



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0122TX-1 for Mabank Independent School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant will build on its work in four core educational assurance areas by building a team of teachers, (selected based on their student's academic performance) who are "highly trained in instructional based strategies...", well versed in the program, Understanding by Design and in their specific content areas. These teachers will guide, train, and assist other teachers in understanding how their end-of-the-year summative assessments have a role in preparing each grade level student for college and career readiness through personalized learning. Although statements are provided professing teacher expertise and adequacy in carrying out the goals of this selection criteria, applicant provides no evidence to support its claims.</li> <li>• Applicant will utilize DMAC Solutions, which consists of a suite of web-based applications to include State Assessment Portal, TEKSscore, PDAS (Professional Appraisal and Development System), Personal Graduation Plans and RTI (Response to Intervention) portal with electronic student portfolios. LEA has utilized this data management system since 2008, with all teachers using the system to analyze student academic data and upload pertinent information.</li> <li>• Applicant states, "through annual staff analysis conducted by campus and district leaders, positions and programs are evaluated for effectiveness." The applicant claims to be efficient and pay competitive salaries in efforts to retain teachers and principals. Applicant also states that teacher leader positions have been developed based on student academic outcomes. These teacher leaders serve as teacher mentors and provide on-campus professional development. Furthermore, as an incentive to develop, retain and award effective teachers, the applicant offers eight days of paid professional development during the summer months as examples of its effort to develop and maintain highly effective teachers and principals.</li> <li>• Applicant has no schools with the federal designation of "low performing". However, LEA states it will work toward accelerating learning for all students, especially those at their lowest performing schools.</li> <li>• The applicant did not describe what their learning experience would look like. Applicant provides a somewhat ambiguous description of what the classroom experience would look like in their narrative. An example would be: "the district will provide teachers the information, tools, and supports that will enable them to meet the needs of each child and substantially accelerate and deepen each student's learning". A more illustrative description involving use of proposal components was desired for a high-quality plan.</li> <li>• Considering the requirements of this selection criteria, applicant earns mid-point range.</li> </ul>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant provides socio-economic data that supports the inclusion of all schools within the district as meeting RTTD qualification for participation. No selection process or plan for school participation was enacted by LEA. Their decision to include all students is based on their intent to impact the entire district--all six schools.</li> <li>• 65.1% of the 3,426 students are from low-income families and 48% are classified as high-needs as defined by Federal standards.</li> <li>• The applicant has therefore included the entire school district, all student enrollment for participation in the proposal.</li> <li>• It is unclear how LEA will utilize the IDEA system (Instructional Development and Evaluation Assessment) as a gauge of successful proposal implementation, relative to the Response To Intervention (RTI) program. An expanded accounting of the relationship of their proposal and the RTI and IDEA programs that should support a high-quality proposal implementation is ambiguous at best, if not missing altogether. Given the prominence of the IDEA and RTI systems mentioned in this selection criteria, it would be easy to interpret this association as the key in proposal</li> </ul>		

success or failure. Applicant was unclear in narrative as to its approach to satisfying the requirements of a high-quality proposal.

- The applicant provides a description to each of the components in implementation of their proposal through their four projects: Unique Learning Environments, Unique Curriculum and Instruction, Unique Support, and Unique Highly Effective Educators.
- The applicant describes their four projects that support the 21st century blended learning, aligns to college and career readiness standards, support for students and families, and includes the continuous improvement model that is supported by researched based professional development and includes an evaluation system.
- The applicant presents good evidence supporting success in its approach to reform proposal implementation, resulting in mid-range points for this category.

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

**10**

**4**

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

- The applicant promotes the stance that in order to enact a high quality plan that prepares students for college or careers, their interventions will begin in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve which impacts the entire student body spectrum, thereby preparing them all for college or careers.
- Applicant indicates their intention to utilize researched-based standardized instruments to help identify strengths and weakness—academically and socially—within the participating students. The evidence of a high quality plan was short on details within the narrative. However, since the proposal is already planned to be a district-wide change agent, scale up plans were not necessary. Nevertheless, to meet the demands of a high quality plan using monies from this grant, more details, researched based forecasting and planning including clear goals and the methodology to improve learning outcomes of all students is expected of applicant.
- Applicant offers a somewhat ambiguous description of what the classroom experience will look like in their narrative. An example of which would be that the district will provide teachers the information, tools, and supports that will enable them to meet the needs of each child and substantially accelerate and deepen each student's learning.
- While this statement is positive in its reference to the applicant's overall goals, it is inadequate in providing a mental picture of what the learning experience will look like.
- Applicant states that by changing the educational mind-set of their students through its plan, they will help their students identify their strengths and begin to embark on unique pathways for their success. It is unclear whether there is documented evidence that such a wholesale shift in mind-set has occurred and further what has been the effect on learners in relation to the goals of this grant.
- Overall, applicant earns mid-range points.

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

**10**

**5**

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

- Applicant states their proposal includes administering the following assessments/tests, Explore, Plan and Aspire to drive instructional and curriculum decisions in regards to college and career readiness, and to make adjustments to course sequence to align more closely with Plan, Explore and ACT test administrations.
- Applicant will use the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) for various key subject matter in grades 3-8.
- Applicant list the various socio-economic sub-groups and their baseline performance on the named summative assessments and the increasing goals for the term of the grant proposal. For example, School Year 2012-13, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Math, African American baseline at 67%; goal for 2013-14 is 70%.
- Applicant shows a decreasing achievement gap demonstrated by the baseline and goals between comparison group (white) and sub-groups (AA, Hispanic) as decreasing by 1% per school year.
- Applicant shows a chart depicting college enrollment rates of same six categories as the shown in earlier charts to demonstrate student outcomes. This college enrollment chart shows ambitious yet achievable rates, such as a baseline of 45% for Economically Disadvantaged in school year 2012-2013, with a goal of 50% in 2013-2014.
- The applicants' stated goals related to performance and summative assessments were limited to Pre-K to 2nd grade and 3rd grade EOC. This limited grade level assessment contradicts applicant's expansive approach to improved student outcomes and diminishes the likelihood of their proposal resulting in enhanced student learning and equitable academic performance. Applicant is lacking sufficiently detailed goals in its named program (Uniquely Designed Acceleration Program) to fully explain its goals that will demonstrate improved student outcomes. Additionally, the state within which the LEA operates has imposed major requirements of its ninth graders in the

form of what is essentially a career/college decision in the ninth grade. It is called TEA Endorsement decision and is expected of all ninth graders in the district. Expanded discussion and preparation of the LEA regarding this major factor was not seen within the narrative. Due to this and other factors as mentioned earlier, point total is lessened resulting in mid range points.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA has demonstrated notable success with student academic achievement within the time period required of the grant proposal.</li> <li>• Applicant achieved Exemplary District recognition from the Texas Education Agency from school years 2008 through 2012 and met Adequate Yearly Progress per Federal accountability standards. Other evidence of a clear record of success include Title I Distinguished School; National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA) High Performing School; USA News Best High Schools List: Bronze Award (2011,2012,2013); ACT College Readiness Award 2010 and 2011.</li> <li>• Applicant demonstrated improvement in (learning outcomes) assessment scores and closing achievement gaps as demonstrated by 4<sup>th</sup> grade Writing, Hispanic, school year 2011-12 at 63%. The following year 2012-13 the same group proficiency level raised to 78%.</li> <li>• Pertaining to demonstrated evidence of LEA's ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms at its lowest achieving schools; the applicant has stated that its efforts will apply to all students within the entire school district and cannot be segmented out to apply to lowest-achieving schools because the district does not have any Federally identified low performing schools.</li> <li>• LEA does not show data for school year 2012 and 2013 regarding college-ready status according to TEA AEIS report. Data shows an increase in student college readiness from 2007 (49%) to 2011 (60%). High school graduation rates rose from 93% in 2007 to 96% in 2011. Applicant does not provide information or a table showing actual numbers of students enrolling in college after their senior high school year. Substantial information is given concerning college-readiness assessments. However, the rate/numbers of LEA high school seniors entering college is unclear.</li> <li>• Applicant did not elaborate on what current practices are in place that may have had significant contribution toward these increases. LEA provided only generic commentary such as: "Routinely the district and campus instructional leadership team analyzes student performance and participation data to establish additional program goals and objectives that significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of instructional strategies".</li> <li>• Applicant provides eight years of evidence with selected criteria that does not adequately demonstrate a track record of improved student learning outcome and closing academic achievement gaps.</li> <li>• LEA expects its proposal to increase college enrollment by a minimum of 12% annually. Class of 2013 had 49% college enrollment after high school with 12% annual growth, a minimum of 86% of the Class of 2017 should be enrolled in college after high school.</li> <li>• Applicant failed to address the degree to which it would make data available to parents, teachers and students for review and to assist in academic improvement. This inadequacy negatively affected point total, resulting in mid-range points.</li> </ul>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

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

The requirements of this grant proposal calls for actual personnel salaries of instructional staff and teachers. The LEA states that there are websites and other online access points that will provide average actual salaries of teachers and other personnel through The Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System. The information as called for in criteria b, c, and d, was unavailable and not verified. LEA states school-level personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditure data are available for public review due to their participation in the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). Applicant gave the names of state agencies a other governmental organizations (Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts/Financial Allocation Study for Texas, Civil Rights Data Collection, The Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System) that could have the information called for in this selection criteria. Also, applicant stated that the information required in the sector could be obtained by written request. Perhaps this information could be found at the

various locales mentioned by the applicant, but in this sector, LEA demonstrated only minimal evidence of transparency in the listed criteria.

