



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0178CA-1 for Porterville Unified 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>6</b>

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

- The applicant states the overarching goal is to bring their Linked Learning Experiences and Achievements through Personalization, Pathways and Partnerships (LLEAP3) initiative up to scale to be able to assist other students in other school districts.
- LEA states its flagship Linked Learning program is rendered even more effective by working closely with the Common Core State Standards. Applicant expects to enhance its adherence to the first listed core education assurance by developing new assessments aligned to the CCSS through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium beginning in school year 2014-15.
- Applicant says it will help better prepare its students for college and/or workplace careers through its Expected Graduate Outcomes.
- Applicant asserts that the computer adaptive assessments of CCSS will more effectively measure student knowledge and understanding giving educators, students and parents more accurate, timely information on which to adjustments to the students personalized learning plan for college and career readiness.
- Applicant is counting on the new CCSS assessments featured in Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to be even more robust in more effectively measuring student knowledge and understanding of ELA and math—replacing the current tests.
- Applicant asserts that the synergy and mutual support of their Linked Learning program and the new components of Smarter Balanced Assessment will help the district in preparing students for college and/or careers in the global economy.
- Applicant intends t to build data systems to better measure student growth and academic success and are able to share needed information to the teacher and principals on interventions needed to improve the instructional environment. Examples of LEA’s efforts regarding building data systems to include plans to upgrade its current student information system from Aeries SIS to Aeries Analytics as their comprehensive data system to measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how to improve instruction. The newer system can be adapted to integrate Linked Learning Pathways projects to monitor student progress.
- A major part of applicant’s process required to implement its high quality plan is its Linked Learning Program. The program requires additional capacities of its teachers and leaders. Applicant indicates it will address the issue of needing better-prepared teachers and leaders through a partnership with California State University (CSU), San Diego and CSU Fresno and PUSD, to bring a Single Subject Credential Program to the Linked Learning Pathways program to assist in preparing highly effective teachers. Other programs available to participating teachers include system-wide reform of coaching provided by Pathways leadership teams and ConnectEd coaches to ensure theory translates into practicality. Given the importance of teacher preparation through professional development, more detailed information on the processes and relationships with the named higher education institutions would have contributed toward qualification as a high quality plan, however such explanations were missing or obscure.
- Applicant plans to use funds from RTTD to implement LLEAP3 to expand the district’s Linked Learning Initiative (K-12) from its current development stages to full reform and application system-wide.
- Applicant states their commitment to turning around their lowest-achieving schools. LEA claims to have made strides (toward turning around their lowest-performing schools) through implementation of Linked Learning Pathways and evidenced based practices. Applicant says that their proposed project would further transform the target schools by providing teachers with targeted professional development. This portion of the core educational assurance area was unclear in the manner applicant would affect its intentions. They appeared to hinge success regarding this sub-sector

squarely on the shoulders of targeted professional development. Applicant offered insufficient details as to how this might be accomplished.

- Regarding a clear and credible approach to its goals to enhancing student academic achievement through tenets outlined in this grant, the applicant provides an understanding of the goals of this grant proposal, by articulating a credible approach to grant goals.

- Applicant began educational reform in 2008 through its Linked Learning program aimed at high school transformation. The intent of this program reflects the goals of the RTTD grant—career education and expanding (college) opportunities for high school graduates. Further demonstrating the applicant has taken a clear and credible approach to goals of the grant, we see that applicant developed its concepts at one “pilot” school—Harmony Magnet. The pilot resulted in nine “Open Choice Pathways for students to choose and engage in RTTD grant-like activities of personalized learning for college and or career readiness. These nine pathways were/are: Digital Design & Communication *and* Law, Justice & Education; Engineering *and* Performing Arts; Multimedia & Technology *and* Environmental Science; Business & Finance *and* Health Sciences; Emerging Agricultural Technology.

- The applicant describes a classroom where students are actively engaged in inquiry work, where they are reading, talking, questioning, analyzing and creating products in large groups, small groups, and independently. Students would be actively engaged in their strand or pathway of interest (choice). When out of the classroom setting, these students are out in the community continuing to work in their personalized learning strand. Based on the narrative provided, applicant provides adequate convincing evidence of building on its work in the four core educational assurance areas and articulating its goals of accelerating student achievement.

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

**10**

**5**

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

- Applicant chose to include all students, in all of its schools in the district. LEA explains that school selection was not the primary area of concern, instead it was the groundwork needed to obtain buy-in and believability from key stakeholders. Some demographic information is included below, and denotes certain markers that meet the competition’s eligibility requirements:
- As justification for all-school inclusion, LEA provided evidence that made it difficult not to be all inclusive. LEA sought to change the educational culture and existing student options by offering career-based Pathways that would enable all Porterville’s students to be college and career ready. Applicant’s grant request appears to be a major step in their attempt to broaden the change in teaching and learning environment. Which explains the inclusion of all schools in the district for this grant request. Applicant states that the change in concept was a huge challenge in their rural community. Nevertheless, PUSD leadership team set out to deliver a clear and compelling message to all stakeholders to explain the proposed change that, every student could be prepared for both career and college. Stakeholders who were the recipient of the message were school board members, parents, teachers, union representation, students, business and community leaders, local community college faculty and member of the broader educational community. District leadership also formed advisory boards for every Pathway, across grade levels. As a result of the significant lead-up processes, applicant was able to obtain information on successes and failures of Pathway designs planned for deployment to all students in the district.
- Applicant’s proposal will use grant funding to accelerate, expand development of Pathways in grades 9 through 12. It remains unclear how the entire student population, including kindergarten through 8th grade, will directly benefit from LEA’s main goal of expanded Pathway development. Insufficient evidence is provided how applicant will develop or recognize association of a kindergartner’s propensity to adopt a Pathway. Career awareness in elementary school was not shown to be supported by researched-based evidence. Additional information regarding the relevancy and application of Pathways in the earlier grades was unclear, and if adequately provided would have given support for qualification as a high-quality proposal. Therefore, applicant earns mid-range points.

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

**10**

**2**

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

- The LEA has completed groundwork to have reached the current level of educational reform within participating schools. The Pathway schools currently affect only those students entering 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, at which point these students have by then chosen or are assisted in choosing an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Applicant seeks to expand Pathway choices/programs and expand the benefits of Linked Learning in grades K-8. RTTD funding will expand applicant’s effort to accelerate student learning beginning in kindergarten through junior high grade levels through the LLEAP3 after school programs.

- A K-8<sup>th</sup> Pathways Department will be developed through LLEAP3. Staffing will include a Director, two Data Specialists, two Clerical Support, three Workplace Coordinators, three Instructional Coaches, two Pathways Coaches, and a Middle School Career Counselor.
- Applicant has a four year plan to scale up its proposal to full development in fourth year of proposal, with components of a high-quality plan, lacking are more detailed examples of how the many initiatives will coalesce into actions needed to achieve proposal goals.
- The extent to which classroom teachers and administrators are trained how to utilize the researched-based programs that generate actionable data, is the self-limiting step in successful rollout of LLEAP3. LEA seems to recognize the tremendous importance of a well-defined professional development plan and how it will dictate the LEA's ability to scale up the plan to meaningful reform. Applicant further emphasizes the importance of professional development to help reach the goals of their proposal. LEA will provide a Professional Development Institute for all classroom teachers. A Professional Development Director will be hired to coordinate all LLEAP3 professional development activities. Under this sub-sector, a high quality plan is expected to have provided more detailed insight into the initiatives planned by the applicant regarding recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers, principals. Particularly since the applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of highly effective teachers and principals to ensure success of its proposal. The discrepancy between the applicant's acknowledgement of the impact of developing highly effective teachers (through professional development) and the lack of documented attention given to this sector is eye opening. Applicants Logic Model for District-Wide Linked Learning System was unclear, not very intuitive and did not provide substantive support for the accompanying narrative. Applicant demonstrated how some of these efforts would support success of its proposal; others did not meet high quality standards under this sub-sector; as such low-range points are earned.

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

**10**

**4**

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

- Applicant's proposal calls for Pathway Choices designed to offer the student a personalized pathway based on teaching methodologies, ongoing assessments and a course of study sanctioned by business, academia and the district. LEA claims said proposal would result in ambitious yet achievable annual goals as tracked on 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass rates on the California High School Exit Exam, math and English Language Arts. Also tracked will be scores on California Standards Tests in grades 2-11; percentage of students proficient in math and English Language Arts charts. The two-year trend is not positive for the chosen assessment tracking goals. The goals call for a significant turnaround (ambitious), yet it is doubtful if the 6-7 percentage point gains can be realized given the downward trending in student test scores.
- With the implementation of early grade interventions as called for in applicant's proposal, perhaps test scores would be higher by the time K-2<sup>nd</sup> graders reached testing grade level. It was not readily apparent how applicant's proposal initiatives would result in such dramatic test score results in the next four years. The district-wide goals for improved student outcomes were contradictory, or at least equivocal when faced with the realities of learning time to affect change, even with accelerated learning initiatives in place. These facts when considered in total, earned applicant 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>3</b>

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

- LEA introduced Linked Learning Pathways to their student populace five years ago. There has been some documented student behavioral positive data. For the purposes of this RTTD funding and to substantiate that the applicant's proposal has demonstrated evidence of raising student academic achievement and improving student learning outcomes, we would expect to see a clear record of success in the past four years. However, when looking at the All High Schools, scoring graphic, there is a disconcerting lack of significant separation between the Pathway and non-Pathway high school and math scores; additionally the gap between the two groups is closing in the last two years. Raw scores are trending downward for all high schools, including Pathway high schools. However, given the similar demographics of student bodies, high schools with Pathways have a documented history of relatively higher rate of student academic achievement, particularly with post secondary enrollment—95% Pathway, compared

to 50% non-Pathway.

- The Pathways program as currently implemented does not show significant positive gains, but the extent to which the expanded version, as contained in applicant's proposal, will achieve ambitious reforms and result in sustained, improved student learning outcomes is not entirely convincing. The inconsistent results of its current initiatives earns applicant low points.
- Within the narrative for this selection criteria, LEA lacked a reference as to how it makes student performance data available to students, educators and parents.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA was unable to provide personnel salaries as called for in this selection criteria. Applicant states that salary records are publicly available upon request at district office.

Public hearings are required before budget approval and major expenditures. Invitations are published in the local newspaper, the time and place for public commentary. This level of dissemination and access to LEA's processes, practices and investments is minimal and does not constitute what is considered a high level of transparency.

LEA adds that with grant proposal funding, proposal reform projects, including student assessment and project progress will be made publicly available via the district website and other publications. Teachers, students, parents and principals will have access to student specific achievement data through reports and data programs pending funding of the proposal.

The quality of the transparency of processes related to LEA proposal was unclear, resulting in low points.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA does not have complete legal authority over the policy direction of the schools; this authority rests with the state legislature. However, applicant states that under a 1976 legal statute, California Education Code Section 35160, Section 35160.1.(a) and (b), as long as an initiative is not legally prohibited and remains within the purposes for which school district was established, then it can be undertaken.

These laws provide broad latitude for local school officials to take actions that are in keeping with the purposes for which the funds were appropriated. Applicant says it can count on long standing support for Career Technical Education by the California Department of Education. Similar to the Pathways currently in place in the district, California Partnership Academies have been funded by the California Legislature for over 15 years. There was no evidence that this funding support by the state legislature is supported by legal statutes and therefore could be terminated depending on the political climate.

The LEA currently receives funding for five Partnership Academies. Assembly Bill 790, signed into law October 2011. Beginning school year 2012-13 this bill provides funding for pilot programs to assist in designing district led school re-design initiatives that integrate career-themed Pathways into instructional frameworks of high schools.

The pilot programs that will go into effect in apparent support of applicant's core proposal component, are not secured by legal mandate, and as pilots run the risk of losing funding in the following years. This creates a precarious environment in which to deploy a four year plan such as this grant, contributing to applicant earning low scores.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA engages a myriad of stakeholders throughout the process of proposal development, implementation and evaluation. Applicant has several years of established stakeholder contact and input. The applicant's grant funded proposal is LLEAP3 reform model consisting of additional Pathways to those already in place within the district. The LEA showed a chart illustrating a committee that will be used to determine the content of the applicant's proposal, including the additional Pathways. Applicant is lacking demonstrated input of students, families in their process of developing grant proposal. There is also limited teacher participation in creation of Pathway content for the grant proposal. These are among a collection of deficiencies (as follows), that show diminished engagement of required participants as called for in selection criteria..

LEA demonstrated direct engagement with collective bargaining representation through its contact with the Porterville Educators Association (PEA), affiliated with the California Teachers Association—the bargaining agency for LEA teachers.

PEA proposed several additions to applicant's proposal that resulted in increased emphasis and funding in areas of professional development, collaboration time for teachers, parent involvement and technology. The PEA executive council approved LEA's RTTD application and authorized their president to sign the application. Direct engagement with collective bargaining representation is clearly evident here.

Applicant does not show a history of engaging students, families, and principals in developing their proposal. LEA attempts to impart an aura of legitimacy to the claim of student, parental, teacher and principal involvement, by saying these groups were part of the reform vision that is the basis for LEA's ultimate grant proposal. The Joint District Administrators Council (JDAC) and the Governing Board, as stated by LEA, are the authors of the proposal, with other committees weighing in on the plan. The degree of input that may have affected changes to the proposal are not clear from the narrative.

Letters of support from a wide variety of stakeholders were provided in appendix. Applicant is deficient in demonstrating how families, student and parents were engaged in development of this grant proposal, other requirements are sufficiently demonstrated. Therefore mid-range points are earned.

