to, and Dakota Ridge, a school that served special education students and has the largest equity and achievement gap in the district. Base on this selection, the total number of participating students is 3,655 with 42.44% of these students coming from low-income families.

Based on the school's strategic plan and subsequent gap analysis, the district developed a plan to support schools. The district decided to train an RTI lead teacher for each of the 18 elementary schools in two cohorts. Schools applied to be a part of the first cohort and the selected elementary schools participated in the first cohort. It is clear why the applicant chose these schools but it is unclear why others were not included. The applicant did not explain its rationale for selecting 7 schools over selecting more or less. Additionally, the applicant does not explain its rationale for only serving elementary schools (with one middle school grade) and not including middle and high schools.

The district did provide the list of participating schools as well the number of participating student, the number from low-income families, the number of high-need students, and the number of participating educators. The number of low-income students and high-need students represent over 40% of the participating students.

The applicant has provided some explanation for selecting its schools but it is not fully explained and therefore, the applicant scores in the medium range.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not address how its reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools in this section. In section (B)(1), the applicant references a scale up plan but it is difficult to understand and does not include many elements of a high quality plan including responsible parties and deliverables. Furthermore, this plan ends in SY 15-16 before the grant is over so this leads to additional questions about if this is scale up plan post-grant or will be occurring in conjunction with the support to be provided during the grant.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) For grades K-2 reading, the applicant has set targets of 100% proficiency by SY 2017-2018. These targets are ambitious but given that the applicant already demonstrates high levels of proficiency for students overall (K-81.21%, 1-83.5%, Grade 2-79.53%), this may be achievable. However, given that the applicant's plan is unclear, as described below, it is unclear if its plan will support this level of achievement.

For grades 3-12 reading, the applicant has set targets for Sy 17-18 ranging from high 70% to high 80% proficiency. Again, given the right plan (though the applicant's proposal in this grant is confusing), these targets may be achievable given that the overall achievement rate is within a reasonable range to expect these gains. However, the applicant has set particularly high growth objectives for some subgroups without explaining how it hopes to advance these groups at this rate. For example, in 3rd grade reading, the applicant is expecting an increase from 38.7% proficiency to 87% proficiency for free/reduced lunch students. In grade 4 reading, the applicant expects ELL students to improve from 18.9% proficiency in Sy 12-13 to 82.4% proficiency in Sy 17-18. Similar issues are seen in later grades.

The applicant has not provided any data for math achievement.

(b) The achievement gap targets are in direct conflict to the student achievement targets set in (A)(4)(a). For example, in kindergarten reading, the Sy 17-18 target is 84.75% proficiency rather than 100%. For grades 1 and 2, the Sy 17-18 targets range (generally between 70-80% proficiency) but do not reach the 100% proficiency target established in (A)(4)(a). Similar problems exist in later grades. For example, the grade 10 targets related to achievement gaps range

between 38.9% and 63.4% rather than the 86.5% target established in (A)(4)(a).

The district's method of establishing its achievement gap targets is further complicated by the fact that it did not always set its gap targets based on the highest performing subgroup. For example, in many grades, Asian/Pacific Islander, not white, is the highest performing subgroup but the targets were based on closing the gap between white students and other subgroups.

(A)(4)(c)

It is unclear how the applicant determined to set its graduation rate targets. All subgroups are expected to have a 90% graduation rate by Sy 17-18. For many of the subgroups, this is quite ambitious and represents a 20-50% increase in graduation rates over a 5 year period. It is troublesome that this is the target established for white students are 90% actually represents a decline from white students' graduate rate of 92.1% in Sy 12-13.

(A)(4)(d)

The targets established for college enrollment rates are ambitious but achievable. On average, the expected increase is 15% overall. However, the 40% jump for American Indian students and 33% increase for Hispanic students is quite dramatic and the applicant has not explained how it hopes to achieve this increase. Additionally, the applicant did not include all subgroups including special education and free/reduced price lunch.