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

**10**

**8**

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

- LEA is in a state that is not identified as a Race to the Top state.
- LEA states that the state government has enacted legal statutes that reflect many of the same goals and qualifications outlined in the RTTD.
- Applicant states that House Bill 5 passed by the Texas legislature permits local school districts more flexibility in curriculum development see Appendix 3.
- The LEA outlines several legislative programs have altered the flexibility in curriculum development, by replacing the Minimum High School Program (MHSP), Recommended High School Program (RHSP), and Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) with the Foundation Plan beginning in the 2014-2015 school year which will further permit applicant sufficient autonomy to implement their proposed plan.
- The 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed the Advancement of College Readiness in Curriculum, the details of which align with the RTTD qualifications.
- LEA operates in a political and legislative environment which affords legal statutes permitting applicant sufficient autonomy to implement its proposal, therefore high points are earned
- An area of great concern related to this selection criteria is the portion of new House Bill-5 requiring high school freshmen to choose an "endorsement", which basically means that the freshman must establish or declare an area of interest that could restrict the full measure of personalized learning options championed by this grant funding. These new graduation endorsements go into effect school year 2014-15 and could have an unforeseen affect on a student's personalized learning plan.

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

**15**

**3**

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

- The LEA referred to input from teachers and parents in their narrative. (see Appendix 4) Although LEA confirmed their primary stakeholders included students, teachers, administrators, parents and school board members, it was unclear if all these groups provided input into the proposal development. This discrepancy resulted decreased point total. Letters of support were listed from key stakeholders as shown in Appendix 5. Some of these criterions were met, and some were not, resulting in partial fulfillment.
- Applicant provides insufficient evidence in this sector which warrants a score in the low range.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>

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

LEA plans to hire Enrichment Instructional Specialists to work with Intervention Specialists and Reading Specialists (funded by Title-IIA and Title I, respectively) to develop personalized academic plans for students in K-6. Applicant outlines researched based tools to help identify strengths and weakness in the whole student. Social, emotional, academic, learning stages will be identified using a variety of researched based tools, which will drive the delivery of personalized educational content.

Applicant begins to shape and identify students for college and career readiness in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade with the use of the ACT Engage assessment, which will determine placement in the AVID program at Junior High. These students will have been the recipients of college/career ready interventions beginning in kindergarten. The AVID Implementation Guide (Appendix 9) provides a general overview of the program.

A high quality plan calls for frequent assessments of student status to determine the validity of the student's personalized

education plan. LEA was not entirely clear how and when these updates would occur. LEA states “Data from DMAC on common district summative assessments will be routinely analyzed and responded to by PLC teams at the campus level.”

As a non-Race to the Top school state, applicant has state approved requirements to offer its students a career-based endorsement in four core areas. This requirement appears to segue seamlessly into grant requirements for college and career ready graduation requirement. Applicant has identified a need for curriculum adjustments to comply with state mandated career based endorsement for students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

LEA suggested a relationship between the student, school, parent and teacher that formerly may not have promoted an understanding within the student that what they were learning was vital to their successfully accomplishing their goals. LEA implies that they have set out to change that dynamic by establishing trust and providing environments where the parents of students are engaged in discussions and not simply talked to. In effect they want to change the (*educational*) culture of the community.

Standardized, frequent, research-based assessments will be administered to students at age-appropriate times to determine their learning and developmental progress toward college and career-readiness goals. Applicant has outlined a detailed structure of assessments from kindergarten through senior high school.

Applicant’s proposal provides evidence of deep learning in areas of academic interest—particularly for high-need students—with their utilization of the ACT Engage program/assessment. This venture helps identify those borderline students who may not otherwise progress to college or career readiness. The AVID program at the junior high school level serves to motivate and deepen individual learning through accelerated learning—not remediation.

AVID offers students the opportunity to develop skill needed to accomplish—goal setting, teamwork, critical thinking, communication and problem solving.

Continuing the personalized learning-teaching plan at the junior high level, the students expand their exposure to their college and/or career readiness instructional strategies and assessments.

Applicant provided insufficient information in the narrative to provide a clear understanding of how it would provide a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development to comply with grant requirements.

The remaining components of C1,(b) are not clearly fulfilled by LEA, as evidence is lacking or ambiguous in the narrative.

Overall, the applicant earns a mid-range point total due to inconsistent presentation of all components of a high quality plan for this grant sector.

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

**20**

**5**

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

The LEA expresses heightened commitment to professional development in their proposal—Uniquely Designed Acceleration of All—by stating, “None of this is possible without a high quality professional development plan to improve learning.” Applicant outlines various steps, programs and plans to hire highly qualified teachers and leaders, and then develop them into highly effective personnel through programs such as Digital Learning, Rigorous and Relevant Instruction, Grading for Learning, Building Instructional Leadership and Connectivity, Building Relationships. Inadequate reference was provided to show how teachers and other educators would engage in the training, or how they would interact in professional teams or communities to support their individual or collective teaching capacity.

LEA declares that through their prior history of using data in programs such as Campus master schedules, standards based grading practices, Title I and IIA support instructional specialist positions, Take Flight Dyslexia program, Read 180 and Math iTutoring they are well prepared to increase the level of data usage to adapt teaching content and instructional practices. Applicant provides a general skeleton of efforts designed to develop and support high quality, highly effective teachers, with mention of how this would occur using their Uniquely Designed Acceleration for All Students. Lacking in these claims were the details required to meet requirements of a high-quality plan.

LEA's AVID program encompasses the bulk of applicants plan to build high quality, highly effective teachers and provide avenues of support from local leadership. It was again unclear how these intents might take place without conforming to the components of a high quality plan.

Applicant recognized a disconnect between the researched-based intervention, academic enrichment programs and the final scores on the ACT testing tool. LEA attributed this less than expected student performance to a need for educator training and professional development on recruitment, retention and instruction of AP courses. LEA showed structured intent to make sure participating educators have access to, and know how to use tools, data and resources to facilitate

application of knowledge learned in a college and career ready format.

The applicant outlined a proposed new organizational structure to enhance leading and learning at all campuses. Their proposal calls for new teacher positions to support acceleration on all campuses. These positions are: Advanced Academic Coordinator; and two Instructional Enrichment Specialists. But again, there were insufficient details related to how these positions would directly address the listed grant requirements. The detailed requirements as outlined in this sector were not clearly addressed in applicant's narrative. Therefore, LEA earns low points in this section.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The high-quality plan practices as outlined in this section, D1, a, b, c, d, e, were not clearly addressed in applicants narrative in this section. With further reading, many of the requirements outlined herein could be deduced, but were not completely discussed as called for in this section.

LEA did mention that school principals have complete autonomy over their campuses to determine schedules, personnel and assignments. Limited reference is given to opportunities for students to demonstrate subject matter mastery instead of time spent on a topic; applicant mentions Local Alternative Methods for Earning Credit. Overall, the applicant did not meet the requirements of this section.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(D2a)

Applicant provides vague evidence that it meets this requirement. Applicant is committed to using technology to support learning in home and school but shows insufficient proof that parents and other stakeholders will have access, regardless of income. Narrative is inadequate in complying with this sub-section.

(D2b)

LEA provides insufficient details on how their intentions are to be realized. Applicant states educators will receive training on how to access the systems and appropriately input/share data; and that the educators will then be responsible for training the students and parents. It is unclear however, how this will take place and under what circumstances. Compliance with this sub-section is lacking a workable plan.

(D2c)

Applicant is ambiguous in how it will allow parents and students to export information in an open data format. Applicant refers to the frequency of use of data, which in this case is irrelevant. Without any strong evidence to support how applicant plans to address this sub-sector, low points are earned. Overall, applicant is without documented supporting evidence, and earns a low point total.

(D2d)

LEA currently utilizes systems such as Skyward, to share student information between campuses and enables parents to access certain data. To meet qualifications of a high quality plan, interoperability among systems that include student data, budget data and instructional improvement system data. These components were missing in applicant's narrative and provided insufficient evidence of complying with this sub-sector, thereby earning low points.