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

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

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

LEA says they are building on evidenced-based practices that are already underway though not yet up to scale. Their project will build capacity and access to Linked Learning Pathways at the high school level and establish ways to connect kindergartners to Pathways with the intent of broadening the proposal's impact to all participating students. Applicant states that beginning in kindergarten and throughout elementary school, teachers and parents will work with the students to pursue personalized learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and to meet the Expected Graduate Outcomes (EGOs). The applicant did not adequately address their need to assist students in understanding that their learning goals are key to their success. Although tacitly referred to in their narrative (The essential ingredients of PUSD's Linked Learning approach are student engagement, motivation, ownership, leadership, and responsibility), specific mention of applicant's intent to assure student understanding was lacking. Also, no definitive evidence was provided on the details of how LEA would show a correlation between expanding Pathways at the high school level and enhancing student learning gain in the kindergarten through elementary grade years. The components of a high quality plan are not clearly outlined for this sector.

Applicant will involve students, teachers and parents in creating an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which includes summative assessments, personal academic interests and guidance from academic teams to provide participants with the knowledge of how to utilize system tools to achieve and adapt personalized learning plan goals.

Applicant places major emphasis on project and work-based experiences. This portion of the ILP is said to contribute to the student displaying mastery of foundational skills, information literacy, creativity and innovation, organization, communication, collaboration, and the ability to work with diverse individuals, all elements necessary for post-secondary and career success. LEA plans on further developing the variety of high-quality instructional approaches available to participating students by ensuring a high-quality professional development program where teachers and other educators increase their capacity to teach using project-based learning and adjust their instructional focus to better serve their students. Among its support tools for student personalized learning, applicant will use an online platform (ConnectEd Studios) to connect students and teachers with industry professionals that support their projects. LEA participating teachers will have access to a new data system called Aeries Analytics, which will permit teachers to synthesize and analyze test data to create personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills. As support for demonstrating how LEA will prepare students to utilize technological tools and resources in effecting their plan, applicant simply states: Students will learn to use technology effectively, in conjunction with the PUSD Technology Plan and ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NET-S), to develop the technology and information literacy skills needed in the 21st Century. A more robust, documented plan to make sure students are trained and supported in using the technological tools and resources available to them, was not adequately outlined, thereby reducing qualification as a high quality plan. In some ways, the applicant's personalized learning plan for their students and staff has so many requirements as outlined by the applicant, until there will likely be a need for more than 1-FTE as Director of Pathways. Serving almost 14,000 students with the details planned herein will require more personnel to support the effective outlay of the plan. Considering the requirements outlined in section's criteria, applicant has, demonstrated that its proposal encompasses some of the criteria, and is lacking in others.

LEA has set into play a complex interaction of student achievement goals, state and district required mandates, data driven

assessments and other measures along with ongoing professional development, all of which should synergistically work to deliver a personalized learning environment to participating students. The details of each component and their relationship to proposal success is not clearly linked. There are silos of seemingly independent educational activities such as the rubrics developed by LEA to help students achieve the expected graduate outcomes as required by the Porterville Unified School District. The relationship of these initiatives and the goals of this grant proposal are lacking clarity. Therefore mid-range points are earned.

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

**20**

**9**

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

Applicant realizes that at the interface of knowledge dissemination and its intended recipient (the student), is the teacher; the one person that has tremendous influence in the process of preparing students for college and or career readiness. In order to prepare LEA's teachers and educators for their proposal, applicant states: "we have created a professional development plan that focuses on building the capacity of our teachers to personalize the learning environment at all levels and focuses on sustaining the strategies over time". Applicant's teachers will participate in a Professional Development Institute (PDI) in two months prior to beginning of school and at designated times throughout the school year. The number of PDI days is based on grade level and project activities. The topics covered during the PDI will target the knowledge and skills needed to successfully personalize teaching and learning and will include: using data to inform instruction; 21st century learning tools and digital resources for differentiation; project based learning and assessment; work-based learning, service and community learning; developing and using assessments; and development of the ILP. **Lacking was attention to more details for the implementation of this very important part of the proposal process.**

To make sure that all educators have access to, and know how to use the tools, data and resources to accelerate student learning, LEA will hire a full-time Professional Development Director to coordinate all professional development activities. This is an enormous task for one individual. **Applicant would need a more detailed plan to qualify for high-quality status that would show the relationship between key goals and rationale.** It is not enough Each teacher will have their own Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPD). To make sure participating educators know how to use the technology systems designed to help them, help their students, District leaders and project-partners with specific expertise in the systems used in professional development such as ConnectEd, Project Lead the Way, the National Academy Foundation, and WestEd will provide training for the PDI workshops annually. **Still missing are the the details. More specifics are needed to address the components of a high quality plan and the impact on these courses are expected to have on student learning outcomes.**

District school leadership have previously developed policies and procedures for implementation of parts of LEA's proposal and was approved by the District's Board of Trustee's. To promote a common bond of understanding between the teachers and the leadership in applying the technological tools used to help implement their proposal, applicant will have their principals attend monthly meeting (ConnectEd Leadership Institute). These monthly meetings will provide coaching meetings for principals in Linked Learning Pathways schools; coaching includes leadership strategies and techniques around development and evaluation of Pathways programs and the development of an individualized action plan for each principal. LEA outlines support for their teachers and principals to support the environment for implementation of personalized learning for them, which in turn will support the same for their students and help ensure success of LEA's proposal. **The support as provided, is unclear how it will translate into on-site, learning environment application. More details are required for high quality assessment.**

To assist LEA in identifying and developing high-effective teachers and principals, applicant conducts various methods to evaluate teacher's classroom performance. Included in these processes are Walk Through protocol; Pathways Quality Review and an evaluation system based on California Standards for Teaching Profession. The evaluation systems are based on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CAPSEL). **No evidence was provided that would support these processes contributing toward increasing student exposure to highly-effective teachers and principals.**

Applicant provides a chart that lists categories that make-up a high quality plan. However, when comparing the high quality plan criteria to the information provided in the chart by applicant, the likelihood that their efforts in this section comprise a high quality plan are not entirely supported in their proposal. Therefore, mid-range points are earned.

**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>7</b>

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

During the last five years, applicant has refined, altered, and adjusted integral components of their proposal to reach its current state. During this time LEA has made changes to their central office structure to respond to the changing needs of their students and to the educational environment. LEA has established has a broad base of ownership and support for their proposal (LLEAP3 Initiative) at all levels from the Governing Board, to the individual school sites. Applicant's Linked Learning Team is charged with ensuring adherence to criteria (c, d, e) in this sector. The Executive Cabinet is responsible for the overall implementation of the LLEAP3 program. Members of this executive cabinet are: Superintendent, assistant superintendent of Business Services, assistant superintendent of Instructional Services, and assistant superintendent of Human Resources. With such high level administrators, the governance structure affords LEA a greater opportunity to enact policies and practices to facilitate personalized learning.

Applicant states: "Currently, high school students have the opportunity to progress academically and earn credit based on mastery instead of time in class". Applicant's proposal calls for Pathways development, including a 4-year course of study plan. However, the student has the option of on-line courses, credit recovery programs (summer programs, on-line courses, independent study, or adult school classes), alternative and independent study programs, and concurrent enrollment at the community college or adult school to provide them resources for subject mastery. LLEAP3 will guide the development of more options for students to earn credit through challenge examinations. The plight of ELL (English Language Learners) needs a more thorough approach to inclusion in the proposal, the lack of programmatic preparation for ELL students hampers the plan's ability to qualify for a high-quality plan, since about 26% of the participating students are English Language Learners. Overall, LEA delivers some of the components of a high quality plan, and is lacking in others, as noted above, and thereby earns mid-range points.

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

**10**

**2**

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA is not fully demonstrating a high-quality plan in this sector. They admittedly have work to do in order to fully address the criteria in this section. Their Open Door Policy makes computers available to the community before school and after school hours. However, the hours and days are not provided. Also lacking was more detail on the way LEA provides the know-how, or technical support to stakeholders needing help in accessing student learning data and its meaning. The level of support from the LEA's technology department was inconclusive, but applicant did mention there are innovative small group training and one-on-one training and online training avenues to obtain technical support if needed. Limited student information is available to stakeholders through the LEA's Parent Portal.

Applicant states that upon obtaining funding through this grant, they will be able to address each of the criterions in this section by virtue of obtaining infrastructure and hardware. Specifically, applicant states: "One of the biggest challenges for PUSD is funding to implement a fully integrated data system to provide all stakeholders with a common log-in to access data and information from a myriad of existing programs".

Applicant currently has several pilot programs that involve students using iPads at home and at school. With grant funding applicant plans to expand the use and access of internet based programs among teachers, students and parents (family). Currently, LEA provides access to family, students by opening its computer labs before and after school hours with limited technical help onsite.

Data systems interoperability is not fully functional according to LEA. Included the proposal is the plan to fully integrate data systems with the capability to participate in open source access for stakeholders to student and LEA information. Given the requirements of this sector and the LEA's current status, low points are earned.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>

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

LEA has outlined a system of committees and teams to monitor the implementation of their proposal and provide continuous improvement processes that will give feedback on project progress. Applicant has experience in engaging in continuous improvement before grant application initiation and have exhibited a understanding of the importance of this process. Sufficient details, proven professional development courses with documented evidence of positive impact on

teachers and students would be expected for district with this type history. Their District Leadership Team (DLT) will meet weekly during the first year of proposal implementation to create detailed summative and evaluative feedback for LEA. The DLT will meet monthly thereafter to report its finding related to monitoring and measuring plan progress. Teachers, Pathways Department personnel, and students will continue to monitor progress and to modify instruction, as necessary, on a daily basis. Applicant outlines how it will enact monitoring of progress in 5 areas of investment: (1) Integrated career and technical education; 2) Intensive professional development for teachers and leaders; 3) Data system that (a) provides teachers with tools to make formative decisions regarding learning, (b) students and parents with on-time data to monitor progress, and (c) administrators with information to support and strengthen instruction targeting college- and career-ready standards; 4) Positive and personalized relationships and supports for all students; and 5) Collaborative leadership and community engagement.

LEA indicated that they already monitor, measure and publicly share information on the success and/or failure of their current Linked Learning Pathways, and will be able to continue these activities and be even more transparent with the addition of upgraded technological capabilities. Applicant was unclear and vague as to how this information is shared publicly, when does this sharing take place, and within what written document. LEA's plan does not completely meet the hallmarks of a high quality plan and therefore earns a mid-range score.

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

**5**

**3**

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

Applicant demonstrates a plan for ongoing communication and engagement between PUSD and internal and external stakeholders several ways.

Applicant welcomes business partners, community members, students, and parents to all meetings. The program director leads stakeholders in discussions to promote career awareness for students, and develop collaborative relationships.

Funds are allocated to fund newsletters, informational meetings, marketing video and materials, student and teacher recruitment brochures and invitations to highlight student work.

Applicant uses multiple outlets for ongoing communication and engagement with students, parent, teachers, and the non-school community.

The proposal as provided, expands on current processes that have—through necessity—maintained an open avenue of communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

The five (5) additional Pathways that are part of LEA's proposal have travelled the course of communication and engagement to reach this point. Based on continuous feedback and improvement, changes will likely occur during the grant years and beyond.

The LLEAP3 Director will arrange for various formats (newsletters, mailings, videos, student and teacher recruitment brochures) of communication and engagement to promote career awareness for students, and develop collaborative relationships with local business and industry and with local post-secondary institutions.

It was unclear when would these communication tools be completed and sent to stakeholders. Otherwise, applicant exhibits most of the plan's requirements for a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement, earning mid-range points.

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

**5**

**1**

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

LEA developed a chart that addresses each sub-sector under this selection criterion.

LEA lists four goals under performance measures that applicant deems sufficient to address the success or failure of the proposal. The four goals are: improve the effectiveness of teachers and principals; improve student academic achievement; increase social-emotional development and improve college and career readiness. The applicant-proposed measure or Project Objective listed in Goal-1 has limited potential to accurately measure whether or not a teacher or principal is effective or highly-effective. There are multiple crucial inputs that factor into a student's performance on standardized tests and other assessments. To hinge the determination of effective or highly-effective staff on one measurement is overly simplistic.

Each of these four goals is accompanied by a more defined sub-sets of goals that create a collective group of performance measures that generally have the capability to achieve ambitious performance measures. The limiting factor

here is the degree to which these performance measures are achievable given the trending test score results and that the funding is primarily intended to create initiatives (Pathways) that affect junior high and high school students. It is because of these reasons applicant earns a low score.

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

**5**

**2**

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

Applicant states their overarching goal is to bring their proposal (LLEAP3) up to scalability as a solution to closing the poverty, achievement and opportunity gap. Quantitative data will be collected, analyzed and used for program modification and improvement.

Qualitative data, including professional development, will continue to be collected to assist in making course adjustments to measure performance in developing high effective teachers who in turn should precipitate a measurable academic performance enhancement among participating students. **Collectively, it is the teachers who will gauge the effectiveness of program implementation, providing valuable feedback leading to either program revision on continuation.**

Further, LEA charges their District Technology Team to assess the ease of use of technology, loss and/or damage, and increased use of technology in program implementation. The underlying question remains as to whether the performance measures being evaluated will support the impact of achieving learning gains of a personalized student learning plan. Therefore applicant earns mid range points.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

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

LEA shows details of how RTTD funding will be used to achieve proposal.

The applicant includes other funding to supplement grant funding.

Accounting practices including placing certain expenditures under "Personnel", such as supplies, printing, postage and non-project specific travel for the Project Director, will be contained in Personnel category. This is manner of accounting principles are contradictory to the heightened transparency expected of grant recipients.

Single source or similar investments are identified in applicants budget.

Applicant shows how monies (RTTD and other sources) will be allocated and spent.

A missing or unclear element concerned the upgrades and maintenance expense of the newly purchased (updated) software Aeires Analytics Student Focused Data System. As the program develops there will be upgrades, version supplements and more. Applicant should make clear if budget has planned expenditures for hardware obsolescence/replacement, and software upgrades. Therefore, when considering all, applicant earns mid range points.

