Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0129CA-1 for Rocketship Education - Lead: Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship Education articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds upon the core educational assurance areas and describes what the classroom experience looks like for students and teachers. Rocketship is a high performing, open enrollment consortium of nine pre-kindergarten through grade five public charter schools serving over 5,000 high-need students in the San Jose, California area (eight schools) and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (one school).

(a) The applicant demonstrates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in the following four core educational assurance areas: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around lowest-achieving schools to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching. The applicant thoroughly describes how it articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that it builds on its work in these four core educational assurance areas:

1. **Standards and Assessments**: The applicant clearly indicates that both California and Wisconsin have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The applicant effectively demonstrates that it will build on its work in this area by aligning the Common Core State Standards to a rigorous curriculum for all students. The applicant indicates that their reform vision will build on the implementation of their core curriculum, which is supported by the use of diagnostic, formative, benchmark, and summative assessments aligned to the standards. The applicant indicates that their primary CCSS-aligned assessments include NWEA-assessments including CPAA, MAP, and MPG; California and Wisconsin Standards Tests; and STEP Literacy. They also use a progress monitoring system called AIMSWEB, which tests foundational academic skill levels against national norms. The applicant indicates that many schools with fully-developed Response to Intervention (RtI) frameworks use AIMSWEB, and these progress monitoring components improve teachers' ability to make adjustments in teaching and identify students for intervention based on this data. The applicant effectively indicates that these standards and assessments prepare students with the knowledge and skills that set them on a clear path to success in college and the workplace.

2. **Data systems to support instruction**: The applicant effectively indicates that student data are collected, organized, and accessed through *Schoolzilla,* Rocketship's data warehouse system. The applicant clearly indicates that this system features toolkits designed to make student data easy for educators to use by helping them to access data to immediately identify the next steps in student learning. The applicant demonstrates that *Schoolzilla* is useful in providing the big picture, as well as student-level strand-level data and growth and value added data based on the NWEA assessments. The applicant will build on its work in this area by using Illuminate and *Schoolzilla* to gather data for teachers to use to inform instruction. Rocketship uses interoperable data systems, which allow for the exporting of data in open format for teachers, students and parents. The applicant clearly indicates that Rocketship participates, and will continue to participate, in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADs) and Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) data system, which allow for the receiving and matching of student-level preschool-through-12th grade and higher education data.

3. **Effective teachers and leaders**: The applicant clearly describes their reform vision that involves recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining the best teachers to ensure that their students attain a world-class, college- and career-ready education. The applicant effectively describes how Rocketship will build on its exiting work in this area by creating instructional pathways (expanding the number of highly effective teachers and principals by creating an individualized approach to evaluating and retaining instructional team members and leaders); developing educators at all levels to effectively implement the learning model (invest in training so that educators are effective in a non-traditional teaching environment and can adapt and personalize instruction based on data about student learning and student needs); and building a tech-enhanced professional learning community (develop process and tools to support the collaboration and dissemination of effective instructional practices for personalized learning). The applicant indicates that Rocketship offers a leadership fellows program, including coaching and formal professional development opportunities. Each Rocketship school staff includes two assistant principals to manage and support two grade levels, with the principal supervising the remaining two grade levels. Administrators spend a significant proportion of their days coaching teachers and providing feedback. The applicant indicates that all teachers spend several weeks together before school starts to build a collaborative culture of trust, to create a strong school culture, and to gain alignment with school and grade level goals.

4. **Turning around the lowest achieving schools**: The applicant indicates that Rocketship does not have any schools that meet the definition of "low-performing" or "lowest-performing" schools.

(b) The applicant thoroughly articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that provides a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating

student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student interest. The applicant, over the past six years, has achieved outstanding results for students while growing student enrollment at over 20 percent annually. The applicant thoroughly describes their vision as Rethinking Elementary School from the Ground Up, where educators make data-based decisions to provide students personalized instructional experiences that will provide greater student independence and ownership for their learning over time. The applicant effectively indicates that this reform vision is accomplished with personalized learning to meet each child's needs; excellent teachers and leaders; and engaged parents who are essential to closing the achievement gap. The applicant clearly describes the following key initiatives to personalized learning to meet each child's needs and interests: innovate to improve a blended learning model (ongoing innovations to the pre-k through 3rd grade models and invest in continued development of the flexible classroom model in the 4th and 5th grades); and accelerate independent student learning through increased student and family access to technology-enabled supports during out-of-school time (increase access and compatibility for students and families to take ownership and make independent learning progress during non-school time).