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEA offers the use of a systematic assessment through evaluative methods that will gather information related to quantitative and qualitative data. Applicant states three improvement questions will drive their continuous improvement process: "What are we trying to do?" "How well are we doing it?" " How can we improve what we are doing?"</li> <li>• The applicant describes their continuous improvement process, where the district will use various evaluation methods to assess the program, quantitatively and qualitatively. Although a broad description of these plans are listed, no details are provided in this section explaining how they will be used to achieve a high-quality plan. To provide only the types of plans under the two broad categories of qualitative and quantitative is insufficient to qualify as a high quality plan.</li> <li>• Not readily evident was how the applicant will publicly share information about the quality of its investments funded by RTTD money.</li> <li>• It was unclear if applicant possessed the means to publicly share this information of this sector.</li> <li>• Applicant did not show evidence of ability to implement and in particular, sustain a high quality continuous improvement process. This resulted in lower point total.</li> </ul>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>LEA plans to engage in quarterly communication with stakeholders.</p> <p>Stakeholders are clearly identified, however it is unclear whether this communication will occur via newsletter, electronic, face-to-face or a combination thereof.</p> <p>The content of the communications the applicant wants to communicate includes data used to improve/inform program elements and report results.</p> <p>The communication frequency with identified stakeholders will be every three months. The format by which this communication will occur is unclear.</p> <p>The applicant does address qualifications of a high-quality plan by stating how it will analyze and utilize data: to improve and inform program elements and report results.</p> <p>Communication with internal and external stakeholders—district administration, campus-based administrators, business office, consultants, Institutions of Higher Education, parents, teachers working with students—will all be communicated with on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Applicant was unclear on the methodology and content of these communications to meet qualifications of a high-quality plan, which contributed to earning medium range point total.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant presents the performance measures in a detailed chart form. The applicant lists the various subgroups included in their plan. The list of performance measures include, all participating students, K-2 District Developed Assessments &amp; DRA II 3-8 STAAR targets a 5% increase each year; performance measures (grades PreK-3) has a District goal of 90% for each subgroup on the PreK Brigance Early Childhood Screening, K-2 DRA II &amp; District Developed</p>		

Math Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> – STAAR Reading and Mathematics; STAAR Math includes a 5% increase each year in Proficient and Advanced. The applicant list performance measures that are trackable and measurable.

Looking at the extensive charting provided and the anticipated increase in student performance given for each population group and performance measure, the significant pace of increase would indicate a successful proposal. However, when taking into account the applicants prior history of achievement, such lofty performance measures of success are not supported and seem beyond reach, when considering the plan as a whole.

Within this narrative applicant does not address its rationale for selecting the measure; or how the measure will contribute toward proposal goals, or how it will contribute toward measuring success, if it is insufficient to gauge proposal progress. Without addressing these sub-sectors as required by grant, applicant earns low points.

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

**5**

**1**

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

Applicant plans to hire internal and external evaluators to assess effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities. Details related to this section were not covered here, but LEA referred reader to see detailed plan in section A2 –Applicants Approach to Implementation.

Applicant refers reader to detailed plan in Section (A2) Uniquely Designed Acceleration for All Students implementation/Evaluation Plan. As stated in the grant qualifications, proposal may at times require adjustments and revisions during implementation. A high quality plan would incorporate plans to make these adjustments based on the data derived from tools used; it is unclear how the LEA will accomplish this. Inadequate evidence is provided in applicant’s narrative that demonstrates sound adherence to the requirements in this sector. Therefore, low points are given.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

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

The applicant provided a chart and list of funds to be utilized by the RTTD grant. Applicant also provided continuation plans beyond the grant, including funds from other sources to support the grant, such as Title I, Title II A, College for All Grant. The applicant also lists in their overall budget summary table the various budget categories including, personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, and training supplies.

The applicant provides details for funding of their many projects including their Unique Learning Environment, Unique Curriculum and Instruction aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards, Unique Support that includes implementation of a systematic K-12 approach to support families and student’s college and career destination, and Unique Highly Effective Educators.

To assure transparency in use of these grant monies, more detailed reasoning of why applicant chose to contract with Dedra Stafford Education Consultant and what are the listed goal expectations and measures of success. Explanation of how applicant will enact security measures to protect the physical goods purchased with grant funding was unclear.

Overall, the applicant provides adequate details related to the criteria required for this section, earning them mid-range points.

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

**10**

**6**

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

The applicant has developed four projects for this RTTD proposal.

Applicant outlines how projects will be sustained after grant with financial support from other governmental sources (state, local). Missing was the methodology applicant would use to evaluate effectiveness of past investments and how this information could be used to affect future investments.

Although most requirements of this sector were met by applicant, it did not clearly address a portion of the grant

requirements and as such earns mid-range point totals.

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The LEA listed five population groups, the number within the listed qualifications of the grant criteria and provided the associated categories per grant directions. The applicant refers to enhancing staff's capacity by providing them with tools and supports to assess academic, emotional and behavioral needs. The manner in which this would be accomplished was unclear, however.</p> <p>The applicant shows it contracts with the Henderson County Help Center—an umbrella community service organization—to provide targeted services for students and families. This county help center offers various services that address the social emotional and/or behavioral needs of the participating high-needs students.</p> <p>Applicant lists five population groups: At risk; socio-economically disadvantaged; English learners; homeless, and special needs/dyslexia. Each of these groups shall--as a result of proposal implementation--be able to demonstrate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kinder students enter school with knowledge and skills to succeed? Students function at grade-level in reading and math</li> <li>2. Students are aware of college and career options</li> <li>3. Students graduate from high school college and career ready</li> <li>4. Students and families are aware of, access and have access to a range of social services</li> </ol> <p>Applicant did not provide sufficient narrative and information on how its partners would support staff in a capacity-building manner. Similarly, applicant states that it will engage in a collaborative decision-making process, but fails to sufficiently outline the details of such a collaboration.</p> <p>LEA provided annual performance measure and desired results per student population.</p> <p>The Henderson County Help Center will track and measure data related to population level desired results for students of the LEA and make the information available to the district to further address the needs of students through targeting of resources of the Help Center.</p> <p>The full measure of these criteria were not clearly addressed by applicant. Some were clearly met, others were less clear and incomplete. Applicant earns a mid-range score.</p>		

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Applicant layers comprehensive and coherent initiatives—new and existing—to create personalized learning environments for affected students. Applicant structures an interaction of outside funding and RTTD funding to utilize electronic mobile devices, coupled with trained teachers and educators who participate in a continuously upgraded professional development program, to assist their students in learning through personalized curriculum to promote and prepare them for college and career ready deployment. The applicant also outlines methods to use RTTD funding to increase student graduation rates, accelerate student academic achievement and decrease historical achievement gaps among student groups. Budget details, performance measures, a commitment to early intervention with researched tools, and a narrative with emphasis on professional development reflect LEA's alignment with Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environment. Applicant meets this requirement.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>82</b>
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

**Application #0122TX-2 for Mabank Independent School District**

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant provides a focused sketch of its district's background and accomplishments leading up to a vision for the proposed project and described within each of the four core educational assurance areas—rigorous standards and assessments, high-quality data systems, effective teachers and principals, and low-performing schools. Applicant specifically describes its vision for providing personalized learning support linked to accelerated learning, and in the process to increasing equity. Applicant also provides a clear and concise overview of the classroom experience for personalized education.</p> <p>A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are addressed.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant explains in the proposal narrative that all schools, students, and educators in the school district will participate in the project from the first year. The applicant identifies the district's six schools (3 elementary schools, 1 intermediate school, 1 junior high school, and 1 high school) that enroll 3,425 total students (K-12), including 65% from low-income families and 48% having high needs. The applicant states that a total of 242 teachers will participate in the project.</p> <p>A middle score is awarded this section because, while overall population data are provided for the district, the number of participating students and teachers by school is not clearly identifiable in the applicant's proposal.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>All of the components for a high-quality plan—key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties—are clearly and effectively addressed in an Implementation/Evaluation Plan table organized around four projects: (1) learning environments; (2) curriculum and instruction aligned to college and career readiness standards; (3) support; and (4) highly effective educators.</p> <p>Specifics for how the project will evolve over the four years of the grant term are clearly provided in the detailed implementation/evaluation plan table. The applicant also provides a brief description of its "theory of change."</p>		

A high score is awarded for this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exception that, although the entire district will be involved from the beginning of the project, the applicant does not clearly address how the project will impact district-wide reform.

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

**10**

**5**

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

Applicant provides tables for summative assessments (STAAR—State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) that cover state-level tests for grades 3-8 in reading and math; in writing at grades 4 and 7; in science at grades 5 and 8; in social studies at grade 8; and end-of-course (EOC) assessments for English I, English II, Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history. In the narrative, applicant states that for grade 3 through the EOC assessments the overall goal is to achieve a 90% proficiency rate by 2017 and a minimum of 5% growth annually. From a closer inspection of the summative assessment tables, it is not entirely clear whether they include goals for proficiency or growth (but it appears they focus only on proficiency).

Three other problems with the summative assessment tables: (1) in some cases, the overall goal is to have 100% proficiency by grade level and content area by 2017, but one or more of the student subgroups has a goal of less than 100%;(2) there are significant differences in % proficient between the two baseline years, which may be a typo or, if not, an issue that should have been discussed in the narrative; and (3) not all of the ESEA subgroups are included, notably students with limited English proficiency. This third problem of incomplete subgroups also pertains to three other tables with goals for decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.