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:		
<p>In response to this selection criterion, the applicant provided information on its strategic plan, needs assessment, and pilot project but provided very little, if any, evidence demonstrating success in the past four years improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, raising the graduation rate or college enrollment rates. The only student achievement data provided is for the participating schools (no districtwide data is provided) and this is only for school-wide achievement on the MCA between 2009-2012. No achievement gap data, graduation rate data, or college enrollment data is provided. In almost every school, math scores dipped between 2010-2011 but the applicant has not explained why and in most cases, the schools have not fully recovered from this dip. In most cases, the science and reading scores has generally held steady though some smaller increases or decreases were seen.</p> <p>The district indicates that the schools selected to participate in the grant are some of the district's lowest achieving but it is unclear if these schools meet the definition of persistently lowest-achieving or low-performing as defined for purposes of this grant. While districts may not have schools that meet this definition, it is unclear if the district thought about these definitions in developing its grant.</p> <p>The applicant does not address how is has made student data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform instruction, participation, and services.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant says that it makes the data described in this selection criterion publicly available. Links are provided by the reviewer cannot view these links so the applicant must be given the benefit of the doubt. Assuming that the applicant makes this data available but has not described any transparency measures beyond the general measures described in the selection criterion, the applicant is awarded a score at the high end of the medium range.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The narrative in (B)(3) does not speak to whether or not the LEA has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State requirements to implement its plan. Later in the narrative the applicant does speak to the state plan to implement a new educator evaluation system but this does not speak to the context for the applicant's whole plan. The applicant did receive a letter of support from the State Department of Education but this letter did not specifically speak to the conditions and level of autonomy for this selection criterion.</p>		

The information specifically discussed under (b)(3) speaks to stakeholder input on a process unrelated to this grant.

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

15

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that stakeholders from the community, businesses, parent groups, teachers, teachers unions, and administrators participated in the strategic planning that led to the Race to the Top grant application. In spring 2011, the superintendent convened a strategic planning task force that included members from the aforementioned groups. However, little evidence is provided to support this or to demonstrate the extent to which these groups were involved. The only letters of support are from the State Department of Education and mayors.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this selection and throughout the application narrative, the applicant fails to provide a clear and cohesive plan as to how it will personalize learning in order to support all students. The applicant's plan is focused on its partnership with the Literacy Collaborative, but it is unclear how it is personalizing learning to the extent requested in this application.

(a) and (b)

The district opens this selection criterion by saying that it supports personalized learning by "shifting towards a capacity building model for training, coaching, instruction, and learning." This capacity building model has the ability to begin to help students to understand that what they are learning is key to their success but the theory behind this model and the expected outcome is not clearly tied to the personalized learning goals articulated in this selection criterion. The district explains that it is adding multi-level text covering different topics in a variety of subject areas, thereby providing students an opportunity to choose in study topics in their area of interest.

The table describing the paradigm shift under the Literacy Collaborative begins to explain how students will be engaged in deeper learning. However, this narrative in this selection criterion or throughout the application does not address how this learning will be personalized for students.

The district further states that through this proposed structure, student and parents will "get an opportunity to choose in their interest areas and parents will enjoy multiple performance measures throughout the units, giving the students the opportunity to ensure mastery of the college and career ready standards so students are prepared for the 21st century." This does not explain how the student will master career and college ready standards and this is not self evident.

References in (C)(1) and again in (C)(2) are made to personalized learning plans (informed by RTI) for the lowest achieving students but this does not address how the average and high performers will be served. Additionally, the work described is largely educator driven and does not speak to how students will own their learning. It is also unclear how students will have access to and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

In this selection criterion, the applicant fails to provide an implementation plan. In (B)(1), the applicant has the outline of a plan but it is insufficient and again, does not speak to how learning will be personalized for students. It speaks to some professional development that will be provided as well as the training and support of an RTI lead teacher but again, this does not address how student learning will be personalized and how teachers will be trained to personalize learning for students. In most cases, the outline simply says that professional development will be provided but provides no detail as to what the professional development will entail. The plan is also missing critical elements of a high quality plan including responsible parties, deliverables, and key goals.

(c)

The applicant provides little information on the mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students.

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

20

5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(c)(2)

The information provided by the applicant is not fully responsive to this selection criterion. This selection criterion asks the applicant to describe a plan for providing educators with the professional development, tools, data, and other resources necessary to personalize learning for students and to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. The chart in (C)(1) describes how professional development will be different under a capacity building model but does not explain how teachers will be learning how to personalize instruction for students. (D)(1) makes mention of a 40 hour training course that teaches the Literacy Collaborative Model of Instruction. It says that this course is provided to all core instruction and intervention teachers.

In (C)(2), the district discusses its PLC system under which teachers, interventionists, coaches, and administrators join together to review student data to meet the needs of students. The process of data review is described but no information is included to describe how this is used to inform instruction for students.

The district describes the use of North Start Educational tools that captures data and generates comprehensive reports to provide information on students and says that teachers, administrators, and parents can make real-time decisions based on this data. The applicant provides a list of information available via this system but does not describe how it is used to inform instruction.