(c) The applicant articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that effectively describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. The applicant effectively describes Rocketship's personalized learning model that combines individualized practice time with deep learning experiences in core subjects. In pre-kindergarten or transitional kindergarten, students attend school in a single classroom and participate in small-group instruction, spend time in the learning lab working on Online Learning Programs (OLPs), and participate in independent center activities. In kindergarten through 3rd grade, students participate in a targeted extended block daily schedule with a 200 minute block of English, language arts, and social studies; a 100 minute block of math and science; and 100 minutes in the learning lab. Students also participate in an enrichment block in which they have the opportunity to deepen learning in other areas including art, music, dance, and physical education. Teachers lead instructional blocks based on their areas of specialization. The applicant effectively describes the personalized learning model in grades four and five, in which students learn in a grade-level cohort. Students share two to three teachers and one paraprofessional who provides tutoring and targeted individualized support to students. This model is adapted to student learning needs to that students can engage in a wide variety of learning opportunities, including project-based learning, working in multiple groups to build self-direction and independence to prepare for middle school. The applicant thoroughly describes the personalized learning approach by grade level, aligning grade level instructional model (PreK/TK in-classroom rational model; K-3rd enhanced rational model; and 4th-5th flexible model), staffing, and rationale for the learning approach.

This criterion is scored in the high range because the overall comprehensive and coherent reform vision articulates and demonstrates a very clear approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. The applicant demonstrates a clear vision to explicitly connect particular reform actions to student outcomes.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant effectively demonstrates that Rocketship's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high-quality LEA-level implementation of the proposed project.

(a) The applicant clearly indicates that existing Rocketship schools and students (prekindergarten, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten - grade 5) will participate in the proposal. The applicant did not describe the process that they initially used to select the nine (9) LEAs in the San Jose, California area and the single newly organized school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The applicant indicates that nine (9) LEAs currently operating in the area of San Jose, California and its single school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin will participate in the proposed project. Rocketship will implement a three-part approach to personalized learning across the participating LEAs, utilizing the following strategies: Year 1 - improve the blended learning model by hiring a Director of Blended Learning and Innovation, who will be a Manager of Learning Management System (LMS) Content and identify contractors to develop a scheduling solution; Year 2: invest in curriculum, materials, and tools to support the implementation of the grades four and five flexible model and expand the flexible model to an additional grade (3rd grade) for three of the nine participating schools; and review literature on developmentally appropriate blended learning models to determine how to best expand practices from the flexible model to other grades; assess results from the pilots in kindergarten through 3rd grade completed during school year 2012-2013; and make recommendations to the RTT-D Oversight Committee. To choose the specific participating schools for implementation in 2014-2015, the Director of Blended Learning will develop a rating tool to assess the readiness of participating schools to implement the model in a new grade. In Year 3, the contractor will complete the work of scheduling and an additional flexible classroom will be implemented in three additional participating schools. In Year 4, the applicant will implement their last three new flexible classrooms. All participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.

(b) The applicant effectively describes its approach to implementation to support high-quality LEA-level implementation in the following schools that will participate in grant activities: Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary (CA); Rocketship Si Se Puede Academy (CA); Rocketship Los Suenos Academy (CA); Rocketship Mosaic Elementary (CA); Rocketship Discovery Prep (CA); Rocketship Academy Brilliant Minds (CA); Rocketship Alma Academy (CA); Rocketship Spark (CA); and Rocketship Southside Community Prep (WI). Rocketship is a high performing, open enrollment consortium of nine pre-kindergarten through grade five public charter schools serving over 5,000 high-need students in the San Jose, California area (eight schools) and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (one school). The majority of students served are economically disadvantaged (87 percent), Hispanic/other minority (90 percent), and English Language Learners (ELL) (81 percent). All Rocketship schools enroll at least 40 percent of their students who qualify for free or reduced lunch support. The applicant provides specific data indicating that 85 percent of Rocketship students qualify for free or reduced lunch subsidies, ranging from a high of 91 percent at Rocketship Si Se Pude to a low of 75 percent at Rocketship Spark Academy.

(c) The applicant thoroughly aligns each of the nine (9) participating schools with the number of participating students (5,003 total); number of participating students at each school; (ranging from 319 to 642); the number of participating high-need students (5,003 total); the number of participating low-income students (4,273); and the number of participating educators (275). The applicant effectively indicates that over the course of the grant period, the participating schools will grow their enrollment to more than 5,600. This is because of enrollment increases in grade four and grade five for schools that do not yet serve these grades. The applicant indicates that their schools serving only kindergarten through third grade, or sometimes through fourth grade, add one grade level per year until they are fully enrolled.