In judging whether the annual goals are ambitious yet achievable, several issues with the data are problematic. For the summative assessments (proficiency and growth), if one assumes that the student performance table represents proficiency goals, there are no specific annual goals for growth (only the overall goal of 5% annual growth). In addition, as noted above, there are significant differences between the two baseline years (2011-12 and 2012-13), which are not explained in the narrative, and improvements in proficiency goals for the combined student groups between 2013-14 and 2016-17 range from 0% to 18%, or an average not more than 3-4% annually (which is less than the goal of 5% annual growth in state-level tests of student achievement). Improvements in “proficiency” also vary by content area and grade level as shown in the respective table. For summative assessments of student performance, a reasonable judgment is that the goals are achievable but may not be ambitious enough.

With regard to judgments about goals for closing the achievement gap, there are some significant variations between the two baseline years in data about the current gap overall and for each subgroup compared to the comparison group (which the applicant identifies as white students, presumably at the state level). If the second baseline year (2012-13) is selected as a starting point for assessing the achievement gap, some subgroups of district students, for some grade levels and content area, performed *above* the state comparison group during the baseline year (2012-13) and, therefore, there was not an achievement gap for them. For those student subgroups in the district who performed *below* the state comparison group during the baseline year, the four-year (2013-14 to 2016-07) project targets for closure of the achievement gap ranged from 2% gains in reduction to 16% gains in reduction, with the large majority in the 2-4% gain range. Based on these data, the achievement gap reduction goals are accomplishable but questionably ambitious.

All student subgroups would be expected to graduate from high school, from a reported baseline year (2012-13) rate of 91% overall, including 84% for white students, 87% for students with disabilities, 90% for Hispanic students, 91% for students from low-income families, and 100% for African American students. The applicant ambitiously and appropriately intends that all students will graduate from high school.

With regard to college enrollment, the baseline year (2012-13) rate of 49% overall ranged from 0% for students with disabilities to 45% for white students and to 60% for African American students and 62% for Hispanic students. The goal for college enrollment rate overall is 77%, including 97% for Hispanic students, 94% for African American students, 71% for white students and students from low-income families, and 2% for students with disabilities. Why these expected enrollment rates vary between student subgroups is not explained by the applicant. The extremely low college enrollment

rate expected for students with disabilities stands out as well as the high college enrollment rates for African American and Hispanic students.

A middle score is awarded for this section because, while all of the criteria are addressed with the exception of omitting students with limited English proficiency from the goals and narrative, there are some inconsistencies (and confusions) in the data tables and questions about whether goals for summative assessments and closing the achievement gap are sufficiently ambitious.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant does not provide sufficient data to fully judge whether it has demonstrated a clear record of success in improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, or raising college enrollment rate. The four-year completion rate increased from 87% in 2006 to 96% in 2011 (the latest year reported by the applicant) and the number of students taking the ACT increased from 27 in 2006 to 101 in 2013. Applicant asserts that it does not have any persistently lowest achieving schools or low-performing schools among the six participating schools. Applicant does not address whether it makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.</p> <p>Applicant notes that among its recent recognitions and rewards: four schools (the 3 elementary schools and the middle school) recently have been designated (designee not identified) as Title I Distinguished Schools; the middle school was named as a “High Performing School” by the National Center for Educational Achievement; the high school received a “Bronze Award” by the USA News Best High Schools List and the ACT College Readiness Award (2011-2013); the high school principal was named Texas Education Service Center Region 10 Secondary Principal of the Year in 2013; and two students were recognized as Commended Students in the 2013 National Merit Scholarship Program, and both received academic scholarships.</p> <p>A low score is awarded because, although the applicant brings attention to several awards received for its academic accomplishments, insufficient data are provided as evidence for judging the applicant’s merit for explicit criteria in this section.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>

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

Applicant affirms that it posts prior year expenditure data on the district website along with proposed and adopted budgets for the last four years, and that actual instructional and support personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures at the school level are available by written open records request.

Applicant also notes that salaries of teachers, professional support, and campus administrators along with actual total operating expenditures for instructional and non-instructional programs and services are accessible on the state education agency website. The public also may view salaries, spending by program, and spending by object code at the district and school level on the state government website.

A low medium score is awarded for this section because, while expenditure data for actual personnel salaries and non-personnel items at the school level is available from state websites other than the district, and the district can provide such data upon written request, ease of access to such data could be a problem for the parents, educators, and the general public. Also, transparency in district processes and practices other than budgets and expenditures is not addressed by the applicant.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant asserts that, although Texas is not a Race to the Top state, it has enacted standards to increase high school graduates who are college- and career-ready. In addition, state legislation enacted through the state education agency provides districts with flexibility in curriculum development through a less prescriptive graduation plan that provides districts with more options for crafting courses and/or requirements to meet the needs of their student population, which in turn can help to personalize the learning experience for every student.

As examples of drawing on flexibility in the state context for project implementation, the applicant is working to develop a curriculum that aligns with the state college and career standards and currently is piloting two programs (one at the elementary level and another at the secondary level) focused on the needs of gifted students.

A moderate score is awarded this section because, while it focuses on state conditions for curriculum development and serving the needs of gifted students, it does not adequately address other key aspects of the context for implementing personalized learning environments.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant provides the results of an online survey indicating that 95.5% of parents and 98.6% of teachers support the district's intent to apply for the grant. In addition, five letters of support are located in the appendix, including responses from a state representative, state board of education member, city mayor, vice president of instruction at a community college, and ACT employees.

A low score is awarded this section because it does not describe how students, families, teachers, and principals were involved in the development of the proposal, it does not identify the extent of teacher engagement and support of the proposed project (other than the survey, which does not provide population or respondent data sufficient to interpret the extent of support), and it does not include letters of support from key stakeholders such as parents, student organization, early childhood programs, the business community, and other community-based groups.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>

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

Within the applicant's project implementation plan that includes all five components for a high-quality plan (goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties), the following criteria for *learning* are specifically addressed through the following initiatives:

- To expand the district’s pilot initiative on one-to-one mobile learning device, iPads for individual use will be purchased and distributed within a phased roll-out plan for use by all 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students; iPads on carts will be purchased and distributed for use in PK-4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. Apps to support personalized or collaborative learning will be identified, evaluated, acquired, and implemented for appropriate content and learning needs.
- Training and workshops will be provided to students, teachers, and families on the integration of mobile devices in the classroom and home.
- K-12 eBook circulations will be expanded and readily available for student and teacher use.
- A Family/Student College Readiness Center will be designed and implemented at all six schools by a campus administrator, counselors, and PTO representatives. The Centers will have a calendar of events that include campus and off-campus cultural and field experiences designed to develop students socially for college and career readiness.
- A system of district administered and analyzed student assessments will be implemented to measure individual student academic growth in college and career readiness standards, and training will be provided to all teachers on analyzing and using assessment data to develop K-12 personalized remediation and/or acceleration plans based on student interests or needs.
- ITBS and CoGAT, nationally norm-referenced assessments, will be administered to all 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students to provide data helpful in designing personalized acceleration or remediation activities.
- ACT assessment programs—ASPIRE for all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, EXPLORE for all 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, and PLAN for all 10<sup>th</sup> grade students—linked to College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) will be purchased and administered to provide data useful for making program and personalized academic plans.
- Course offerings in dual credit and AP will be expanded, increased with rigor and fidelity, and aligned with TEA (Texas Education Agency) graduation endorsements for STEM, Business and Industry, Public Services, Arts and Humanities, and Multidisciplinary Studies. A system of common summative assessments and benchmarks will be designed to monitor the delivery of AP coursework. In addition, potential growth in dual credit and AP courses will be planned and projected to meet student need and TEA endorsement requirements.
- To build capacity for increased enrollment of AP courses, the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade, the curriculum will be aligned with Pre-AP and AP courses at the high school.
- A budget and calendar of events will be established for the Scholars Institute, which provides opportunities for students to participate in field research, work with professional mentors, and provide cultural experiences.
- A social and emotional cohorts program will be established at the school level to integrate instruction with techniques to help students stay focused and to work collaboratively.
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a college readiness system, will be provided at the high school and junior high to increase school-wide learning and performance.
- Reading and math competency assessments (e.g., DRAII and iStation Beginning Reading) will continue to be administered in the PK, K, and 1<sup>st</sup> grades, with the expectation that 85% of the students will perform at or above grade level.

Applicant does not specifically address: (1) how students will be supported to understand that what they are learning is key to their success; (2) how students are involved in deep learning experiences and (3) develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, and creativity; (4) how accommodations and strategies are designed and provided for high-need students; or (5) mechanisms (beyond the purchase, distribution, and use of iPads) in place to help students understand how to use tools and resources to track and manage their learning.

A middle score is awarded because, while some of the criteria are addressed effectively, several criteria in this section are not addressed or address sufficiently to warrant a higher score.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Within the applicant’s project implementation plan that includes all five components for a high-quality plan (goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties), the criteria for *teaching and leading* are specifically addressed through the following initiatives:

- Eduphoria, a software system, will be purchased and implemented to house curriculum materials and a digital format

for posting weekly lesson plans.