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

**10**

**8**

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

The applicant states: As part of our sustainability plan, we will continue to strengthen existing relationships and establish new partnerships during and beyond the project period. The district is proactive in pursuing a variety of additional funding through discretionary grants, resources available through local government, and support through local and national non-profit organizations.

Since the applicant has a history of sound financial management and obtaining funding and currently has portions of its proposal in place, it is entirely conceivable that applicant can continue sustainability of project goals after term of the grant.

Applicant is pinning its proposal sustainability hopes on the incremental build up, year after year for proposal duration. According to LEA the linchpin of the entire process is the teaching, training and development of teachers through professional development processes on how to access and interpret the data gained from utilizing the software, technology, formative and summative assessments. In other words, to engrain and sustain capacity with its workforce will all but ensure

proposal success. Continued fiscal support was not as clearly aligned with a high-quality plan, which reduces point totals in this sector.

The LEA has displayed the ability to effectively manage the fiscal component of its funding request and generates confidence that it will Local funding has been the mainstay of Linked Learning Programs and Pathways development prior to RTTD grant proposal. The continuance of community, business and public support is nearly assured through the historically intact business partnerships and sound fiscal management of the PUSD Board of Trustees. Considering the applicants ongoing communication and engagement with business partners and the expressed commitment of state funding, the applicant gives the elements of a high quality plan under this sector, thereby earning high points.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

LEA has built a network of partnerships with community health and social agencies to address the social, emotional and/or behavioral needs of its students. These partners provide mental health support, family crisis intervention, special needs assessment and education, academic and behavioral supports for at-risk students, services for domestic abuse and the homeless, staff development opportunities, and services for students who have been sexually abused.

District currently has 146 partners capable of delivering a variety of health and social services to participating students in need.

Population level desired results mirror or closely align to applicant's proposal, such as increasing academic performance in English and math; increasing number of students on track for college and/or career; decrease in the number of severe discipline issues.

The chart listing agencies that have entered into partnerships with LEA also shows whether public or private, what type of service is offered, and who is the beneficiary.

Applicant provided insufficient or sparse evidence as to how it would address sub-section 5-a through 5-e in this selection criteria, which expects LEA to show how its partnerships will build staff capacity by providing tools and other forms of support. Applicant lists many partners with most being categorized as helping in a specific subject/trade area; more akin to a Vocational-Technical vein, which corresponds to applicant's Pathways. Less clear was the degree to which the partners helped LEA assess the individual learning needs of participating students. The partnership association have room for more involvement on various levels, such as engaging parents and families; helping create a decision making process to provide input to LEA about what the partnerships have gleaned as useful information to address the student's individual needs. This limitation impacted applicant's score potential negatively, resulting in low point totals.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

A core component of LEA's proposal is to generate data from formative and summative assessments to drive the decision making processes related to personalized learning environments for its students and staff. Each learning pathway is supported or will be supported rubric milestones and researched based testing tools to guide student and LEA on the best learning path for the students and staff.

High-quality data systems requirement is satisfied with LEA's proposed upgrade to Aeries Analytics systems. This systems will offer educators the ability to analyze and manipulate data to arrive at informtion based decisions.

To develop, sustain and retain effective teachers and principals, LEA starts all its teachers with access to a Professional Development Institute before school year begins, with follow-up workshops in November and February for the duration of the proposal. A full-time professional development director will assist teachers if maixmizing their development strategies.

Each teacher will have a personalized development plan. This classroom instruction helps teachers understand how to use data to inform instruction. Other topics include differentiated instruction, project-based learning, implementing the CCSS, assessment, LL strategies K-12, Response to Intervention/other interventions, and developing integrated curriculum. Applicant believes it has begun the long journey of changing the educational culture and changing the mind-set of stakeholders—students, teachers, parents, community, business and other educators. It is apparent the applicant realizes the importance of teaching its teachers and has structured a system to do so.

Applicant does not specifically establish special emphasis, or similarly named programs targeting its low achieving schools. LEA seems to be committed to their proposal as being the high-tide that raises all ships. When deployed as planned, applicant asserts that low-performing schools will not need any extra effort to realize enhanced student academic gains.

So far their results has recorded some positive results. To create the change in educational culture and obtain documented results, the applicant has placed its hopes for success on Pathways, which are essentially learning strands based on student interest and assessment based tools.

The LEA has a good record of soliciting and obtaining business/industry buy-in, political support, and private/public partnerships to continuously improve their concept model and how it impacts their students. Applicant has thus far demonstrated strong evidence that their proposal is working.

Applicant has shown how it will build on the core educational values of this grant, and how plans to further develop their existing learning/teaching model that will assist schools and other learning environments to accelerate student learning and develops teachers and educators ready to prepare participating students for college and/or careers.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>88</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0178CA-2 for Porterville Unified 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>10</b>

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

The applicant clearly describes its district as comprised of 20 schools—ten elementary schools, three middle schools, five comprehensive high schools, a charter independent study high school, and an adult school. Demographically, the district enrolls 13,835 students—80% are identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged, 78% are Hispanic, and 26% are English learners. There are more high schools than middle schools in the district primarily because the district also serves 14 feeder school districts located in impoverished areas and generally isolated from urban and suburban support systems.

As documented by district assessments, external evaluations and award recognitions, the applicant effectively explains that it has successfully created and implemented innovative “learning pathways” which are personalized for high school students by linking academic and technical content with real-world contexts related to student interests in order to better prepare them for college and careers. The applicant’s vision guiding this proposed project is clearly described: to expand linked learning pathways at the high school level, implement them further at all elementary and middle schools in the district, establish the initiative as a sustainable district-wide reform practice, and serve as a model for other school districts in the state and beyond.

The applicant convincingly presents the proposed project as building on the four core educational assurance areas in the following ways:

- The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will be adopted and new student assessments aligned to CCSS through the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium will be used beginning the 2014-15 school year. The CCSS define the knowledge and skills that students should develop during their K-12 education so that they will graduate from high school and be successful in academic college courses and in workforce training programs.
- An upgraded comprehensive data management system (Aeries Analytics), along with a learning management system (such as Haiku), will be purchased and implemented so that educators will be able to draw on simultaneously multiple sets of relevant data for needed interventions and instruction, real-time feedback to inform educators, students and parents, and Linked Learning Pathways projects integrated into the database to monitor progress.
- Along with a collaborative partnership between the district and several teacher education institutions in the state to prepare effective teachers for a linked learning environment, educators will be supported in their professional growth for linked learning pathways and personalized learning through communities of practice, professional learning communities, and interdisciplinary collaborations. The district school board also has endorsed rewarding and retaining effective teachers through a resolution to provide employment protection for teachers prepared in integrated curriculum and instruction for linked learning.
- The district's implementation of linked learning pathways and evidence-based practices aims to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps for assuring that socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities receive the support their need to be successful. The proposed project aims to further transform the district's lowest achieving schools by providing teachers with targeted professional development and support, and by implementing more personalized and rigorous instruction, social-emotional support services, greater parental involvement, expanded use of technology, and accountability for results.

To personalize the learning environment, support equity and access, and accelerate and deepen student learning, the applicant clearly describes that it will implement a system-wide reform model that has five mutually supportive components aligned with the core educational assurances:

- Career and technical education integrated with academic programs.
- Intensive professional development for teachers and leaders.
- Data systems that provide teachers with the tools to make formative decisions regarding learning, students and parents with on-time data to monitor progress, and administrators with the information to support and strengthen instruction that targets college- and career-ready standards.
- Positive and personalized relationships and supports for all students, particularly English learners, students falling below grade level, students with special needs, and students facing the challenges associated with poverty and homelessness.
- Collaborative leadership and community engagement.

As the applicant appropriately explains, the classroom experience for linked learning pathways will be individualized for every student, to some extent, based on the student's interests, aspirations, learning styles, and learning needs. Teachers will consider these factors, along with established goals and standards, in making instructional decisions such as giving extra time, allowing for learning acceleration, and modifying instruction. While each student will have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), formed with his or her learning team (teacher, advisor/coach, and school administrator), linked learning classrooms will have some shared general characteristics, such as providing rigorous and integrated coursework as well as learning activities that are relevant, outcome-focused, student-directed, and collaborative.

The highest score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed.

The applicant clearly describes its district as comprised of 20 schools—ten elementary schools, three middle schools, five comprehensive high schools, a charter independent study high school, and an adult school. Demographically, the district enrolls 13,835 students—80% are identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged, 78% are Hispanic, and 26% are English learners. There are more high schools than middle schools in the district primarily because the district also serves 14 feeder school districts located in impoverished areas and generally isolated from urban and suburban support systems.

As documented by district assessments, external evaluations and award recognitions, the applicant effectively explains that it has successfully created and implemented innovative “learning pathways” which are personalized for high school students by linking academic and technical content with real-world contexts related to student interests in order to better prepare them for college and careers. The applicant’s vision guiding this proposed project is clearly described: to expand linked learning pathways at the high school level, implement them further at all elementary and middle schools in the district, establish the initiative as a sustainable district-wide reform practice, and serve as a model for other school districts in the state and beyond.

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- An upgraded comprehensive data management system (Aeries Analytics), along with a learning management system (such as Haiku), will be purchased and implemented so that educators will be able to draw on simultaneously multiple sets of relevant data for needed interventions and instruction, real-time feedback to inform educators, students and parents, and Linked Learning Pathways projects integrated into the database to monitor progress.
- Along with a collaborative partnership between the district and several teacher education institutions in the state to prepare effective teachers for a linked learning environment, educators will be supported in their professional growth for linked learning pathways and personalized learning through communities of practice, professional learning communities, and interdisciplinary collaborations. The district school board also has endorsed rewarding and retaining effective teachers through a resolution to provide employment protection for teachers prepared in integrated curriculum and instruction for linked learning.
- The district’s implementation of linked learning pathways and evidence-based practices aims to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps for assuring that socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities receive the support they need to be successful. The proposed project aims to further transform the district’s lowest achieving schools by providing teachers with targeted professional development and support, and by implementing more personalized and rigorous instruction, social-emotional support services, greater parental involvement, expanded use of technology, and accountability for results.

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- Intensive professional development for teachers and leaders.
- Data systems that provide teachers with the tools to make formative decisions regarding learning, students and parents with on-time data to monitor progress, and administrators with the information to support and strengthen instruction that targets college- and career-ready standards.
- Positive and personalized relationships and supports for all students, particularly English learners, students falling below grade level, students with special needs, and students facing the challenges associated with poverty and homelessness.
- Collaborative leadership and community engagement.

As the applicant appropriately explains, the classroom experience for linked learning pathways will be individualized for every student, to some extent, based on the student’s interests, aspirations, learning styles, and learning needs. Teachers will consider these factors, along with established goals and standards, in making instructional decisions such as giving extra time, allowing for learning acceleration, and modifying instruction. While each student will have an Individual Learning

Plan (ILP), formed with his or her learning team (teacher, advisor/coach, and school administrator), linked learning classrooms will have some shared general characteristics, such as providing rigorous and integrated coursework as well as learning activities that are relevant, outcome-focused, student-directed, and collaborative.

The highest score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed.

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

**10**

**2**

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

The applicant clearly and sufficiently explains that all schools, students, and educators in the district will participate in the proposed project as a result of multiple meetings and feedback from individuals that represent the following stakeholders regarding the proposed project:

- Teacher bargaining unit
- Teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools
- Site principals
- Students
- Parents
- Parent Teacher Association
- Pathway advisory boards
- School Site Councils
- ConnectEd (one of the district’s professional partners)

Applicant provides in a table the list of 20 participating schools, the grades included in each school, and school demographics (raw data and percentages). The listed participating schools include all 10 elementary schools (K-6), all three middle schools (7-8), and all seven high schools (9-12) in the district. The applicant states that all of the 13,895 total students and all of the 845 educators will participate in the project.

[Note: As specified in the FY13 Race to the Top - District Application for Funding package, the budget request is to be based on the number of participating students that the applicant will serve within the first 100 days of the grant award, and participating student is defined as a student directly served by the applicant’s project in creating personalized learning environments as described for Absolute Priority 1. The **number of students served** in the proposed project **has direct ramifications** not only for assessing whether the appropriate **budget request** is reasonable and sufficient, but also for assessing how well the applicant addresses other project criteria in sections such as: **Learning**—implementing instructional strategies for all *participating students* that enable them to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards; **Teaching and Leading**—the number and percent of *participating students* whose teacher of record and principal are “highly effective” and “effective”; and, **LEA and School Infrastructure**—assuring that all *participating students* have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources, both in and out of school, to support the implementation of the applicant’s proposal.]

Evidence provided by the applicant is both unclear and conflicting with regard to whether and when the project would directly engage all students in the district, particularly with regard to the major thrust of the project, which is Linked Learning Pathways:

- The applicant’s stated *vision* is that *all students* will acquire academic knowledge and skills and learn how to apply their learning in real-world applicants. At the same time, the applicant’s stated intention is bringing the Linked Learning Initiative to scalability at the district level, i.e. to serve as a district-wide reform model. Moreover, the applicant states that, with RTTD funding, the development and implementation of Pathways will be accelerated to reach the goal of “wall-to-wall” implementation in the district. The strong implication is that the applicant’s intent is to engage all students in all schools in the Pathways initiative supported through the RTTD project funding.

The applicant provides information that 54% of all *grade 9-12 students currently enroll* in a one of the nine Pathways provided at the five high schools in the district (four the high schools have two Pathways each, and the other high school has one Pathway). On the next page to the foregoing information, the applicant states that (based on enrollment projections) 73% of the *high school students* in the district would be enrolled in Linked Learning (LL) Pathways *by 2017-18* (the post-grant year) and 100% of the *high school students* would be enrolled in LL Pathways *by 2021-22* (five years after the completion of the proposed project). Based on this evidence of current and projected enrollment in the LL Pathways, it is not possible to conclude that 100% of the *high school students* in the district would be directly engaged in the major thrust of the project.