This criterion is scored in the high range of points because the applicant describes a comprehensive approach to implementing its reform proposal, which will support high-quality LEA-level implementation of the proposal. The applicant indicates that nine (9) LEAs currently operating in the area of San Jose, California and its single school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin will participate in grant activities. Rocketship will implement a three-part approach to personalized learning across the participating LEAs. The applicant clearly indicates that existing Rocketship schools and students (prekindergarten, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten - grade 5) will participate in the proposal. The applicant did not describe the process that they used to initially select the nine (9) LEAs in the San Jose, California area and the single newly organized school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship describes a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) to address LEA-wide reform and change, and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals. Rocketship will scale up and create meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools by: monitoring the results as they implement these initiatives in their current school; and applying lessons learned to the program's eventual establishment and rollout in their new elementary schools. The applicant indicates that while participating schools currently serve approximately 5,000 students, they anticipate that the Rocketship network will reach over 16,000 by 2016-2017, year four of the grant. The applicant indicates that students who enroll after the 2013-2014 are not part of the official count of participating students, but those in Rocketship's new schools will benefit from the implementation and the scaling of the activities that they propose.

The applicant effectively describes how the LEA-wide reform proposal will help the applicant reach its outcome goal, to close the achievement gap in ELA and mathematics. The applicant provides a thorough logic model for achieving impact by aligning current situation, theory of action (personalized learning; excellent teachers and leaders; and engaged parents), intended impact (achieve 1.5 years of student progress annually; close the achievement gap in ELA and math; 90% of Rocketship students will complete high school; 90% of graduating Rocketship students will matriculate to college; 70% of college enrolling Rocketship students will obtain a postsecondary degree; 100% of students will have an effective teacher and principal and 93% will have a highly effective teacher and principal; and 70% of parents/guardians will be deeply engaged in their school community), theory of change, and the ultimate goal (By Rethinking Elementary School from the Ground Up, they will close the achievement gap in their lifetime). The applicant provides an effective implementation roadmap: scaling up across initiatives, aligning activities, timeline, and personnel responsible.

This criterion is scored in the high range because the applicant demonstrates a high-quality reform and change plan indicating how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and describing how the plan will help the applicant reach its outcome goals (to improve student learning for all students).

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not disaggregate data, overall, and by student subgroup, for each participating LEA in the following areas: the performance on summative assessments and the decreasing achievement gaps. The applicant did not use State ESEA targets (California and Wisconsin) for grades 3-5 for the performance on summative assessments.

(4)(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth): 90% of Rocketship students will end the year on or above grade level in mathematics and reading; 75% of students will grow at least 1.5 years annually in math and reading. The assessments for SY 2013-2014 and beyond will be NWEA - Children's Progress Academic Assessment (NWEA-CPAA) - Literacy and Mathematics and STEP Literacy Assessment. The applicant did not use State ESEA targets to set its annual achievement goals, but used the NWEA-MAP instead.

(4)(b) Decreasing achievement gaps: Rocketship's goal is to completely eliminate achievement gaps between Rocketship sub-groups and statewide highest-performing groups in Mathematics and ELA, which is ambitious and achievable. The applicant did not compare each of the LEAs subgroups to the State's highest achieving subgroup, which is required in the definition of the term achievement gap.

(4)(c) Graduation rates: Rocketship clearly describes its plan to provide individualized instruction for every student so that 90% of their students will graduate from high school.

(4)(d) College enrollment: Rocketship plans to significantly increase the number of students who enroll in postsecondary educational programs to 90%. It is not

clear why the annual goals continue to be 90% in future years.

(4)(e) Postsecondary degree attainment: Rocketship's goal is for 70% of those students who enroll in postsecondary education to graduate.

This criterion is scored in the medium range of points because the applicant provides a goal, or annual goals, overall and by student subgroup, for performance on summative assessments; decreasing achievement gaps; graduation rates; college enrollment; and postsecondary degree attainment. However, the applicant did not disaggregate data, overall, and by student subgroup, for each participating LEA in the following areas: performance on summative assessments; decreasing achievement gaps; graduation rates; college enrollment; and postsecondary degree attainment. The applicant did not use State ESEA targets (California and Wisconsin) for grades 3-5 for the performance on summative assessments. The applicant did not use State ESEA targets to set its annual achievement goals, but used the NWEA-MAP instead. In determining decreasing achievement gaps, the applicant did not compare each of the LEA subgroups to the State's highest achieving subgroup, which is required in the definition of the term achievement gap.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	**15**	**15**

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship demonstrates evidence, since opening in 2007, of improved student achievement and learning, leading to increased educational equity in California and beginning this school year, in Wisconsin. The applicant reports a clear record of success indicating that Rocketship students performed in the top five percent of all California school district serving low-income students on the California State Test (CST) in 2011-2012. The applicant reports that every year from 2007 to 2013, each of Rocketship's California schools has exceeded the Academic Performance Index (API) standard for excellence of 800 on the CST, demonstrating a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning.