- Parent outreach opportunities provided at each participating school will include literacy and numeracy nights, early childhood parent outreach, adult education classes (e.g., GED, ESL, FASFA, and scholarship support), and ACT assessment measures of college and career readiness.
- A summer institute (multi-day program) will be used to train AVID site team members, content area teachers, and administrators in AVID methodologies, the development of leadership capabilities, and time for school teams to develop an annual AVID implementation plan for their school.
- A district instructional leadership team will identify and respond to early social indicators of college readiness. The indicators include discipline problems, attendance rate, reading level, communication skills, self-esteem, and interaction with peers. The district instructional leadership team also will work collaboratively to compare teacher evaluations (using the Professional Development and Appraisal System, PDAS, a system to be purchased) with actual student performance outcomes.
- To help create more personalized learning environments, educators will be involved in ongoing training for integrating technology tools (e.g., interactive Smart Boards, Web 2.0 tools, podcasting, WebPages, and Twitter), Flipped Teaching, and project-based learning into teaching and learning activities.
- Professional development [specific activities not specified] will be provided for PK-1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers to support research-based literacy and numeracy programs.
- Job descriptions for Instructional Enrichment Teacher (at four schools) and Advanced Academic Coordinator (at the high school and junior high) will be developed, posted, and individuals hired. These individuals will work collaboratively with teachers to differentiate and accelerate instruction, including the infusion of innovative technology to improve the learning process.
- Financial support will be provided for teachers to attain a content area specific master's degree, Career and Technology Education (TEA) certification, or Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials in order to increase capacity to provide personalized pathways for student learning.
- Training will be provided to all school instructional leaders for walk-throughs to monitor the school and district implementation of instructional initiatives and teacher effectiveness.
- Professional development (in areas such as PLC implementation, instructional rigor and relevance, and social and emotional teacher-student connections) will be designed and provided to instructional leaders and teachers to implement a collaborative environments focused on increasing student achievement toward college and career readiness.
- Teacher Gathering Place, to be designed by campus instructional leadership teams, will be a virtual learning space (within Media Learning Centers and with media and print resources available) for educators to collaborate and evaluate the effectiveness of individual lessons, build problem-based learning, or differentiate opportunities.
- PLCs will help sustain understanding of assessments and their use at the school level.
- The district will continue to offer an onsite master's program toward principalship in partnership with Stephen F. Austin University.

Applicant does not specifically address: (1) how feedback provided by the district's teacher and principal evaluation system will be used to improve practices; (2) how educator performance information will be used for continuous improvement; or (3) a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

It is not clear in the overall implementation plan—provided in charts in (A)(2)—which goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible apply to a specific high-quality plan for expanding student access to the most effective educators. Evidence is also lacking that the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals will be increased in hard to staff schools, subjects (such as math and science), and specialty areas (such as students with disabilities). Applicant does provides two completed tables in (E)(3) Performance Measures for number and percentage of participating students overall and by student subgroup for “highly effective” and “effective” teachers and principals (baseline year, each year and of the grant term, and a post-grant year). Applicant notes that the data in these tables are based on a K-2 district-developed measures, DRAII (reading assessment for elementary grades), and a state-level summative assessment measure (STAAR, but specific assessment area not identified) for Grades 3-8. Teacher and principal effectiveness measures apparently are not included for students in Grades 9-12, and the total number of participating students in these two tables is 2,872 and not 3,426 (the reported total of participating students). Problematically, the data presented by the applicant do not follow a clear definition of “highly effective” and “effective” teachers and principals.

A middle score is awarded because, while some of the criteria are addressed effectively, several criteria in this section are not addressed or address sufficiently to warrant a higher score.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant explains that the organizational structure of the district is designed to provide support and services to all students and that school board policy has set a positive direction which is also supportive of innovative instruction for student achievement and facilitating personalized learning. Appropriately, the district curriculum department will facilitate the project by ensuring that federal, state, and local standards are delivered through a personalized learning environment that is responsive to the unique needs of all K-12 students. Among its provisions, the district’s curriculum department includes the Early Childhood Center, the gifted and talented program, English as a Second Language (ESL), special education (e.g., responsiveness to dyslexia), and Response to Intervention (Rtl).</p> <p>The applicant stresses the importance of collaboration in the proposed project as exemplified by the functions of school leadership teams: lead project development, implementation, and continuous improvement at the school level; facilitate the involvement of the school community by encouraging, supporting, and creating opportunities for involvement from parents and other community stakeholders; and, ensure that board, staff, parents, and other community members understand project goals and objectives—including the important role of data analysis for differentiated learning.</p> <p>Two examples are provided in the application as evidence that students have the opportunity to earn credit on mastery not the amount of time spent on a topic. One example is the policy on “Alternative Methods for Earning Credit,” including acceleration of grade level or course if student scores 90% or above on a criterion-referenced test for the grade level and/or subject area. The other example is the credit recovery program for at-risk students where there is no required seat time for credit, but rather credit is based on mastery of standards.</p> <p>The applicant states that the district gives students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways but it does not provide examples or other evidence supporting this claim.</p> <p>Because the applicant effectively addresses the criteria in this section, with the exception of not providing evidence regarding multiple ways and times students can demonstrate mastery of standards, a mid-range score is awarded.</p>		

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant clearly explains that students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders will have access to information and tools for project implementation as evidenced through training programs, an existing program notification system, the one-to-one technology program, the district’s website, face-to-face meetings, and the district’s information and learning management system. Specific examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with parents, students, and stakeholders will inform them of progress in the district and encourage their involvement.</li> <li>• Parents will have immediate access to information about their child’s grades, assignments, attendance, and other activities through school and at-home technology—and they will be able to customize how they receive the information.</li> <li>• Educators will receive training on how to access systems as well as input and update information; in turn, teachers will train students and parents on how to access portals and share information, which also will be placed on the</li> </ul>		

district's website along with FAQs for those who missing the training or have additional questions.

- The district will continue to use its current interoperable data system, which links student information between schools and enables parents with children at multiple schools to as well as educators to access data such as attendance, discipline issues, class schedules, and health records.

A middle score is awarded this section because, while it effectively responds to some of the related criteria, it does not address the full requirements of a high-quality plan for LEA policy and infrastructure (goals, activities, timelines, deliverable, and person(s) responsible) and specific information is not provided about stakeholder access to budget data.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant sparsely states three questions and two methods that will guide its focus on continuous improvement. The questions are: (1) What are we trying to do? (2) How well are we doing it? (3) How can we improve what we are doing? Both quantitative methods (surveys/questionnaires, standardized tests, systematic document and data review) and qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, observations) are mentioned for assessing progress and gathering information for needed improvements.</p> <p>A low score is awarded this section because the applicant does not provide a high-quality plan (goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties) for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process, and it does not address how it will publicly share information on the quality of its investments.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant clearly states that a quarterly communication [no specific means of communication mentioned] with stakeholders will focus on progress of the initiative and any problems encountered in its implementation. Also, an end-of-year report is to be prepared by the Curriculum Director working with the school leadership teams to describe the progress of the project and to set goals for subsequent years.</p> <p>A low score is awarded this section because the applicant does not provide a high-quality plan (goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties) for ongoing communication and engagement.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant provides data tables that respond to all five required performance measures with regard to the number and percentage of students by subgroup: whose teacher and principal are "highly effective" (all grades), whose teacher and principal are "effective" (all grades), who are on track to college- and career-readiness (grades 4-8), who complete and submit the FAFSA form (grades 9-12), and who are on track to college- and career-readiness (grades 9-12).</p> <p>In addition, applicant provides data tables that respond to specific applicant-proposed performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• five age-appropriate measures of students' academic growth for PreK-3 (Brigance Early Childhood Screening, PreK;</li> </ul>		

Developmental Reading Assessment or DRAII, Grades 1-2; District Math Assessment, Kinder-Grade 2; STAAR Reading, Grade 3; STAAR Math, Grade 3);

- two age-appropriate non-cognitive indicators of growth for PreK-3(annual attendance rate and number of disciplinary incidents);
- six grade-appropriate academic leading indicators for grades 4-8 (STAAR Reading and EOC for Grades 4-8; STAAR Math and EOC for Grades 4-8; STAAR Writing for Grades 4-8 and STAAR EOC for Grade 4 and Grade 7; STAAR Science and EOC for Grade 5 and Grade 8; STAAR Algebra EOC for Grade 8; STAAR Social Studies EOC for Grade 8);
- two grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicators for grades 4-8 (annual attendance rate and number of disciplinary incidents);
- two measures of career-readiness for grades 9-12 (EXPLORE Reading, Writing, Math and Science; PLAN Reading, Writing, Math, and Science);
- two grade-appropriate academic leading indicators for grades 9-12 (AP Exam scores of 3 or higher; ACT Composite mean score); and
- two grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicators for grades 9-12 (annual attendance rate and number of disciplinary incidents).