- The applicant states that it will expand the benefits of Linked Learning to students in grades K-8 through more systematic attention to real-world applications in academic curriculum, career awareness, authentic project-based learning, and individual learning plans for elementary and middle school students. At the same time, the applicant does not provide specific information in the project plan within the section on **LEA-wide Reform and Change** to determine how many K-8 students will be direct participants in Linked Learning Pathways developed and implemented during the project. Overall, the applicant does not identify how many students in particular grades and schools will directly participate in the project for each of the four years of the project. The applicant does state that the Linked Learning Pathways program will be fully developed and implemented at all sites in the district by the fourth year of the project.

While the applicant provides a description of stakeholder involvement in the process to select school for participation, a low score is awarded for this section because of the confusing and conflicting information about number of participating students.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

To achieve the overarching goal of transitioning the district through the developmental phase of the linked learning pathways reform initiative by establishing a system that leads to district-wide personalized learning and ensures a secure foundation to sustain and replicate the model, the applicant clearly identifies five student achievement outcomes that will guide the project:

- Improve student achievement in English language arts and mathematics.
- Decrease the achievement gap for all significant subgroups.
- Increase the number of students who are college- and career-ready.
- Increase graduation rates.
- Increase the number of students who enroll in post-secondary education.

To achieve these student outcomes, the applicant effectively provides an overall Project Management Plan that includes goals, activities, timelines (over four years), deliverables, and persons responsible for district-wide reform. More specifically, as supported by the applicant's implementation plan, the project will over the four years:

- Further implement and expand linked learning pathways in grades 9-12.
- Expand the linked learning model to grades K-8.
- Increase teacher and administrator capacity to personalize learning for all students.
- Increase use of data to drive teaching and learning.
- Create a continuum of supports for students and families, with particular attention to high-need students.
- Establish a rigorous, sustainable quality improvement process.

[Note: The Project Management Plan includes for all project components where applicable (a) staffing, (b) professional development for teachers and principals, (c) student and parent training, and (d) project reports. Upon close inspection, the overall Project Management Plan includes components sufficient to meet the requirements of high-quality plans for LEA and School Infrastructure, Continuous Improvement, Ongoing Communication and Engagement, and Sustainability of Project Goals. The applicant supplies specific high-quality plan for Learning, Teaching and Leading, and Evaluating Effectiveness of Investments.]

A high score is awarded because, while all of the criteria are effectively addressed, it is not clear, or there is conflicting evidence, whether all students in the district, or some portion of K-12 students, will be active participants in the project. [See bracketed note in Section A2 for explanation of confusing and conflicting information about number student participants in the project.].

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant clearly provides in tables in the appendix sufficient evidence that the following goals for the four-year project (2013-14 to 2016-17), compared to the baseline year (2012-13), are ambitious yet achievable in that they equal or exceed state ESEA targets:

- *Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth)*
  - Measure: Percentage of students proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math on the California Standards Tests (CST) in grades 2-6 and grades 7-8
    - Goal: ELA proficiency on CST for students overall in grades 2-6 from 41% in baseline year to 68% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 27% in proficient students; comparable gains in ELA proficiency targeted for student subgroups
    - Goal: ELA proficiency on CST for students overall in grades 7-8 from 45% in baseline year to 65% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 20% in proficient students; comparable gains in ELA proficiency targeted for student subgroups
    - Goal: Math proficiency on CST for students overall in grades 2-6 from 58% in baseline year to 82% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 24% in proficient students; comparable gains in Math proficiency targeted for student subgroups
    - Goal: Math proficiency on CST for students overall in grades 7-8 from 45% in baseline year to 61% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 16% in proficient students; comparable gains in Math proficiency targeted for student subgroups groups, except 22% gain for English learners
  - Measure: 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass rates in ELA and Math on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)
    - Goal: ELA 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass rate on CAHSEE for students overall from 78% in baseline year to 93% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 15% in pass rate; comparable gains in ELA pass rate targeted for student subgroups
    - Goal: Math 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass rate on CAHSEE for students overall from 80% in baseline year to 94% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 14% in pass rate; comparable gains in Math pass rate targeted for student subgroups, except 10% gain for white students and 20% gain for English learners
- *Decreasing achievement gaps*
  - Measure: Percentage of district students in grades 2-11 scoring proficient or higher in ELA and Math as measured by the CST compared to percentage of statewide students scoring proficient or higher in ELA and Math on the CST
    - Goal: Percentage of students overall scoring proficient or higher in ELA compared to percentage of statewide students scoring proficient or higher in ELA as measured by the CST from -11% in baseline year to -4% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 7% in reducing the achievement gap; comparable gains in reducing ELA achievement gap targeted for student subgroups, except 16% gain for Asian students
    - Goal: Percentage of students overall scoring proficient or higher in Math compared to percentage of statewide students scoring proficient or higher in Math as measured by the CST from -3% in baseline year to +2% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 5% in reducing the achievement gap; comparable gains in reducing Math achievement targeted for student subgroups
- *Graduation rates*
  - Measure and Goal: High school graduation rate for students overall from 80% in baseline year to 93% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 13% in graduation rate; comparable gains in graduate rate targeted for student

- subgroups
- *College enrollment rates*
  - Measure and Goal: College enrollment rate for students overall from 51% in baseline year to 75% in 4<sup>th</sup> year of project, a gain of 24% in college enrollment rate; comparable gains in college enrollment rate targeted for student subgroups

A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exception of not specifically including students with disabilities as a subgroup for improved student outcomes.

**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>12</b>

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

Over the past four years, the district has demonstrated a clear record of success in improved student learning outcomes as evidenced by:

- (a) increased passing rates on the California High School Exit Exam, especially for students enrolled in Pathways programs (90% passing rate for Pathways students compared to less than 80% passing rates for non-Pathways students);
- (b) increased overall student academic achievement in the district as indicated by the Academic Performance Index (API, a composite index of academic achievement as measured by the California Standards Tests in core subject areas), particularly in the high school in which all students participate in a linked learning pathway;
- (c) reduced achievement gap between the lowest and highest performing elementary schools; and
- (d) improved graduation rates for students participating in linked learning pathways.

The applicant also clearly explains that the achievement gap in point differences between the lowest and highest achieving elementary schools has been reduced over a 13-year period by 50%, based on API.

As confirmation of the applicant’s enumerated successes, an appended external evaluation report (dated 2012 and based on data collected between September 2009 and November 2011) of an ongoing case study performed by the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) observed among the district’s accomplishments that high school students participating in Pathways compared to the non-Pathway students had a higher API and had a higher pass rate on the exit exam. The case study is one of several focused on the California Linked Learning District Initiative involving nine selected districts throughout the state.

A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exceptions of not specifying district success in (a) improving college enrollment and (b) making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

In support of district transparency in processes, practices and investments, the applicant provides the following specific evidence:

- As shown in the appendix, exemplary budget reports—based on the Standard Accounting Code Structure for which all budget and expenditure items can be sorted by resource, site, goal, function and object—provide access to (a) personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and support staff, (b) personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only, (c) personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only, and (d) non-personnel expenditures at the school level. These reports are accessible to educators, parents, and other stakeholders both online and in print formats.
- Parent input is strongly recommended for all expenditures of categorical funds that include Title I, Economic Impact Aid, and Title III resources.
- The following groups involving parents and other stakeholders meet regularly to discuss concerns, make suggestions, and review financial items—Site Councils, District and English Learner Advisory Committees, and District Advisory Committee.
- The district website and publications make available to all stakeholders (educators, parents, students, and community members) the processes, practices, and educational investments related to the district’s system-wide reform model, including student assessment and project progress data.
- Aggregate student achievement data and project activity program are available to students, parents, and community stakeholders through the district website.
- Specific student achievement data and assessments can be accessed by students, parents, teachers, and principals through an updated and secure data management system in the district.

A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are addressed. While transparency concerns are clearly identified, more specific information about ease of access to and use of data and other resources would have been helpful.

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

**10**

**9**

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

Applicant clearly identifies the following state-level legal, statutory, and regulatory concerns that provide sufficient conditions and autonomy to implement personalized learning environments:

- A “permissive education code” that allows school districts to undertake an innovative program or activity as long as it is not prohibited by state statute or inconsistent with the purposes for which school districts are established.
- A provision in the California Education Code that school districts, boards of education, and superintendents have flexibility to create solutions that address their common and unique needs.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) has a history of support for career and technical education, accompanied by well-define standards, including partnership academies (of which five in the district receive state funding).
- Assembly Bill 790, signed into law October 2011 and in effect for the 2012-13 school year, provides for pilot programs that integrate career-themed Pathways into the organizational and instructional frameworks of high schools.

A high score is awarded this section because it effectively describes several positive state-level conditions for autonomy and support to implement personalized learning. It does not mention consideration of any (potential) negative impacts at the state level for implementing personalized learning environments.

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

**15**

**12**

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

The applicant provides mixed levels of detail regarding direct stakeholder engagement in the development of the current proposal and prior stakeholder engagement in the formation of linked learning pathways and technology capabilities that undergird the present proposal.

The applicant clearly describes involvement of the executive council of the local bargaining unit for teachers in the review, drafting, and approval of the present proposal. Less clear, however, is involvement in crafting the union contract and how that involvement has carried over to the current proposed project. The applicant clearly states that the current contract language does not prohibit the use of student achievement in the evaluation process. At the same time, the applicant reports that changes were made in the union contract to increase emphasis and funding for professional development, collaboration time for teachers, recognition for completion of individualized professional development plans in the salary schedule, parent involvement, and technology.

The applicant also demonstrates stakeholder engagement and support in the district's educational technology plan, covering the period 2010-2015 and focusing on the integration of technology into the lifelong learning process, which was developed in collaboration with parents, business, postsecondary institutions, county offices of education, and community groups

Further evidence of stakeholder support for the proposed project is found in 26 letters of support shown in the appendix from the following stakeholders:

- Current students (6)
- Former students now enrolled in a college or university (3)
- Parents (2) (one of which is currently the Chairperson of the District English Learner Advisory Committee)
- President of the local teacher union
- Elementary, middle, and high school principals (4)
- Director of after school programs in the district
- The 15-member P8 coalition formed to support the district's Pathway initiative and representing business, industry, and education organizations
- President/CEO of the local chamber of commerce
- City major
- California State Senator
- California Assembly Republic Leader
- President of the National Academy Foundation
- President of ConnectEd: California Center for College and Career
- President of local community college
- Chair of the local community college district board of trustees
- Dean of the school of education and human development at a California State University campus

It is not entirely clear from the proposal content how teachers (other than the teacher union executive council), students, or parents were directly involved in the development of the current proposal. However, applicant clearly describes how various stakeholder groups (parents and students as well as district, school, industry, civic, and higher constituencies) were recently involved in the creation of reforms linked to the goals and activities of the linked learning pathways initiative featured in the present application.

A high score is awarded this section because, although there is some question about the extent to which teachers, parents, and students were engaged in the development of the current proposal, all of the stakeholder groups are represented in the formative developments of the linked learning pathways initiative. Accompanying letters in the appendix provide evidence of broad-based support among stakeholder groups for proposed project.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		

Applicant provides clear evidence in a chart with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible that it has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment to effectively prepare students for college and careers. The learning management plan is organized around five goals: students will set and monitor individual learning goals; students will learn in a variety of ways; student will access high-quality content; students will receive training and support to manage their learning and stay on track; and students will receive ongoing and regular feedback on their progress.

More specifically, the applicant demonstrates a strong approach to learning that engages and empowers learners as evidenced by the following:

- Students will be helped to understand what they are learning is key to their success through a linked learning curriculum that integrates academic, career, and technical education; students are engaged by demonstrating application of academic content in an applied hands-on way that includes real-life work experiences related to student interests
- All students will develop an individual learning plan (ILP) that connects their interests and aspirations for learning and life, their college and career focus, what students will learning (academic expectations and outcomes), what age-appropriate technical skills and work-based activities they will learning and participate in, how they learn best, how they will be assessed and graded, and how their performance will be reported.
- The ILP will be developed as a collaborative effort among the student, parent, teacher, and counselor. Through this process, parents and students and teachers will be able to collaborate about student goals, academic performance, and learning styles to inform decision-making.
- The ILP also will include access to high-quality content, including digital resources, connected to CCSS and expected graduate outcomes.
- Students who choose to follow a traditional course of study in high school also will have an ILP and will be able to follow a personalized course of study.
- Pathway students will participate in interdisciplinary projects and work-based experiences in small, cohort-based learning groups that provide students the opportunity to be involved in deep learning experiences in their area of interest and to demonstrate their academic preparation to professionals in the field.
- To assure that all students have access to the Pathway of their choice, the district will provide transportation to and from school.
- Students will be helped to understand and pursue life skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that include the following expected graduate outcomes: critical thinking and problem solving; cultural awareness and ability to collaborate with diverse groups; technical skills in digital media applications and information management; effective communication skills of listening, speaking, and writing; creativity and innovation; leadership, self-management, and organizational skills obtained through real-world applications and community involvement; adaptability, responsibility, and ethical behaviors; and ability to navigate a global world of work and further education.
- Teachers and principals will receive intensive professional development for integrating CCSS with linked learning and expected graduate outcomes. Content at all performance levels is aligned to CCSS.
- Students, parents, educators, and residents will be engaged in celebrations that include flags, festivals, food, fashion, and famous people within a diverse community.
- Students will learn from academic content and projects about issues of global significance and identifying human commonalities while recognizing and honoring differences in cultural perspectives.
- The district will support maintenance of home language and promotes second language acquisition through a k-8 dual immersion program.
- Students will be helped to accomplish learning goals through a combination of approaches that include, but are not limited to, working individually, peer-to-peer, small group learning teams, community projects, classroom instruction, portfolio-based activities, and online communities.
- College and career standards will be implemented in personalized learning environments that include project-based learning, interdisciplinary and career-themed projects, and 21<sup>st</sup> century technology tools.
- To support project-based learning, the district will have an online platform that connects students and teachers with industry professionals who are involved with their projects.
- High-need students will receive accommodations and personalized instruction through differentiated learning activities and opportunities before, during, and after school.
- All students will have access to a personalized sequence of instruction based on performance on assessment, goals established in the individual learning plan, learning styles, and interest.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly formative assessments will be used to measure progress toward mastery of learning targets and expected graduate outcomes. All students in the district will have regular formative assessments to

provide ongoing feedback to teachers, students, and parents regarding students' progress.