The applicant mentions the integration of technology but this is not adequately described. In this selection criterion, it says that the use of technology will enhance learning. The narrative further says that devices will be used to integrate technology into inquiry, research, publishing, and performance but this explanation is not sufficient as it does not provide any detail or a plan for how this will be done.

The narrative does not describe how school leaders and leadership teams are provided with training on using information from district's teacher evaluation systems to inform individual and collective educator effectiveness.

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The district mentions that the professional development it will provide will lead to greater teacher effectiveness but this response is inadequate.

As described above in (C)(1), the applicant does not provide a high quality plan for the implementation of its proposal.

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's response is not fully responsive to this selection criterion. The district begins by discussing its Integration and Educational Equity Plan, but it is not clear how this is related to this selection criterion. The district then states that it will investigate becoming a training site for Literacy Collaborative Coaches. This will be helpful if the district scales up this plan but does not speak to anything else the applicant is doing to support personalized learning and whether or not schools are provided with sufficient flexibility and autonomy. (E)(1) mentions building level leadership teams and how this team conducts a needs assessment that it turned into a gap analysis. This is turned into an action plan and interventions are created. An assumption can be made that this provides some flexibility to the schools and is evident of support from the district but this connection is not made by the applicant. This response does not speak at all to giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic or giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>In (D)(1), the applicant mentions that the North Start Data System will be expanded to provide additional resources to parents and students. This will also provide tools for teachers who will be able to use the system to track student progress on select indicators. Little mention is made of access to other resources, interoperable data systems, or accessing data in an open data format.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a brief description of its continuous improvement plan. This plan involves working with building leadership teams to conduct a needs assessment which is turned into a gap analysis. This is then turned into an action plan. This plan appears to only happen once a year so it does not seem that the applicant is receiving timely and regular feedback. Furthermore, this plan is missing many elements of a high quality plan include responsible parties and a detailed timeline.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a communication plan, but it is unclear if this is a plan related specifically to the grant proposal or a general communication model. The key messages appear to be focused on ROI and it is not clear that the applicant will be communicating about other aspects of the grant. The frequency of this timeline is fairly clear but when it actually starts and ends is quite confusing.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The chart indicates that 50% of the applicants teachers were rated as highly effective in SY 13-14 and the remaining 50% were rated at effective. The percentage of highly effective teachers increases until it reaches 100% in Sy 17-18. This target seems extremely ambitious and it unlikely to be achieved as it is unlikely that 100% of teachers will be highly effective.</p> <p>The data for effective and highly effective teachers is provided by school rather than by subgroup as required.</p> <p>In the chart detailing Grades prek-3 targets, it is unclear what the performance measure is because it is not described by the applicant. Therefore cannot determine if this is ambitious. Furthermore, the applicant has not provided a non-cognitive measure for prek-3.</p> <p>The district also fails to describe is on track to college and career readiness indicator for grades 4-8 so there is no way to determine if this target is ambitious.</p> <p>For the grades 4-8 student achievement measure, the district indicates that the growth rate will be 6% per year but this is not demonstrated in the targets set for each year. For grade 5, the goal is that all students will be proficient by SY 17-18 but the subgroup targets are not 100%. For the non-cognitive measures for grades 4-8, it is difficult to determine if the targets are ambitious or achievable because no targets are set.</p> <p>The applicant provides little description of how these measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action or how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As discussed in (E)(1), the applicant has provided a plan for continuous improvement but it is unclear that it is tied directly to the RTT-D grant or that all aspects of the grant will be addressed.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants budget is inadequate and poorly justified. There is a line item for literacy training but no budget is provided. The applicant mentions that 3,655 iPads or chromebooks will be purchased but the use for these devices is not adequately explained in the application. The cost for the Literacy Initiative Instructional Materials is not justified. It is estimated that this will cost \$100,000 a year but there is not explanation. The indirect costs are not calculated correctly based on the rate provided by the district. In grants from other sources, the applicant indicates that it will spend almost \$424 million purchasing ipads or chromebooks for students but this is not discussed in any detail in the application.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

0

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not respond to this selection criterion

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not respond to the competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not met the absolute priority. It has failed to provide a coherent and comprehensive plan for how it will personalize learning for students. The applicant has indicated that it will partner with the Literacy Collaborative and implement a framework it believes will improve student achievement. However, the applicant has failed to provide a detailed plan for how this will be implemented and more importantly, it has completely failed to explain how this approach personalizes learning for students. As such, the applicant is not responsive to the requirements of this application. The applicant did not show a prior record of success in its work and as discussed in (a)(4) and (E)(3), failed to set ambitious and achievable performance measures in many cases.

Total	210	61
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