Overall, applicant provides data for five required performance measures and 17 proposed measures, for a total of 22 performance measures, anchored by the baseline year (2012-13) and accompanied by annual targets for the four-year grant term and a post-grant year.

The student performance targets over the four-year term are ambitious yet achievable based on the following considerations:

- 5%-10% annual increase is expected in portion of students who achieve proficient or advanced achievement on the academic performance measures listed above.
- 10% annual increase is expected in the portion of students who achieve proficient or advanced achievement on the college- and career-readiness measures listed above.
- 10% annual increase in the portion of students who achieve a 3 or greater on the various AP exams.

One of the concerns not addressed by the applicant is the effect these performance targets will have on reducing the “achievement gap” between student subgroups *within* the district.

Performance targets for the health or social-emotional leading indicators selected by the applicant include a 10% annual increase in attendance rate and a 10% decrease annually in the number of discipline incidents. It is laudable but not reasonable to expect that a 100% annual attendance rate will be achieved. A 10% annual reduction in discipline incidents is both ambitious and can be achieved, depending on how discipline incidents are defined, identified, reported, and acted upon.

Regarding performance measures for expanding student access to the “highly effective” and “effective” educators, applicant notes that the data in these tables are based on a K-2 district-developed measures, DRAII (reading assessment for elementary grades), and a state-level summative assessment measure (STAAR, but specific assessment area not identified) for Grades 3-8. Teacher and principal effectiveness measures apparently are not included for students in Grades 9-12, and the total number of participating students in these two tables is 2,872 and not 3,426 (the reported total of participating students). Problematically, the data presented by the applicant do not follow a clear definition of “highly effective” and “effective” teachers and principals.

A middle score is awarded this section because, while performance measures and targets are completed for each of the required charts, the applicant does not fully address its rationale for selecting each measure, how each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information linked to its proposed plan and theory of action, or how it will review and improve the measure over time.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant acknowledges that it will commit to any national evaluation of the program and work with the Department and with a national evaluator or another entity designated by the Department to ensure that data collection and program design are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the program. Beyond that acknowledgement, applicant briefly notes that examples of targets for evaluating effectiveness of investments include professional development, activities that employ technology, parent and family engagement, and college- and career-readiness.</p> <p>A score of zero is awarded for this section because it did not respond to the criterion of a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities, and components of that plan were not found within the Applicant's Approach to Implementation [Section (A)(2)].</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant clearly identifies and describes all funds that will support the project—RTT-D and Other (Title I, Title IIA, and College for All Grant). The project budget is both reasonable and sufficient considering the four project goals/components (learning environments, curriculum and instruction aligned to college- and career readiness standards, support, and highly effective educators) and the incremental average cost of the project per student per year (about \$300--\$1,027,700/3,426 students).</p> <p>A middle score is awarded for this section because, while it identifies and describes funds from multiple sources that will support the project, it does not differentiate one-time investments and ongoing operational costs, or costs that will be incurred after the grant period.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>For one of the subprojects (learning environments), applicant adequately provides three required components of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project (goals, activities, and responsible parties) and for the other three subprojects applicant adequately provides only two components of a high-quality plan (goals and responsible parties) for sustainability. This section is awarded a middle score because timelines and deliverables are not addressed in the plan for sustainability of project goals.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant clearly describes a coherent and sustainable partnership with the Henderson County Help Center, an umbrella community service organization to provide the following targeted services for students and families: child advocacy program; abstinence education program; pregnancy, education and parenting program; an in-home case manager program to assist young parents with pre-natal and post-natal care, information, and parenting education; and a teen dating violence program.</p>		

Population desired results are clearly organized around five population groups: socioeconomically disadvantaged; English learners; homeless; special needs/dyslexia; and at-risk. Five reasonable performance measures (ambitious yet achievable) include all student subgroups, with the exception of English learners, beginning with the baseline year (2012-13) and extending through the grant term (4 years) and a post-grant year (2017-18).

Applicant briefly describes how the selected measures would be tracked and used for improvement. Because all students in all of the schools in the district are project participants, applicant appears to assume that scale-up is implicit in the project design.

A middle score is awarded for this section because, while some of the criteria are effectively addressed, it does not explain (a) how the partnership will integrate education and other services within the participating schools, (b) how the partnership will build the capacity of staff in the participating schools, or (c) how the partnership will contribute to school reform district-wide.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant’s vision for this project is the district will provide teachers the information, tools, and supports that enable them to meet the needs of each child and substantially accelerate and deepen each student’s learning. The district will have the policies, systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers, teacher teams, and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement and closing achievement gaps. All students in the district would be expected to graduate from high school.

Participants in the proposed project will include all six schools in the district that enroll 3,425 total students (K-12) staffed by 242 teachers.

The applicant describes the district’s background and accomplishments as building on the four core educational assurance areas. For example, linked to the belief that quality instructional leadership is critical to a successful education program, the district adopted the “Good to Great” philosophy for inspiring teachers, principals, and leaders at the school and district level.

To expand the district’s pilot initiative on one-to-one mobile learning device, iPads for individual use will be purchased and distributed within a phased roll-out plan for use by all 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and iPads on carts will be purchased and distributed for use in PK-4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. Apps to support personalized or collaborative learning will be identified, evaluated, acquired, and implemented for appropriate content and learning needs.

A system of district administered and analyzed student assessments will be implemented to measure individual student academic growth in college and career readiness standards, and training will be provided to all teachers on analyzing and using assessment data to develop K-12 personalized remediation and/or acceleration plans based on student interests or needs.

A budget and calendar of events will be established for the Scholars Institute, which provides opportunities for students to participate in field research, work with professional mentors, and provide cultural experiences.

Professional development (in areas such as PLC implementation, instructional rigor and relevance, and social and emotional teacher-student connections) will be designed and provided for instructional leaders and teachers to implement collaborative environments focused on increasing student achievement toward college and career readiness.

Total	210	94
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0122TX-3 for Mabank Independent School District

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

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3

##### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

**Strengths:** Mabank ISD aspires to be a public school district that provides personalized ACCELERATION FOR ALL for its 3,426 students in each of its schools: three elementary, two junior high and one high school. The applicant has set forth a reform vision that builds on the four core educational assurance areas. The applicant addressed each of the Assurance Areas with the following evidences:

**Rigorous Standards and Assessments:** The instruction is grounded on building capacity of Mabank's own teachers in a MISD PK12 Curriculum Team. The Team's members were selected based on their students' performance. Teachers had been trained in *Understanding by Design*. The Team reviews the results of all end of year assessment results.

**High quality data systems:** Mabank ISD utilizes the Texas Region 7 ESC DMAC data management system: DMAC Solutions and provides training to staff in its use.

**Effective Teachers and Principals:** District positions and programs are evaluated annually for effectiveness. Salary is competitive. Professional development is based on district initiatives, which are based on student and teacher performance outcomes. The district partners with Stephen F. Austin University to provide an on-site Master's Program for staff interested in advancing to leadership positions.

**Low performing schools:** The district has no schools with the federal or state designation of "low performing".

##### Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide a compelling background for a comprehensive or coherent reform vision. The applicant references that a "foundation has been laid for bold and comprehensive reforms in elementary and secondary education", but does not elaborate on what comprises that foundation. The applicant references a change in district administration in 2004-2005 which caused the district to reflect on its practices. Since that was nearly a decade ago, this proposal provides little in the way of "reform" to the status quo.

Other than a mention of the number of schools and general enrollment information, the applicant fails to provide an overall

background of the district's/ community's demographic, socio-economic, and geographic information; although references to various aspects of this unsubstantiated data are scattered throughout the proposal.

District goals are referenced, but not identified. In this section, the applicant fails to provide a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. Program goals are not identified. The term "personalized" learning is used in the narrative, but no clear definition of the term is provided.

*Understanding by Design* is identified as the district's single source for researched based instructional strategies.

Data regarding numbers or percentages of highly effective and effective teachers and principals is lacking in the narrative.

The "Good to Great" philosophy was adopted by the district eight years ago and is mentioned in the narrative as a supporting statement for Educational Assurance area: Effective teachers and principals, however, no evidence is included to support its continued use through training and application.

"Through annual staff analysis conducted by campus and district leaders, positions and programs are evaluated for effectiveness" is cited in support of the Effective Teacher and Principal Assurance, but only internal program evaluations are mentioned, and the process by which these evaluations occur is not included.

Professional development sessions occur primarily during the summer and are district and not site driven.

No mention is made of the evaluation instrument's components being aligned with student achievement.

The existing academic standards are neither Common Core nor are they aligned to College and Career Ready Standards. The State of Texas is currently revising their academic standards to align with Common Core, and it appears as though there has been no commitment made on the part of the Mabank District to revise their current standards in advance of the state's revisions being made available.

The applicant mentions a poll conducted in 2005 by the National Governors' Association whose results indicated that school was not challenging. No poll was conducted with current students to support or refute the statement of "challenge". No current drop-out rate for Mabank was included.

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

**10**

**2**

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

Strengths:

All six schools and 3,426 students in the Mabank District will participate in the project; beginning pre-K through high school. 65.1% of students are from low income families and 48% of students are classified as high needs. A total of 242 teachers will participate in the program.