- Teachers will monitor student progress and provide feedback, learning support, and additional resources to challenge and support students for achievement of learning goals.
- Parents will be engaged at a much deeper level in their children's education through collaboration on the development of the ILP, information session and workshops, and student presentations.
- Teachers will be provided with universal access to technology for assessment, to support instruction and learning, and to strengthen students' social-emotional support in collaboration with community-based and public-agency partners.
- Student social-emotional supports will be designed to ensure that students who are facing difficult life circumstances will receive the help they need, when they need it, to stay on track academically and to thrive physically and emotionally.
- In addition to support provided by teachers, counselors, coaches and mentors, partnerships with community agencies will enable students and their families to be referred to mental health and health services, drug and alcohol prevention and intervention services, and family counseling.
- To be able to bring personalized learning environments to scale, the district has committed funding over the last several years to create an infrastructure and provide technology tools for teachers and students to use beyond the classroom.
- Through a new data management system (Aeries Analytics), teachers will be able to access and use multiple types of student data to inform teaching and learning.
- Response to Intervention (RtI) approaches will be used across grade spans to focus resources on the needs of students who are struggling
- Customized services (e.g., tutoring, after-school instruction, behavioral interventions, parent engagement, and parent training) will be provided to students and their families on an individual basis.
- Adaptive assessments, supported by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium linked to CCSS, will provide diagnostic information for working with all students, and particularly with higher achievers and struggling students, by targeting resources and interventions.
- To move from a teacher-centered to student-centered approach, students will be provided with tools, training, and support needed to take charge of their own learning.
- Teachers will be helped through professional development and feedback to change their roles from delivering content to helping students form goals and activities for accomplishing them, make sense of information obtained from a variety of sources, learn to use technology effectively, develop information literacy skills, track progress, evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and accomplishments, and seek and use feedback for improvement.
- All students will participate in a hands-on workshop to successfully use a netbook, tablet, or other mobile device.
- In addition to receiving similar instruction themselves, teachers will provide students with learning activities for using the learning management system, how to access a variety of learning resources, take assessments, and track progress.
- As part of their projects, Pathways students will collaborate on creating training videos that will be made available on YouTube and school websites for anytime learning and re-teaching.
- Parents will be able to access technology training on the learning management system anytime 24/7. They also will have the opportunity to participate in workshops and back-to-school nigh demonstrations of the systems and software available to them.

A high score is awarded this section because, although it is not clear, or there is conflicting evidence, whether all students in the district, or some portion of K-12 students, will be active participants in the project, all of the criteria are effectively addressed. [See bracketed note in Section A2 for explanation of confusing and conflicting information about number student participants in the project.]

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant provides clear evidence in a chart with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible that it has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment to effectively prepare students for college and careers. The teaching and leading management plan is organized around the same five goals as the learning management plan: students will set and monitor individual learning goals; students will learn in a variety of ways; student will access high-quality content; students will receive training and support to manage their learning and stay on track; and students will receive ongoing and regular feedback on their progress

More specifically, the applicant demonstrates a strong approach to teaching and leading that helps educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress as evidenced by the following:

- To prepare educators for a shift to increased personalization along with increased rigor and relevance found in linked learning connected to CCSS and the Smarter Balanced Assessments, an overall professional development plan will focus on building the capacity of educators to personalize the learning environment at all levels and sustain personalization strategies over time.
- All teachers will be provided with robust professional development over the four-year project with a consistent focus on personalization and effective instruction for all students.
- Increased professional development and support will be provided for all faculty and staff to create greater personalization of learning in classrooms.
- Professional development will focus on strategies to change classroom instruction from teacher-centered to student-centered through the integration core and technical education, using data to inform instruction, 21<sup>st</sup> century learning tools, project-based learning, and differentiated learning strategies.
- All teachers will participate in a professional development institute (PDI, from one to four days in duration, depending on grade level) prior to the start of the school year in July or early August, with follow-up workshops in November and February, in order to acquire knowledge and skills to: use data to inform instruction; use 21<sup>st</sup> century learning tools and digital resources for differentiation; use project-based, work-based, service, and community learning; develop and use a variety of assessments effectively; collaborate in the development of an ILP. District leaders and project partners will provide training for the PDI and workshops annually.
- A full-time Professional Development Director, hired through the project, will be responsible for (a) coordination of all professional development activities, including the PDI, follow-up workshops, coaching, and use of online resources, (b) developing, conducting, and analyzing annual professional development needs surveys, (c) working with each teacher to develop an Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP), and (d) working with district leaders and community partners to create and update an overall professional development plan based on project goals and identified needs.
- As noted, each teacher will have an IPDP that is collaboratively developed with the Professional Development Director and a site administrator based on classroom observation, student achievement data, state teaching standards, coaching notes, a Pathways Quality Review, and a self-assessment of level of preparedness to guide students toward achievement of expected graduation outcomes. The IPDP also will include resources to meet identified individual needs and may include workshops, conferences, coaching, and virtual resources.
- Teachers will collaborate by subject matter and grade level to identify, develop, and use assessments of student progress toward college- and career-ready standards. Results from the assessments will be posted on the district data management system and be immediately available to teachers and administrators for adjusting lesson plans, grouping students, providing direct instruction, and assigning homework (e.g., Kahn Academy lesson) so that students who are struggling or can benefit from acceleration receive the help they need when the need it.
- District and school-level administrators receive training for leadership and management of the change process. They also are involved in developing policies and procedures to support restructuring and implementation of linked learning as a K-12 reform initiative.
- Teacher and principal evaluation systems will be used to provide feedback for continuous improvement of instructional practice, school climate, and culture.
- Multiple measures—classroom observations using a walkthrough protocol, teaching portfolios, student/parent surveys, and student achievement—would be to determine teacher performance levels, which include distinguished, proficient, needs to improve, and unsatisfactory.
- Principal evaluations also follow a process similar to those for teachers, including classification into one of the four principal performance levels.
- The superintendent is evaluated by the district board of trustees, including several aspects of leadership and management performance along with student achievement results.
- Professional development throughout the district is supported by (1) expert content providers, (2) summer institutes and follow-up activities, (3) instructional and pathways coaches and mentors, (4) technology support staff, (5) communities of practice (grades 7-12), professional learning communities (K-6), and professional learning communities for principals, and (6) peer-to-peer classroom observation and coaching.
- Communities of practice will collaborate on creating culturally responsive interdisciplinary curriculum and projects.
- Professional learning communities for principals will collaborate on instructional leadership and how to develop the leadership capabilities of their teachers.
- Teachers and principals will receive monthly coaching sessions from ConnectEd (a project partner) focused on leading and learning in a linked learning environment that is personalized.
- The linked learning initiative is structured around a program of study that includes high-quality learning resources

which provide students with integrated lessons and projects, work-based learning experiences integrated with a Pathways curriculum, and technology tools that are up-to-date and industry-specific as well as 21<sup>st</sup> century digital resources.

- Students have access to a wide variety of online resources such as Kahn Academy lessons (as one example of open education resources), ConnectEd Studios (a project partner), and Achieve OER Commons. Achieve Commons is a method by which principals and teachers can evaluate the alignment of curriculum materials with goals and activities.
- Several ways are used (e.g., benchmark assessment to determine mastery and if students need extra help and ongoing formative assessments to identify students who need an accelerated pace or those that are challenged by specific concepts) to identify student strengths and needs and to use that information to ensure that all students receive high-quality, personalized instruction.
- An early warning system will be implemented as part of the new district data management system in order to flag high-need students for immediate intervention.
- At the classroom level, the effectiveness of personalization strategies are monitored by principals, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and Pathways Coaches, who in turn consider whether and to what extent professional development is impacting classroom practices or is needed for impacting classroom practices.
- Beyond the classroom, students and their families can receive an array of support services and programs from district staff (counselors, psychologists, nurses, and behavioral specialists) and by partner organizations (health and behavior health services, mental health services, college and career programs, juvenile justice programs).

Applicant provides clear evidence in a chart with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible within the Project Management Plan that it has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The plan is organized around three goals: effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies; teacher evaluation linked to student achievement; and teachers use data to meet individual student needs.

A high score is awarded this section because, although it is not clear, or there is conflicting evidence, whether all students in the district, or some portion of K-12 students, will be active participants in the project, all of the criteria are effectively addressed. [See bracketed note in Section A2 for explanation of confusing and conflicting information about number student participants in the project.]

#### 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>15</b>

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

The applicant effectively integrates the plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure within the Project Management Plan, which includes references to project goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible.

In describing the strength of its practices, policies, and rules to facilitate personalized learning, the applicant provides the following specific evidence:

- Linked learning teams in the central office provide support and services to all schools in the district.
- Principals and leadership teams at the school level have considerable autonomy to make decisions such as: hiring teachers and support personnel at the site; shifting staff within the FTE allotted to the site; with advice from parent-represented Site Councils, controlling site budget items; deciding the scope and sequence of core technical courses; presenting new course proposals to curriculum articulation committees; making decisions for intervention models

used at that site; and, developing master schedules to ensure common planning time for collaboration and for coordinating site-level activities.

- High school students have the opportunity to progress academically and earn credit based on mastery instead of time in class. The progression from level to level leading to graduation and college- and career-readiness, is clearly defined for each Pathway.
- Students have opportunities to set goals, make decisions, and reflect on learning within an established system of performance assessments that measure student progress toward mastery in core and technical areas. This presumes that students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.
- Linked learning permits students, regardless of their prior academic background, to participate in the Pathway of their choice. Currently, there are nine Pathways, each of which is located one of five high schools: Multimedia Technology; Environmental Science; Academy of Business and Finance; Academy of Health Sciences; Digital, Design and Communication; Law, Justice and Education; Emerging Agricultural Technology; Academy of Engineering; and Academy of Performing Arts. New pathways to be developed include: five at the high school level (Military Academy, Alternative Energy Resources, Manufacturing, and two to be determined by student interest and community input); pathways for elementary schools; and pathways for middle schools.
- Support services are provided for all students, including counseling and supplemental instruction in reading, writing, and math.
- The special education department assigns qualified instructional assistants or behavioral assistants to students with learning or behavioral disabilities so that students can maintain progress in mainstream programs.
- English language learners receive English language support as well as core instruction through after school, summer, and Saturday programs. Parents of English language learners are involved in the school and district programs through committees and report to the school board annually with commentary on the programs provided.

The SCOPE report of its linked-learning case study (2012) emphasized that the district has developed successful strategies to build capacity for implementing change systemically—across school sites, across key constituent groups, across departments within a school, and across divisions within the central office. Among these capacity-building strategies are: creating coherent reforms, such as the linked learning initiative; developing strong leadership at the school level; starting small to spark innovation and build a model from the ground up before expansion district-wide; recruiting and building upon a critical mass of committed teachers and students; ensuring teacher buy-in; engaging school staff in constructing curriculum and program models; facilitating learning through partnerships; and planning for sustainability.

The highest score is awarded for this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant effectively integrates the plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure within the Project Management Plan, which includes references to project goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible.

The applicant clearly provides the following evidence that the district and school infrastructure supports personalized learning:

- All students (including special education students, English language learners, socio-economically disadvantaged students) and families will have access to technology through an open door policy which provides access to computers before, during, and after school hours.
- Students, parents, educators, and community stakeholders will have technical support available through the district's technology department, which provides support through one-on-one, small groups, and online training programs.
- A homework hotline will be in place to facilitate communication with parents during and after school hours.
- Parents can access attendance and grade records through the district's parent portal.
- High school students and parents will have access to databases and support services for college planning.
- Educators will have access to content, tools, and other learning resources through the district's data management

system and learning management system.

- A central goal of the district's technology plan is to provide professional development opportunities for educators, including professional learning and support to meet the needs of newly hired teachers and staff as well as experienced teachers and staff. Professional development includes site-based training as well as training at the district level and the regional office of education, and through online resources.
- A new data management system (Aeries Analytics) will provide all stakeholders with a common log-in to access data and information enabling teachers, students, and parents to have up-to-date and readily available information on student assessments, how a student is progressing within an individual learning plan, and other relevant information.

Although all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exception of not specifically describing how students and parents can export information in an open data format, a high medium score is awarded this section because it is not clear, or there is conflicting evidence, whether all students in the district, or some portion of K-12 students, will be active participants in the project. [See bracketed note in Section A2 for explanation of confusing and conflicting information about number student participants in the project.]

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

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

The applicant effectively integrates its plan for continuous improvement within the Project Management Plan, which includes references to project goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible.

The applicant's provides a reasonable approach to continuous improvement that involves different levels and time periods of project implementation. For example, teachers, staff, and students will be expected to monitor progress and make changes as necessary on a daily basis; principals and staff at the school level, and district office personnel, will have similar expectations. Pathways advisory boards will meet monthly to review progress within specific program areas and make recommendations for improvement. The District Leadership Team (DLT) will meet weekly during the first year of the project and monthly for the subsequent three years of the project for ongoing review of implementation activities, assessing progress toward project goals, and making changes for the improvement of project plans and implementation activities. The project director will play a key role in continuous improvement by maintaining documentation of project implementation and goal progress, by sharing formative information with various ongoing groups and committees, and by serving as a member of the DLT. Data will be gathered by surveys, focus groups, and other means to monitor progress and identify needed improvements. Based on these findings and related actions, a full report will be completed annually and shared with stakeholders.

The applicant clearly and effectively addresses five key areas regarding how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of investments in the project:

- *Integrated career and technical education.* Six of the nine current linked learning pathways at the high school level have been certified through a Quality Review and Certification process developed by ConnectEd and its partners. The first step in the process requires program teams to collect data, measure levels of fidelity to quality review rubrics, write action plans for continuous improvement, and address concerns for follow-up. The second step in the process is a site visit by a trained external review team which results in a written report making recommendations for granting certification and/or needed changes for improvement prior to the next review. The applicant proposes that the three remaining uncertified pathway programs undergo this process within first two years of the project. Five new pathways would be developed and implemented over the term of the project grant, using the Rubric for Linked

Learning Certification and Continuous Improvement (which includes the criteria for certification). The pathways director (who also is a member of the DLT) pathways advisory boards, and district pathways committees also will be engaged in reviews that contribute to continuous improvement on an ongoing basis.

- *Intensive professional development for teachers and leaders.* The project director and professional development director will work together to gather data, evaluate effectiveness, and share information about each staff development activity. Information from the individual professional development plans will be used to further develop and improve ongoing activities and explore the need for new activities. Educator surveys and self-assessments will be used in the process for continuous improvement.
- *Data systems that provide teachers with tools to make formative decisions regarding learning, that provide students and parents with on-time data to monitor progress, and that provide administrators with information to support and strengthen instruction targeting college- and career-ready standards.* With the acquisition and implementation of a new data management system (Aeries Analytics), feedback will be immediately available for assessments of achievement and other measures of students' progress toward college- and career-ready outcomes. This formative information can help teachers modify instruction for a specific student or group of students. Principals will be able to use this information to monitor and evaluate teacher participation in and needs for professional development. Students and parents will have immediate access to information on progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. In addition, the district is partnering with the Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) for data support contributing to continuous program improvement and for providing an online data tool to track pathways participation, work-based learning, school attendance, suspensions, and student cohorts from high school to college.
- *Positive and personalized relationship and supports for all students.* Pathway students, organized into small groups by grade level and/or focus area, will attend the same set of classes together and, in general, are expected to build a strong connection to their teachers and peers for meeting individual needs. How well these smaller pathway groups work within a larger school is a concern for monitoring and continuous improvement. Data will be collected and used by teachers to inform instructional practices and to communicate with students on an ongoing basis. Support services to monitor for continuous improvement will include but are not limited to tutoring, weekly progress reports, credit recovery, and targeted support before, during, and after school.
- *Collaborative leadership and community engagement.* Each pathway will have an advisory board that is involved in the design of curriculum, instruction, projects and worked-based experiences. Additional pathways committees include P8 Coalition, Pathways Counselors, and a Joint District Advisory Committee. Pathways teacher leaders and principals share monthly joint meetings. These several district pathways committees contribute to continuous improvement by focusing on the mission of every student having the opportunity to graduate high school both college- and career-ready and by monitoring and making recommendation for instruction and curriculum, marketing and recruitment, work-based learning, and data and quality improvement.

A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed. However, pathways at the elementary and middle school levels are not specifically addressed in the plan for continuous improvement.

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

5

5

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

The applicant effectively integrates the plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders within the Project Management Plan, which includes references to project goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible.

More specifically, the applicant clearly provides the following specific evidence of ongoing communication and engagement:

- The P8 Council engages community members in the development and implement of career pathways.
- The district has an open door policy for all pathways meetings and gatherings. Business partners are encouraged to attend internal events such as professional development days, and staff are welcome to attend meetings held by other pathways groups. The district also promotes the sharing of best practices across pathways teams.
- One of the responsibilities of the project director will be to engage community organizations in discussions and projects that promote career awareness for students and develop collaborative relationships with local business and industry and with local post-secondary institutions. The project director also will be responsible for creating materials and programs that provide information to parents and students for assisting in the selection of a pathway that

matches student interests.

- Ongoing communication and engagement of students, parents, and community members is supported by funds allocated for newsletters, informational meetings, marketing videos and materials, student and teacher recruitment brochures, and invitation to events highlighting student work.
- Examples of online resources for parents that will be available on the district website include the high school course catalog, parent involvement policy, minutes from various board and community meetings, the English Learner Plan, and district and program policies.
- A dedicated pathways website that provides information for students and parents will include a video for each pathway created by students from the technology pathway. Also, pathways students will create an online format of success stories that connect student learning to future career opportunities through a kindergarten to gradation focus on college and career readiness.
- Each spring a showcase, which presents work-based learning opportunities and internship exhibits, will be publicized and made open to the public.
- The Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) annually will update its case study of linked learning in the district and make its report available as a resource for other districts.

The highest score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed.

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

5

4

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

The applicant provides a clear description of all required and proposed performance measures for K-12. Among the performance measures, five are required and eight are proposed by the applicant, for a total of 13 measures.

Within the project narrative, in a multi-page chart organized neatly around project goals and objectives, the applicant effectively explains (a) the rationale for selecting each measure, (b) how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information, and (c) how the measure will be reviewed and improved over time.

The applicant clearly provides in tables in the appendix sufficient evidence that the measures for the four-year project (2013-14 to 2016-17), and a post-grant year (2017-18), compared to the baseline year (2012-13), are ambitious yet achievable in that they equal or exceed state ESEA targets.

A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exception of not specifically including students with disabilities as a subgroup for the performance measures.

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

5

5

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

The applicant provides clear and appropriate evidence in a chart with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible that it has a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RTTD-funded activities. In general, formative data will be collected on an ongoing basis to inform decision-making and guide the continuous improvement process; summative data will focus on information related to program impact and accountability for annual performing reporting.

The applicant clearly explains that the sources and methods of evaluation have been aligned with project goals and objectives [also shown for the performance measures in (E)(3)]. *Sources* of evaluation data include but are not limited to CSTs, API, graduation rates, pass rates on the exit exam, expected graduate outcomes (aligned with CCSS), attendance and expulsion records, participation in linked learning pathways, and FAFSA submissions. Both quantitative and qualitative *methods* will be used to assess quality of programs and services in the following areas of investment: (1) project personnel; (2) professional development; (3) implementation of the district's new data management system (Aeries Analytics) and related technologies; (4) development of additional pathways beyond the current nine pathways at the high school level; (5)

full implementation of linking learning in elementary schools and middle schools as appropriate for each level; (6) targeted interventions for improving student achievement and well-being; and (7) evaluation for continuous improvement.

For example, *professional development* activities will be evaluated through: an educator survey instrument that includes an opportunity for self-assessment; walkthrough protocols for principals and staff to observe instructional strategies and tools targeted in PD activities; and a review of goals, activities, and accomplishments targeted in individualized professional development plans. As another example, a *technology* audit using surveys completed by students, teachers, and parents will focus on concerns such as the extent of technology implementation, the integration of technology to differentiate instruction, ease of technology use, loss and damage of technology such as mobile devices, and use of technology in project-based assignments and assessments.

In addition to these evaluation measures, an advanced practice that the applicant proposes for the project is implementation research. Performance feedback also would be generated through actions such as the following: collection and analysis of information about key project elements and approaches to facilitate replication; periodic and systematic assessment of progress in the project toward achieving intended outcomes; and data collection and analysis of student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

An external evaluator will be hired for the project to guide the development of survey instruments and observation protocols as well as to measure student engagement, parent satisfaction, and teacher efficacy.

The highest score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed.

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

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

### (F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies two types of funds that will support the project: the RTT-D grant and district general funds from all sources.

In addition to an overall project budget, applicant provides separate budgets for:

- Project personnel
- Linked learning pathways in high schools
- Linked learning pathways in middle schools
- Linked learning pathways in elementary schools
- Targeted interventions for student who struggle academically
- Professional development

A clear and thoughtful rationale is provided for each separate budget.

A low score is awarded for this section for several reasons: (a) the applicant does not discuss explicitly whether the budget request is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed project, (b) the applicant does not identify funds that will be used for one-time investments and those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period; and (c) it is not clear, or there is conflicting evidence, whether all students in the district, or some portion of K-12 students, will be active participants in the project. [See bracketed note in Section A2 for explanation of confusing and conflicting information about number student

participants in the project.]

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

**10**

**5**

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

The applicant effectively integrates the plan for sustainability of project goals within the Project Management Plan, which includes references to project goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and person(s) responsible.

The applicant clearly states its intent to further develop and expand its successful developmental initiative for linked learning pathways into a sustainable, district-wide reform practice that can serve as a model for other districts in the state and beyond.

In support of sufficient financial resources to sustain project goals after the project term, the applicant provides the following reasonable assumptions for funding sources:

- All district resources will be leveraged in support of linked learning pathways at the high school, middle school, and elementary school levels, including general education funds and categorical financial support through Title I, Title II, Title III, and Economic Impact Aid.
- Collaborative partnerships for funding specific elements of linked learning pathways (such as the mentoring project and the data and evaluation project currently funded by the James Irvine Foundation) will continue to be strengthened, and new partnerships will be established during and beyond the project period.
- Additional funding will be successfully pursued at the local, state, and national levels, such as discretionary grants, resources available through local government, and support through local and national non-profit organizations.

The applicant clearly and appropriately acknowledges that a combination of factors, in conjunction with sufficient financial support, is necessary for sustainability of project goals. Five additional factors are effectively explained in support of sustainability: (a) sound fiscal management through the judicious use of funds at all levels, and investments in programs that are likely to build capacity for sustaining long-term change; (b) investments in schools and materials (such as infrastructure, technology, and curriculum materials) that will enable full implementation and continuing support after the funding period; (c) community support and partnerships that enable and energize the links between academic instruction and workplace and career experiences; (d) buy-in of teachers, staff, and administrators at all schools, at every level, in the linked learning initiative and the implementation of “wall-to-wall” pathways at the school level; and (e) recruitment, hiring, professional development, evaluation, and retention practices to help assure that the right people are in place ,and provided with the proper tools and support, to implement and sustain project goals.

A middle score is awarded this section because, while all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exception of not specifically identifying how evaluation data regarding the effectiveness of past investments will be used to inform future investments, it is not clear, or there is conflicting evidence, whether all students in the district, or some portion of K-12 students, will be active participants in the project during or in the post-grant year. [See bracketed note in Section A2 for explanation of confusing and conflicting information about number student participants in the project.].

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's clearly stated goal in forming community partnerships is to provide services to students and families that can strengthen and stabilize the student's home environment while increasing the student's opportunities for success in becoming college- and career-ready.

The applicant provides specific, detailed information about each of 146 community partners who currently support the district's linking learning pathways initiative and who the applicant believes will continue to work with district during and beyond the grant period. The specific information about each partner includes the name of the organization, agency or individual; its type (e.g., public, private, profit/non-profit, and professional); the kind of support provided (e.g., pathway, pathway-specific, and program); a brief description of the service provided; and the beneficiaries of the service (e.g., students in general, at-risk students, homeless students; abused students, parents, and teachers).

Drawing on the mantra "It takes a village to educate a child," the applicant provides convincing evidence that it will build on, further develop, and expand existing partnerships that augment the schools' resources and provide additional student and family supports for serving the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of participating students and, particularly, of high-need students.

The applicant provides the following specific evidence supporting the alignment, integrated services, and intended outcomes of partnerships to advance the district-wide reform model of linked learning pathways:

- Current and new partnerships will be integrated in the project implementation for accomplishing the following goals: further implementing and expanding linked learning pathways in grades 9-12; expanding the linked learning model to grades K-8; increasing teacher and administrator capacity to personalize learning for all students; increasing the use of relevant data to drive teaching and learning; creating a continuum of support for students and families starting with high-need students; and establishing a rigorous, sustainable quality improvement process.
- Current partnerships with ConnectEd, Stanford SCOPE, Education Trust West, the national Center Academy Coalition, and James Irvine Foundation will support efforts to gather, analyze, and use relevant data and research to identify effective practices that can be replicated and adopted/adapted in other districts.
- To better coordinate and strengthen services, a community mental health committee has been formed of individuals representing current community partners who provide mental health support, family crisis intervention, special needs assessment and education, academic and behavioral support for at-risk students, services for domestic abuse and the homeless, staff development opportunities, and services for students who have been abused.
- Desired partnership outcomes (shown in a chart in the proposal narrative) are directly connected to the project performance goals (Section A4) and associated measures (Section E3) which the applicant has clearly identified as ambitious yet achievable: (a) improve the academic achievement of all students, (b) decrease the number of serious discipline issues, (c) increase the percentage of students that graduate with college and career readiness skills, (d) increase the percentage of student successfully completing the expected graduate outcomes, and (d) increase the percentage of students attending post-secondary education. The applicant has clearly described in Sections E1 and E4 how the selected indicators that measure the results for all children within the district would be tracked, how data would be used to improve results for participating students, and a strategy to scale the model district-wide.
- Individual learning plans of students will include support that can be accessed through school partnerships.
- Support activities will be tailored to student needs and can include after-school activities, enrichment courses, tutoring, summer bridge classes, or intervention courses.
- Students with high needs, special needs and disabilities, at risk because of mental health or socio-economic factors, and English learners will be monitored and referred for specific services as needed.
- Parent organizations and committees will receive training and information necessary to decide which partnerships offer services that best serve their family's needs and how to make contacts through the school to receive assistance.
- Parents who need help will be referred to services that provide housing, food, utilities, medical assistance, and outside mental health services when appropriate.
- Teachers, principals, and staff at all district schools will receive information about each of the partnerships and how their students (and parents) can access services.