Weaknesses:

The applicant marginally addressed this Selection Criterion. The applicant failed to provide a description of the process that they used to select schools to participate, although all of the participating schools (all district schools) appear to collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The applicant provides percentages of low income and high needs students, but not numbers of students who fall into those categories.

No signatures of support for this project from participating staff, principals, parents or community members are evident.

The applicant fails to identify its criteria for "high needs".

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

**10**

**3**

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

Strengths:

The applicant includes extensive charts which identify Project Goals, Activities, Timelines, Deliverables and Responsible Parties labeled as (A)(2) Applicant's Approach to Implementation, but these charts are more appropriately applied to (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change.

All students in the district will be served. The project targets providing academic support to high needs students, and to accelerating and adding academic value to students at or above grade level.

The project will incorporate the administration of EXPLORE, PLAN and ASPIRE assessments (to provide nationally normed data to drive instructional and curricular decisions in regards to college and career readiness) to students in grades most closely aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills governing college and career readiness.

The curriculum will be revamped to include more inquiry-based and student-centered learning activities.

**Weaknesses:**

The Project Goals are not measurable as written. The Goals identified for this project are written more as Objectives than in the language of goal statements .

The applicant fails to address the means by which the program will identify or assist pre-K students.

The success of the district’s RTI program is stated to have been evident by a drastic decrease in the number of students placed in Special Education; however, no data regarding numbers of Special Education students pre/post RTI have been included.

One of the cornerstones of the project is to change the culture of the district and to provide interventions for struggling, high needs students. The Henderson County Help Center is the district’s liaison to the state Department of Child Health and Welfare Services in that they provide a menu of services to student struggling emotionally due to dysfunctional home environments. The applicant fails to neither identify their criteria for “high needs”, nor did they define what they mean by “dysfunctional home environments”.

The applicant outlines a “Uniquely Designed Acceleration Program” that “will define personalized learning plans for students.” The applicant fails to demonstrate the means by which the proposed project components can accurately be described as “unique” in that Personalized learning and 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environments are both mentioned, but neither are supported with program or implementation details. The “unique student and family supports “ mentioned in the narrative have not been outlined.

**Based on the Implementation Chart:**

- Most program activities will commence Summer 2014. No activities are identified to begin January 2014.
- The majority of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environment centers on a Media Center and enhanced technology usage. Classroom enhancements reference primarily white boards, and iPads on carts, as opposed to reformation of classroom delivery methodology.
- Standards will be revised to incorporate College and Career Readiness and will be aligned to revised Texas Academic Standards. Texas Standard revisions are not scheduled to be made available until after August, 2014, which will significantly impact the District revision timeline.
- Implementation of classroom walkthroughs to monitor campus implementation of teacher effectiveness is not being implemented until August 2015.

The applicant failed to address the extent to which the application includes a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

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

**10**

**8**

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

**Strengths:**

As required, the applicant has completed Baseline and Projected growth charts for Overall, African American, Hispanic, White and Economically Disadvantaged students in the Goal areas of 3<sup>rd</sup> - HS Reading , Math, Writing, Science, Algebra, Social Studies (where appropriate), based on Texas assessment instruments. Charts comparing minority population assessment scores to White student assessment scores at all grade levels in the areas of Reading, Math, Writing, Algebra, Science, and Social Studies (where appropriate) were completed and submitted.

Charts depicting graduation rates and College Enrollment rates disaggregated by Overall and ethnicities are included within the grant proposal.

Despite the fact that African American students struggled academically in the elementary grades, they enjoy a 100% graduation rate.

**Weaknesses:**

The charts depicting Baseline and Projected Growth appear to contain several recording errors. The Baseline for African American students in grade 3 Reading on the Baseline and Projected Growth chart was recorded as 33% for SY 2011 -12 and @ 83% for SY 2012-2013. This fluctuation was either based on a recording error or an extremely small population sample. No explanation was provided.

African American students' scores, as recorded, are significantly lower than other population's scores at most elementary grade levels, yet this demographic was not identified as requiring focused services by this project's goals.

The Baseline for the 3rd grade Reading Special Education population was recorded at both 86% for SY 2012-2013 and for 2013-2014. These scores appear to be abnormally high for students identified as requiring Special Education Services.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>Mabank ISD has demonstrated evidence of success in advancing student learning by being awarded Exemplary District recognition from the Texas Education Agency from school years 2008-2009 to 2011-2012. The District met Federal Accountability standards annually during that time, and had several schools identified as Title I Distinguished Schools between 2010 and 2013. Mabank Junior High School was awarded a NCEA High Performing School award and Mabank High School had been given a Bronze Award for USA News Best High Schools list for three years (2011-2013). The high school was given an ACT College Readiness Award. Mentioned as well, are individual administrative and student achievement awards.</p> <p>A table depicting College Readiness, Special Education percentages, Dropout Rates, High School Completion Rates, ACT participation and ACT composite scores from SY 2006-2013 were included within the proposal.</p> <p><b>Weakness:</b></p> <p>Tables depicting subject/grade/ student achievement data disaggregated by ethnicity and Special Population were not submitted.</p> <p>The applicant failed to address the district's process of making student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p><b><u>Strengths:</u></b></p> <p>Mabank District has demonstrated evidence of transparency in LEA processes and practices, in that Mabank ISD complies with the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, § 109.1001 and had been awarded a Superior Achievement rating for reporting years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The Texas Education Agency's Academic Excellence Indicator System provides open access and search capabilities for campus data on the average teacher salary by years of experience; average actual salaries of teachers, professional support, administrators; and total operating expenditures for instructional and non-instructional programs and services.</p> <p>Both proposed and adopted budgets for the last four years are available on the district webpage for review.</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Tables depicting salaries of district teachers, professional support and administrators ; incentive pay and bonuses; supplemental pay; and non-personnel expenditures were not included within the proposal.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		

**Strengths:**

The applicant reports that the district does operate under favorable legal, statutory and regulatory conditions to implement personalized learning environments. House Bill 5 requires the Texas Education Agency to give local districts more flexibility in curriculum development by replacing the Minimum High School Program, Recommended High School Program and Distinguished Achievement Program with the Foundation Plan which moves the state from a 4 x 4 graduation plan to a 22 credit plan which allows students to receive endorsements in specific areas. The applicant included a chart entitled Side-By-Side Comparison of Current Graduation Requirements and HB5 as Appendix (3).

Section 29.123 of the Texas Education Code forms the basis of Gifted and Talented services and accountability. The Advancement of College Readiness in Curriculum (Section 28.008 of the Texas Education Code) requires the development of College and Career Ready Standards in the areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

**Weaknesses:**

The means by which the favorable legal, statutory and regulatory conditions which are enjoyed by Texas LEAs apply to Personal Learning Environments, as they are described by this proposal, is unclear.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

**Strengths:**

The applicant has submitted Letters of support from (1) State Representative, (1) State Board of Education member, and (1) Vice President of Instruction Trinity Valley Community College, were included within the application.

Appendix 4 – Race to the Top Stakeholder Survey provides a tally of percent of those surveyed who agreed, disagreed or were undecided relating to the Race to the Top grant submission.

**Weaknesses:**

The applicant failed to provide an adequate description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

No meeting minutes, announcements, fliers, sign-in sheets were included as evidence of parent/ community involvement in the grant process.

The applicant did not include the means by which the survey was developed, how it was administered, the number of participants in the survey, or how the survey was tallied and recorded.

No letters of support from school administration nor school staffs are evident.

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>

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

**Strengths:**

In support of the Selection Criterion, the applicant provides an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students in an age-appropriate manner. Foremost, Individualized Personalized Academic Plans will be implemented by Enrichment and Intervention Specialists for students in grades K-6, and modifications will be made throughout the student's tenure at Mabank.

A variety of assessments will be used to gauge a student's college and career readiness. These include, but are not limited to: DRAII, STARR, ACT, ENGAGE, ASPIRE.

An infusion of technology, specifically iPad's (one-to-one-technology) will be provided for each student in grades 5-12.

Professional development in familiarization with tablets and apps, and their application in an educational setting will be provided to support teaching and learning. Age appropriate technology will be provided for grades PreK-4.

AVID, an elective class where students learn organizational skills, work on critical thinking, and questioning techniques; Socratic Seminars, Junior Great Books, and a fine arts program will be implemented in the junior high.

Advanced Placement classes, Dual Enrollment and a Scholar’s Institute will serve the high achieving student population.

Because of graduation endorsement legislation, Mabank students may select from among the new endorsement offerings to further personalize their learning experiences.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to mention an active role of goal setting, academic plan development, and academic monitoring on the part of the student or parent.

Based on the new graduation endorsement legislation, Mabank High School cannot or is barely able to offer classes needed to fulfill these requirements due to current course alignment to STEM, Arts and Humanities, and Business and Industry, and lack of staff certifications in these required areas. Reassessment of current classes and staff re-tooling will be necessary to fulfill the new requirements.

There were no data presented to support the statement that the majority of Mabank’s families have not attended college.