A high score is awarded this section because all of the criteria are effectively addressed with the exception of not specifically describing how students who receiving specific services from particular partners are impacted in their ability to develop knowledge and skills for college- and career-readiness.

## Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has successfully created and implemented an innovative “learning pathways” program, which is personalized for high school students and links academic and technical content with real-world contexts related to student interests in order to better prepare them for college and careers. The applicant’s vision guiding this proposed project is to expand linked learning pathways at the high school level, implement them further at all elementary and middle schools in the district, establish the initiative as a sustainable district-wide reform practice, and serve as a model for other school districts in the state and beyond. All 20 schools in the district would participate in the project, including 13,895K-12 students and 845 educators.

To achieve the overarching goal of scaling up the linked learning pathways reform initiative, the applicant clearly identifies five student achievement outcomes that will guide the project: improve student achievement in English language arts and mathematics; decrease the achievement gap for all significant subgroups; increase the number of students who are college- and career-ready; increase graduation rates; and increase the number of students who enroll in post-secondary education.

The applicant will build on the four core educational assurance areas in the following ways: adopting and implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and new student assessment aligned with them; upgrading its data management system to more efficient and effective use of data for improving teaching and learning; enhancing professional development and support for both teachers and principals through communities of practice, learning communities, and interdisciplinary collaborations; and, transforming the district’s lowest achieving schools by implementing more personalized and rigorous instruction, social-emotional support services, greater parental involvement, expanded use of technology, and accountability for results.

All students will develop an individual learning plan (ILP) that connects their interests and aspirations for learning and life, their college and career focus, what students will learning (academic expectations and outcomes), what age-appropriate technical skills and work-based activities they will learning and participate in, how they learn best, how they will be assessed and graded, and how their performance will be reported.

Students will be helped to understand and pursue life skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that include the following expected graduate outcomes: critical thinking and problem solving; cultural awareness and ability to collaborate with diverse groups; technical skills in digital media applications and information management; effective communication skills of listening, speaking, and writing; creativity and innovation; leadership, self-management, and organizational skills obtained through real-world applications and community involvement; adaptability, responsibility, and ethical behaviors; and ability to navigate a global world of work and further education.

To move from a teacher-centered to student-centered approach, students will be provided with tools, training, and support needed to take charge of their own learning. Students will be helped to accomplish learning goals through a combination of approaches that include, but are not limited to, working individually, peer-to-peer, small group learning teams, community projects, classroom instruction, portfolio-based activities, and online communities.

Teachers and principals will receive intensive professional development for integrating CCSS with linked learning and expected graduate outcomes. Content at all performance levels is aligned to CCSS. Teachers will be helped through professional development and feedback to change their roles from delivering content to helping students form goals and activities for accomplishing them, make sense of information obtained from a variety of sources, learn to use technology effectively, develop information literacy skills, track progress, evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and accomplishments, and seek and use feedback for improvement.

To increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, the district will pursue effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies, teacher evaluation linked to student achievement, and the careful analysis and use of data to meet the needs of individual students.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>161</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0178CA-3 for Porterville Unified 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>

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

Through a series of community forums, focus group interviews, stakeholder surveys, and informal discussions with students, teachers, parents, and community leaders, Porterville Unified School District developed a vision for teaching, learning, and leading to meet the requirements for success in the 21st Century. The district has designed Linked Learning Experiences and Achievements through Personalization, Pathways, and Partnerships (LLEAP<sup>3</sup>) to transform their high schools into academies or "Pathways" which tie together real-world professions with academics through coursework, technical skills and knowledge, work-based learning, and pertinent support mechanisms for students in grades 9-12. For the new project, LLEAP<sup>3</sup>, Race to the Top District funds will be used to further implement and expand Linked Learning Pathways as a primary strategy for high school transformation and expand the Linked Learning K-12 Initiative through its developmental period of reform into a sustainable, district-wide systemic and systematic practice. The district proposes starting with the planning and design of 5 "Pathways": Manufacturing, and Alternative Energy Resources (AERO) are already underway; a Military Academy Charter High School (which will include grades 7-12) and two additional "schools" whose themes are to be determined based on student and community input. The narrative does not sufficiently explain if "Pathway" program facilities operate as a magnet program within an existing high school (like a School Within a School), if they are charter schools being run by the district, or if they are magnet program housed in separate stand alone facilities, but not included among the district's comprehensive high schools.

The district plans on expanding the benefits of Linked Learning in grades K-8 including more systematic attention to real-world application in the curriculum, career awareness, authentic project-based learning, and individual learning plans for elementary and middle grades through an after school program which will be enhanced through collaboration with regular day teachers. Extensive professional development in personalized learning environments and instructional delivery will be afforded all staff.

All students, including English learners, those falling below grade level, special needs, homeless and in poverty will be provided with developmental supports like cohort scheduling and small school configurations (500 students or less).

The applicant provides rigorous statements which align their project to the four core educational assurance areas:

1. Adopting standards and assessments:

- All CA districts will adopt the Common Core Standards and begin assessing student achievement based on those Standards beginning 2014-2015.

2. Building data systems:

- The district uses the Aeries Student Information System to manage student level information district-wide, but other data records (e.g. assessment, intervention) are embedded in other databanks. It is intended to upgrade the Aeries SIS as the comprehensive data system.

3. Effective teachers and principals

- A variety of programs will be implemented to assist teachers in developing their craft: Single Subject Credential Program, Communities of Practice, and a multitude of professional development offerings.

4. Turning around low achieving schools

- The Linked Learning Program was built on the premise of school turnaround.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant proposes to serve approximately 13,800 students at all of its schools: ten elementary schools, three middle schools, five comprehensive high schools and two alternative education sites. The applicant described the district's approach to implementation, the process by which the district selected its participating schools, a list of the participating schools, and raw data and percentages regarding school demographics.

However, since the applicant is proposing that 5 new Pathway facilities will be developed, it is unclear whether the five comprehensive high schools will be transformed into Pathway schools; whether portions of the comprehensive high schools will become Pathway facilities or whether new stand-alone facilities will be added to the existing schools. Therefore, the applicant cannot provide numbers of students, and student demographic information for those to-be-determined facilities.

Although the applicant includes numbers of students for the elementary and middle schools very little detail is given for the composition of programs in grades K-8. Currently, the Pathways programs at the middle school are conducted after school hours or through elective offerings. Since all students are unable to remain after school, numbers of participating students is unclear.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides a detailed yearly Scope of Work which includes narrative descriptions for each year of the project, and also includes charts identifying Goal alignment, Activities, Timelines and Deliverables. The overarching goal of the LLEAP<sup>3</sup> project is "to bring the PUSD Linked Learning Initiative to scalability as a solution to closing the poverty achievement and opportunity gap". Since bringing their existing program of Pathway programs to scalability is expanding it across the district, this may be a satisfactory response to this Selection Criterion. The narratives did not include means by which the district-wide program would be scaled beyond the district upon completion of the funding cycle.

The applicant describes the program's alignment with the four core educational assurance areas, but does not actually list LLEAP<sup>3</sup> Goals and Objectives.

There is insufficient programmatic information regarding the programs to be implemented in the elementary and middle schools. The chart included within this section identifies the hiring of a K-8 Pathways Director and a Middle School Career Counselor. Additionally, it mentions an activity in which an after school career exploration program is implemented. However, little has been mentioned in regard to the coordination of after school and the traditional school day program.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Performance indicators for each of five categories have been completed and submitted:

1. 10th grade pass rates on the California High School Exit Exam
2. Performance in grades 2-11 on the California Standards Tests based on students proficiency in ELA and Math
3. Decreasing Achievement gaps for grades 2-11 based on students' proficiency in ELA and Math
4. Graduation rate
5. College enrollment rates.

The applicant submitted a composite of student scores rather than grade level scores for grades 2-6 and grades 7-8 Performance on Summative Assessment charts for OVERALL, Hispanic, White, EL, SED in ELA and Math. Likewise, composite rather than grade level scores were submitted for the Decreasing Achievement Gap chart for grades 2-11. Scores comparing State of California American Indian and Asian students were reported as a comparison to the Porterville Unified District scores despite the district's claims that they have no students of those ethnicities.

**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>8</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant attempts to fulfill the requirements of this Selection Criterion by providing attendance and discipline statistics, as well as some standardized testing, graduation rate and post-secondary enrollment data. Focusing data primarily on the district's high schools, the traditional high schools' students' attendance, discipline and academic achievement data are compared to Pathways students' attendance , discipline, and academic proficiency. Early in the proposal, the applicant provided a list of Pathway facilities, but did not provide dates of implementation for those programs, thus the a comparison between students in the traditional setting and the Pathways setting does not fulfill the requirements of "clear success in the past four years". Even so, a reduction in student expulsions from 48 per year in their traditional high school to 16 expulsions in the Pathways schools is still an extremely high expulsion rate, and does not paint a positive picture of school safety within the district. Conflicting expulsion data are included in the section: Competitive Preference Priority.</p> <p>The academic achievement data does not support "clear success", neither for the high schools nor the elementary and middle schools. The applicant submitted a chart demonstrating Academic Performance Index since 2002, and there is growth within the last 12 years. The chart appears to demonstrate that the API is relatively flat and has even declined within the last 4 years.</p> <p>The applicant failed to identify or address its lowest performing schools.</p> <p>The applicant failed to address the means by which the district will make 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>4</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant demonstrates evidence of a current high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, as well as an additional level of transparency that will be made available to students, parents, and community stakeholders regarding student academic achievement data pending funding of this proposal. The proposal describes that public records are available upon request; Board meetings are open, agendas are posted and minutes posted on the district website. Public hearings are held regarding budget approval of major expenditures. Public comment is encouraged. Various committees and advisory boards exist and hold public meetings with public input. Parent input is encouraged in all expenditures of categorical funding, such as Title I, Title III, and Economic Impact AIDE (EIA). Public availability of personnel expenditures at the school level is addressed in the appendices.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

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

The district has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the reform model described in this proposal. Based on the application, California schools enjoy a “permissive education code”, Section 35160.1 (a) and (b) in that “as long as a statute does not prohibit a program or activity and that program or activity is consistent with the purposes for which school districts are established, it can be undertaken”.

The California Department of Education has demonstrated a fondness for and support of Career Technical Education (CTE) and has well defined CTE standards. Small learning environments, in the manner of California Partnership Academies (CPA) are supported through grants. The district has been funded for five CPAs. The Linked Learning Pilot Program commenced in the 2012- 2013 school year and provides for pilot programs to assist in designing district led school re-design initiatives that integrate career-themed Pathways into the frameworks of high schools.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant described the district’s approach to engaging site and district administrators in the development of the project. A Joint District Administrators Council (JDAC) developed a suggested list of reforms to address specific areas of concern such as: numbers of students prepared to meet the University of California or California State University entrance requirements, vertical and horizontal articulation of curriculum, elective opportunities for CTE courses, and connection of academics to career interest beginning in the elementary school. The recommendations became increased graduation requirements and additional programs to promote graduation. These graduation requirements were reviewed by staff, Site Councils, Advisory Committees and the Student Council from each high school. All of the discussion was bought back to the JDAC to be incorporated in the draft language of this proposal.

The applicant provided evidence of the Porterville Educator’s Association support and twenty-six other individuals and entities through letters of support located in the appendices.

The applicant; however, failed to provide evidence of involvement of students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools in the development of *this* Race to the Top- District proposal and, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback, through minutes, notices, surveys, etc..

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>

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

The applicant presented a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant included key goals, activities to be undertaken, a rationale for said activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible. The applicant’s proposal describes one aspect of personalized learning as the development of an Individual Education Plan, ILP, for *each* of its 13,835 students. The ILP includes learning goals, strengths, interests, and needs as well as technical/career skills. ILPs are currently not consistently utilized, so the process will be developed as a part of this project. The discussion of ILPs is more comprehensive for the middle and high school grades, where formalized plans should have been developed by 6th grade and begin taking shape as College and Career ILPs into the high school experience. A grade level during which an elementary student would be involved in developing an Individual Learning Plan is not identified.

Beginning in the Vision narrative, the applicant makes a direct connection between Linked Learning and Pathways as the basis for this proposal. It appears, to this reviewer, that the applicant’s inclusion of elementary students in this application process is unsubstantiated. If this evaluation is in error, it is because the applicant fails to provide a compelling, substantive, Linked Learning program for the lower grades.

At the after school STEaM elementary classes, and even at the middle school, little information is actually provided as to what the Program will look like. In the middle school, after school “interest” classes or elective “interest” classes are being made available during the regular day program. Considering the physical size of the district, students who might be

interested in participating in the after school programs might not be able to participate (and will require parental permission to be able to do so) because of transportation issues and/or home and family responsibilities.

The applicant does provide a well-founded argument for the high school population's program inclusion.

Professional development offerings will include project-based learning, strategic integration of core/technical education, using data to inform instruction, 21st century learning tools (unnamed) and differentiation. Use of mobile devices was mentioned but the type of devices and the topic of their educational application was not developed. The applicant admits that the district has and must continue to commit significant funds to create a technology infrastructure and provide tools for teachers and students to use technology beyond the classroom. A technology audit will be conducted at the end of Year 1 and a plan developed based on the strengths and needs for educational technology.

Through the implementation of the new data system, Aeries Analytics, teachers will be able to access frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards. The information contained in students' ILPs will be loaded onto the data system so students and teachers can track goals, college and career plans, work-based learning, coursework completion and progress on their graduation requirements.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The highquality plan includes goals, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible. The district's professional development strategies focus on dramatically improving student-centered educational practice across the district and across all grade spans. The district is supporting teachers as they shift their practice to increase personalization and engagement in student-centered environments. All teachers will participate in a Professional Development Institute prior to the start of the school year and follow-up with workshops in November and February annually, throughout the years of the project. The number of professional development days required, per grade level was conveyed through a chart. Presenters from organizations such as WestEd, the National Academy Foundation and ConnectEd will provide face-to-face training. There was no mention of on-line professional development opportunities. Topics, initially district driven will include: using data to inform instruction; 21st Century learning tools; work-based learning, service and community learning, developing and using assessments; and development of the ILP. A full time Professional Development Director will be hired through project funds to be responsible for coordination of all professional development activities. An annual PD survey will be conducted and modifications made to the PD offerings based on feedback from the respondents.

Each teacher will be required to develop an IPDP that is designed collaboratively with the site administration based on classroom observation, student achievement, and the California Teaching Standards. The applicant states that the Professional Development Director will meet with *each* teacher to develop their IPDP, but considering the number of teachers employed, that may pose a considerable challenge. Administrators will also have a personalized professional development plan that will link with their evaluation and be used to enhance their leadership skills.

The teacher and principal evaluation systems are used to provide feedback for continuous improvement of instructional practice, and school climate and culture and are based on California Standards for the Teaching Profession and California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The district will further refine its teacher and principal evaluation systems to link performance evaluations to student learning, but the new instruments won't be piloted until the second year of the grant, feedback gathered, revised, if needed, and Board approval sought post pilot.

As a part of their professional development plan, teachers will collaborate by subject matter and grade level to develop formative assessments. These assessments will be accessible through the to-be-acquired Aeries Analytics data system. The applicant is reluctant to discuss the capabilities of the Aeries Analytics, and thereby provides generic descriptions of its capacity such as "Technology is used to provide rapid feedback to student and teachers regarding progress on mastery of content and to identify gaps in their learning". The capability and function of the Aeries Analytics System should have been researched and included in this narrative. Other on-line resources include Kahn Academy lessons, ConnectEd Studios and Achieve Commons.

The applicant did not address the application's requirement C-2(d) to provide a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals in subjects such as math and science and in specialty areas such as special education.

**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>14</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant has a quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. The applicant demonstrates that practices, policies, and rules currently exist and that these will be expanded to incorporate the LLEAP<sup>3</sup> initiative. Through a system of departments, committees, councils, and personnel, the district is poised to provide support and services to all participating project schools. A diagram describing this complex committee structure has been submitted. Responsibilities for each positions have been described. The district exercises an Open Door Policy for all meetings.</p> <p>Board members demonstrate support not only through their membership as the Porterville District Board, but also as participants on the District Leadership Team and on the P8 Executive Council. There are the Executive Cabinet, District Leadership Team, and Pathways 9-12 Department with supporting personnel. With RTTD funding, new positions will include a Pathways K-8 Director, three Workplace Coordinators, a middle school Coach and Career Counselor, and Instructional Coach. Likewise in the elementary, a Pathways Coach, and two Instructional Coaches will supplement current staff. A Professional Development Director, also funded through RTTD, and LLEAP<sup>3</sup> Project Director will join in the support of the program.</p> <p>School sites have Site Councils (parents), and they, together with the principals, enjoy autonomy over hiring, staffing changes, budget, site curriculum and course proposals and master schedules.</p> <p>Students have the opportunity to progress academically and earn credit based on mastery through on-line courses, credit recovery programs, independent study, and concurrent enrollment. Equal opportunities are afforded to special population students.</p> <p>In response to a high-quality plan, the applicant must include key goals, activities to be undertaken, a rationale for said activities, a timeline, deliverables, and persons responsible. The omission of these key components makes it difficult to determine if the plan will achieve its intended outcome.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant fails to propose a high quality plan to support program implementation through a technology infrastructure which is meant to personalize learning. The applicant admits to a need for upgrading their current technology hardware, software and infrastructure and has written an Education Technology Plan covering years 2010-2015. Funding to fully implement an integrated data system is a major challenge. Most schools have computer labs and all schools have a computer in every classroom. Schools have internet and email access, and have the ability to run the State's student information system. The district exercises an 'open door policy' with the technology they do have, but it appears as though training and technical support for students, parents and community are limited.</p> <p>The district does have a viable website and parents can access some student information through a Parent Portal, but no mention has been made of translation capabilities for the limited English speakers in the community.</p> <p>Currently the district entertains a limited number of iPad pilot programs in three middle schools, a 6th grade class in one elementary school and at four high school academies. In order for this project to meet 21st Century standards technology upgrades are critical.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>As a quality approach to continuously improve its plans, the applicant proposes a continuous improvement process that will provide feedback on progress toward target goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during the term of the grant for their current Pathway schools and as the new Pathways programs develop. The applicant offers little description for a continuous improvement process for the proposed middle school and elementary school additions. The District Leadership Team will meet weekly during the first funded year to develop the scope and sequence of the LLEAP<sup>3</sup> Initiative and will <i>then</i> create a detailed formative and summative evaluation plan.</p> <p>The current Pathways programs are being supported through three grants: a US DOE i3: Curriculum Development; James Irvine Foundation: Mentoring; and James Irvine Foundation: Data and Evaluation. One major drawback for this continuous improvement process, is the profound lack of adequate technology needed to support programs, and provide feedback to educators, students and parents. Yet, two funding sources i3, and the James Irvine Foundation grant for Data and Evaluation are technology based. The applicant hopes to remedy this dilemma with RTTD funding which will upgrade their current system with Aeries Analytics, but it is unclear whether this system will provide adequate support to the district's 21st Century technology needs. The applicant fails to mention if they had been awarded the California Linked Learning grant, whose program components comprised the majority of this application's Vision.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans by describing a viable communication process with external stakeholders: an Open Door Policy at all internal events; engagement of community organizations in discussions and projects that promote awareness of the programs; use of newsletters, mailings, videos, recruitment brochures, and invitations to events (part of RTTD budget); the district website; and a Spring Showcase which presents exhibits of student work.</p> <p>The district will request that the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education who published a review of the Porterville Pathways Project in 2012, do an annual update. The district failed to discuss an alternative to the Stanford's audit in the event that the school refuses to do an annual review.</p> <p>Internally, the P8 Executive Council will add membership from the new Pathways facilities after they have been opened, and Pathway Committees provide an avenue for teachers to participate in the process.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>As a response to this Selection Criterion, the applicant completed the required performance measure charts. The applicant identified Goals which were aligned to these performance measures. The goals were broken down by Project Objectives, Program Measures, Rationale for Selection, Measurement, information, and Review.</p> <p>Upon review of Goal 3: Increase Social-Emotional Development, the district currently experiences major discipline issues resulting in large numbers of expulsions (111 expulsions in 2012-2013). The applicant fails to identify or address the root causes of these expulsions. The problem of chronic absence is also troubling and perplexing. Addressing these two major disciplinary issues appears to be a prudent.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant identified the quantitative and qualitative data the district will use as part of the process to evaluate personnel, professional development, implementation of the Aeries Analytics data system, development of additional Pathways programs for the high school population, full implementation of the project in the middle and elementary schools, targeted interventions and evaluation for continuous improvement. An external evaluator will be hired to spearhead the evaluation process. A chart describing Objectives, Activities, Timelines, Deliverables and Persons Responsible provided an overview of the process.</p> <p>Several problems have surfaced within the applicant's response that make it difficult to ascertain the success of the</p>		

implementation process. The actual evaluation instrument will be developed post award. The means by which formative data will be collected and analyzed was not discussed. The technology component was unclear. The chart describes that between May – June 2014, a log and survey to track daily use of technology for instruction will be developed. The applicant does not provide further detail as to when these logs or surveys will be implemented or what impact these surveys will have on this project.

**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>

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

The applicant provided a budget of \$24,444,741, and accompanying narratives for the LLEAP<sup>3</sup> Program that will ultimately serve all 13,835 students in the Porterville Unified School District. The amount requested is unreasonable and not in compliance with award ranges described in the FAQ document B-3, since the district’s application does not demonstrate that the district will serve approximately 13,000 students within the first 100 days of the grant award.

According to FAQ C-6 and C-7, “An applicant must base its requested award amount on the number of participating students it proposes to serve at the time of the application or within the first 100 days of the grant award. (i.e. budget requests must be within the award range for the number of students at the time of the application.)

It appears that the district can comfortably be up and running with their high school population (6125). 5 new Pathway “schools” are underway, but they would not be up and running during Year 1. The applicant provides little evidence of participation of all Middle School students at this point, because the program only involves after school activities and elective offerings. Not all Middle School students are able to be counted for after school activities because of transportation issues and family commitments. The applicant does not enumerate the number of students it will serve in its after school programs.

Other than proposed ILPs “to be completed sometime before 6th grade”, there is no program currently defined for the elementary school except STeAM, which is another after school program. It appears as though the brunt of the program development for both elementary and the middle grades will be the responsibility of the to-be-determined Director of Pathways K-8 whose hiring will be contingent upon the success of this grant application.

Several irregularities surfaced upon review of the budget narratives. Personnel salaries are extravagant: Two minor examples: 2 data (entry)specialists and 2 clerks each at an annual salary of \$55,350. It is unknown whether these positions are 10 (@ \$53/hr.) or 12 month (@\$28/hr.) positions. These salaries, and other personnel salaries listed within the budget narratives, are priced well above market value.

Technology, such as cell phones for administration deserved a budget entry, but there was no budget allocated for 21st Century educational technology devices for students (such as ipads or other handheld devices), or tech upgrades for teachers or classrooms.

Regarding training of staff: assuming that all Porterville staff were in agreement with this proposal, and actively participated in its development, as inferred, the need for a day-long paid workshop to be attended by all staff to describe the project is questionable. Whatever information that needs to be disseminated at the beginning of the 2014 school year, can be done through an informative video made available to all schools to be played and discussed during an early release day or during a staff meeting.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

In order to sustain project goals after the term of the grant, all district resources will be leveraged in support of this project and sustained through General Education Funds, federal entitlements, and Economic Impact Aid. The district will seek additional funding through such avenues as discretionary grants, local government and non-profit organizations. The district is currently receiving grant funds from Investing in Education (i3), and two James Irvine Foundation grants; however, the funding cycles for these end prior to the conclusion of the funding cycle for RTTD. A multitude of Advisory Board members have been recruited to provide continued support of the projects.

Community partnerships are purposefully developed and relationships nurtured. Modifications and upgrades to buildings and technology will provide for long-term sustainability. Professional development will build capacity among staff. New staff are well compensated as a means of hiring and retaining quality individuals.

The applicant did not respond to the development of a budget for years following the grant cycle

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

As a part of the requirement set out by the Competitive Priority Selection Criterion, the applicant completed a chart identifying 146 individual or partnering organizations, the type of program provided, the beneficiaries of the partnerships, and the services provided, and describes in detail how these partnerships would integrate education and other services for participating students.

The district has built an extensive network of community partnerships to provide support services for the District's youth and families. These partnerships provide mental health support, family crisis intervention, special needs assessments and education, academic and behavioral supports for at-risk students, services for domestic abuse and homeless, staff development opportunities, and services for students who have been sexually abused.

In an attempt to strengthen and stabilize family life for the district's students, the district has formed a community mental health committee comprised of individuals from the district, Health and Human Services, Child Welfare, the Police Department, Family Crisis, and city officials including the Mayor.

Partnerships with ConnectEd, Stanford SCOPE, Education Trust West, the National Career Academy Coalition, and the James Irvine Foundation support the district's efforts to gather and analyze statistically relevant data and research best practices so that the LLEAP<sup>3</sup> program can monitor its implementation based on the goals set for the program, and ultimately become a role model for duplication in other districts.

The applicant's approach to implementation includes the following goals and the proposal includes desired results that align and support this proposal. The goals include:

- Further implement and expand Linked Learning Pathways grades 9-12.
- Expand Linked Learning model grades K-8
- Increase teacher and administrator capacity to personalize learning for all students.
- Increase use of data to drive teaching and learning
- Create a continuum of support for students and families starting with high-needs students.
- Establish rigorous, sustainable quality improvement process.

The applicant provides the same data to support the current Link to Learning program as it did in the previous section (B) Prior Record of Success, which does not demonstrate compelling evidence for expansion of the program. Again, the narratives focus primarily on high school students and make little or no mention of the manner by which these partnerships will assist students in grades K-8.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Through a series of community forums, focus group interviews, stakeholder surveys, and informal discussions with students, teachers, parents, and community leaders, Porterville Unified School District developed a program for teaching, learning, and leading to meet the requirements for success in the 21st Century. The applicant provides rigorous statements which align their project to the four core educational assurance areas:

1. Adopting standards and assessments:

All CA districts will adopt the Common Core Standards and begin assessing student achievement based on those Standards beginning 2014-2015.

2. Building data systems:

The district uses the Aeries Student Information System to manage student level information district-wide, but other data records (e.g. assessment, intervention) are embedded in other databanks. It is intended to upgrade the Aeries SIS as the comprehensive data system.

3. Effective teachers and principals

A variety of programs will be implemented to assist teachers in developing their craft: Single Subject Credential Program, and Communities of Practice, and a multitude of professional development offerings.

4. Turning around low achieving schools

The Linked Learning Program was built on the premise of school turnaround.

The district has designed Linked Learning Experiences and Achievements through Personalization, Pathways, and Partnerships (LLEAP<sup>3</sup>) to transform their high schools into academies or “Pathways” which tie together real-world professions with academics through coursework, technical skills and knowledge, work-based learning, and pertinent support mechanisms for students in grades 9-12

The district plans on expanding the benefits of Linked Learning in grades K-8 including more systematic attention to real-world application in the curriculum, career awareness, authentic project-based learning, and individual learning plans for elementary and middle grades.

Total	210	150
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