The applicant claims that students will be assessed for social and emotional impediments to learning, as early as Pre-K. No information regarding the process by which this will occur, nor the assessments to be used have been included.

The applicant comments that parents will be given opportunities to actively participate in their child’s learning, but no strategies have been offered.

Standards based grading is a work in progress, since standards are being revised.

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

**20**

**5**

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

Strengths:

Through the proposal's Uniquely Designed Acceleration for All Students proposal, the applicant outlines professional development requirements and high-lights resources which will enable principals and teachers to structure a learning environment which will meet the individual needs of students

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to address frequent monitoring of student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and marginally addressed the use of data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators.

The use of teacher and principal evaluation systems to inform educational practice is not addressed.

The applicant fails to outline a plan that is geared at increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The primary thrust of teachers’ professional development is eight paid days during the summer months. No evidence is provided that professional development workshops are provided during the school year. Professional development offerings are driven by the district, with no evidence of input from individual school sites. To support the district’s proposal for Uniquely Designed Acceleration for All Students, the application states that the following professional development MUST be included: unwrapping the standards, data analysis, professional learning communities, explicit teaching, differentiated learning, technology applications, Universal Design of 21st Century skills, AVID, and Project Based Learning. The proposal fails to address the means by which the magnitude of these professional development requirements will occur, nor does it specify a budget to support these requirements.

In an attempt to focus this proposal on 21st Century Learning Environments, the applicant superimposes “trendy jargon” to describe traditional school facility spaces without proposing a rationale for doing so. This change in traditional “terms” provide little substance to the proposal. The library is now the Media Center; the Family Resource Center is the Family/Student College Readiness Center and the conference room/teachers’ lounge is a Teacher Gathering Space.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Strengths:

The applicant's addresses a portion of this Selection Criterion by describing that the Mabank District has a policy which permits the acceleration of one grade level for students in grades 1-12.

A credit recovery policy is provided through the Mabank Academy for students 9-12.

The proposal enumerates several programs which are geared to support struggling students. These include: Rosetta Stone, Read 180. iTutor, and Odyssey. Federal entitlements provide funding for diagnosticians, therapists, counselors, program specialists and psychologists.

The Early Childhood Center provides quality programs for Head Start and pre-K . Mabank Advanced Academic and Creative Arts is a program in support of gifted and talented students. ESL supports English learners. Special Education and Response to Intervention programs support academic and behavioral needs of students.

School leadership teams provide an avenue for shared decision making.

Weaknesses:

The applicant responded to this Selection Criteria by identifying the policies and processes that are *currently* in place to demonstrate mastery, credit recovery, accessibility to students of with disabilities, but the applicant marginally responded to the prompt regarding practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning, as in the case of their "Unique Pathways" proposal. The proposal states that "The expectation of the Mabank ISD Board and District Superintendent is that all central office administrators are to provide direct support to campuses as needed." No explanation as to the specific types of support was included. Campus principals have complete autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets. Site-councils or campus leadership organizations were not identified.

The applicant failed to include evidence of support for this proposal by building administration.

A narrative in support of multiple pathways for credit acquisition and standard mastery is included in the proposal, but specific strategies are not identified.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Strengths:

The applicant offers that Mabank District and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by commenting on the district's website and Skyward, a system which links student information between campuses and enables parents and educators access to data such as attendance, discipline, schedules, and health records, are currently available within the district.

Weaknesses:

The applicant fails to provide adequate evidence in support of data system equipment upgrades, availability, usage, training, or technical support required by this Selection Criterion.

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

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

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

Strengths:

The applicant attempted to respond to this Selection Criteria by providing a brief bulleted list outlining quantitative and qualitative assessment strategies.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to provide evidence of a high-quality, rigorous plan for continuous improvement which ensures timely and regular feedback, monitoring and adjustment strategies or the means by which the district will publicly share this information.

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

5

2

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

Strengths:

The applicant responded to this Selection Criteria of continuous improvement by providing a bulleted listing of program elements and intended audiences which describes the means by which the district will analyze and use data.

Communication between grant stakeholders will occur quarterly. Stakeholders for the project are identified.

An-end-of-year report that describes the program's progress will be generated and distributed to the Board, Superintendent, parents and staff so subsequent goals can be established.

Weaknesses:

The plan proposed contains none of the elements of a high-quality plan( as defined in this notice). The "data" to which the proposal refers is not identified.The applicant failed to include strategies that the district will undertake to make adjustments, or improvements, and goal redevelopment.

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

5

2

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

Strengths:

The applicant completed charts depicting performance measures per assessment by grade-level band for the subgroups of All participating students, African American, Hispanic, White, Economically Disadvantaged and Special Education.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to describe the following relating to the selected performance measures—

- (a) Its rationale for selecting that measure;
- (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; and
- (c) How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

Several errors are evident in the data submitted. In several of the applicant's charts depicting Performance Measures, totals of subcategories do not equal the "All participating students" category. Ex. For the category "Effective Teacher",

Total All Participating Students = 2872; Total African American + Hispanic + White = 2179. 693 students have not been counted. Adding the categories of Economically Disadvantaged and SpED would raise questions about duplicate counts.

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

**5**

**1**

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

Strengths:

The applicant's plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities centers on the district working with both internal and external evaluators to evaluate the effectiveness of their Race to the Top – District funded activities.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to submit a rigorous evaluation component for Race to the Top – District funded activities. The means by which funded activities would be evaluated to determine their effectiveness in achieving the goals of the grant were not identified.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

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

Strengths:

The applicant completed and submitted Budget Subparts: 1, 3 and 4 for the project, as required.

Weaknesses:

Rather than completing Subpart 2: Overall Budget Summary Narratives, reviewers were required to refer to tables submitted for Selection Criterion A2 for corresponding budget rationales. Table A2 identified grant activities, timelines and persons responsible. The table failed to provide sufficient itemization to demonstrate how costs were calculated.

In the Section "Highly Effective Educators" of Subpart 4, the applicant identifies a total of \$95,000 in the Supplies category for Modernization of libraries (Furniture) and a total of \$348, 200 listed under Contractual for Library Modernization ( painting, floor coverings) . Section 14003 of the ARRA prohibits Race to the Top funds from being used for school modernization, renovation or repair.

There are no budget allocations for upgrades to data systems, enhanced parent involvement strategies, and several professional development requirements that had been identified in the project narratives such as differentiated learning, unwrapping the standards (which are currently under revision) and Universal Design of 21st Century Skills .

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

**10**

**3**

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

Strengths:

The applicant's sustainability plan reflects on each of the project's "Goals", person's responsible, and what means the district will employ to sustain them. The application states that elements of the grant programs will be locally funded or federally funded through entitlements. It is anticipated that professional development garnered throughout the funding cycle will be self- sustaining.

Weaknesses:

The applicant failed to address an evaluation of the effectiveness of the grant funding, or use this data to inform future investments toward the continuation of this project post funding.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

**Strengths:**

The district has partnered with Henderson County Help Center to address the social, emotional , and behavioral needs of its students and to provide family support through a Child Advocacy Program, counseling services, a Help Line, an abstinence education program, a school dropout prevention program for pregnant teens, a teen dating violence program and in-home case management for pre-and post natal care. The district will use the partnership to improve its results for students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty, family instability, abuse or neglect. The partnership model is designed to continuously improve results over time by regularly reviewing and adjusting program services to students and families, based on identified needs and assets. A Memorandum of Understanding with the Henderson County Help Center is included among the attachments.

Performance Measure charts and a Population –Level Desired Results chart have been completed, as required.

**Weaknesses:**

A relationship with the Henderson County Help Center exists pre-Race to the Top-District grant competition. Additional partnerships could have been developed which would contribute to the success of this application.

Whereas Performance Measure charts and the Population-Level Desired Results chart had been completed, as required, the applicant failed to comment on how the district or partner would track the success of each indicator and to improve results over time. The applicant failed to comment on the means by which the district selected these particular populations to target.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant addressed how, through the use of Race to the Top District funds, the district would build on the core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments that are designed to significantly improve teaching and learning.

The district will provide teachers with the information, tools, and supports that will enable them to meet the needs of every child and substantially accelerate and deepen each students' learning. The district will have the policies, systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers, teacher teams, and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement and on closing the achievement gaps. From pre-kindergarten through high school, the program is proposed to blend academic rigor with a strong system of personalized academic support, with the focus being enhancing what goes on in the classroom; ensuring that the relationship between educators and students results in improved academic outcomes.

All of the district's students have been targeted. The proposal includes strategies for at risk, performing and excelling students, parental involvement, and staff development activities. A comprehensive budget has been submitted.

The application has many weaknesses addressed throughout the responses to the Selection Criteria. Primarily, however; the application fails to provide a compelling picture as to why the Mabank District should be funded for this project. It appears, as well, that the application's responses were thoughtful and responsive to the Selection Criteria early on, but responses became less so as the Selection Criteria continued to require more levels of clarity, resulting in fewer points being awarded to those responses.



Total	210	87
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