The applicant effectively provides evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement, and increasing equity in learning and teaching, including evidence that demonstrates this success in the following areas:

(1)(a) Rocketship demonstrates strong examples of improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. The applicant provides thorough data demonstrating evidence of student achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching by personalizing learning in the following ways: improve personalized learning to meet each child's need; support excellent teachers and leaders; and enable engaged parents which is essential to closing the achievement gap. Rocketship proposes to enable their students to accelerate achievement, to complete their secondary education, and to thrive in college. The applicant indicates that their students are recruited from surrounding neighborhoods and their target population is low-income, special education, English Language Learners (ELL) and other "at-risk" students. Rocketship's eight schools, in California, serve 66 to 73 percent ELL students where the average ELL percentage is 24 percent for the surrounding Santa Clara County. Rocketship serves a low-income population in which 85 percent qualify for Free or Reduced Price Meals (FRPM), in a county where the average percentage of FRPM is 20 percent. Milwaukee's Southside Community Prep has 84 percent of students who qualify for FRPM. The applicant provides clear data indicating that the 2013 Rocketship low-income Academic Performance Index (API) is 815, compared to nearby districts (783), and the California average (767). The applicant provides clear data indicating that the 2013 Rocketship English Language Learner Academic Performance Index (API) is 813, compared to nearby districts (778), and the California average (758). The applicant provides clear data indicating that Rocketship is closing the achievement gap for Integrated Special Education (ISE) students. In 2011-2012, 35 percent of ISE students served by Rocketship were basic, proficient, or advanced in English and Language Arts (ELA) on the STAR/CST; in 2012-2013, that percentage increased to 55 percent basic or above. The applicant provides clear data indicating that in mathematics, 56 percent of their ISE students improved their CST scores from the previous year or maintained proficiency; the percentage of ISE students scoring proficient or advanced increased from 22 percent in 2011-2012 to 40 percent in 2012-2013. Rocketship is also closing the achievement gap for racial subgroups. In 2012-2013, at Rocketship, the average API for Hispanic students (who comprise 83 percent of total Rocketship students) was 817, compared to an API for Hispanic students in the state of California of 785. The applicant also provides data indicating that their Asian and White students also outperform the state average and the state proficiency benchmark. The applicant provides clear data (2013 CST) indicating that Rocketship is closing the gap in student achievement in mathematics between Rocketship students (77 percent) and student achievement of students in California's high-income district (86 percent). The applicant also provides clear data indicating that Rocketship performance over more than four years demonstrates sustained academic excellence; Rocketship students advance more than one grade-level per year in both ELA and mathematics. The applicant effectively reports that because their schools serve only elementary school-aged students and they have only been operating schools since 2007, none of their students have reached the age of graduation from high school. The applicant indicates that is beginning a partnership this year that will enable them to monitor the success of their students in middle school, and with the assistance of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) in California and the Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) in Wisconsin, over time they will monitor the success rates of their students as they graduate from high school and enroll in college.

(1)(b) Rocketship effectively reports that they do not have any schools that qualify as low-performing. Rocketship does not operate low-achieving schools nor does it turn-around pre-existing schools. Every year, since Rocketship schools began, their California schools have each exceeded the Academic Performance Index (API) standard for excellence of 800 on the CST. Rocketship's first school in Milwaukee is serving a high-minority, high-poverty population, similar to the Rocketship schools in California.

(1)(c) Rocketship demonstrates evidence of student performance data being made available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. The applicant describes the following methods of making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents: visual presentations in the classroom of both academic and behavioral goals, allowing students to take ownership of their performance data by seeing it from day to day; describing and celebrating individual and class achievement with the entire school through their end-of-week Rocketship Landing; educators, paraprofessional tutors, and school leaders have access to and frequently use extensive and informative data (Data Day following each interim assessment period, in which data are used to create flexible, similarly-leveled groups of student within the classroom, allowing teachers to maximize the instructional impact of new or reviewed material based on each individual or group's needs); utilization of a Response to Intervention (RtI) model that uses frequent assessments and warning signs to identify when a student needs supportive action; utilizing of the *Schoolzilla* data system (available to educators and parents) to collect and organize student data for students to collect and organize student data to impact instruction; utilization of *Illuminate* to scan in and cut assessment data; utilization of formative, summative, and benchmark assessments to enable educators to measure student achievement and academic growth; and parent engagement with student data that increases family engagement and improves student outcomes (participation in Rocketship Launch and Landings; sharing of standards-based report cards with parents and guardians three times annually, along with bi-monthly summaries of assessment in humanities and mathematics/science; holding parent-teacher conferences at least once per year, and more often if needed; providing every 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade student with a computer-learning device to facilitate out-of-school time learning and engagement; providing parents access to track student progress on Online Learning Programs; availability of families to be able to track Rocketship's academic progress through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) in California and the Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) in Wisconsin; and online snapshots that provide data comparisons at the school, District, and state level in academic and socio-economic categories.

This criterion is scored in the high range because the applicant provides evidence of a prior record of success and conditions for reform. Rocketship has demonstrated evidence, since opening in 2007, of improved student achievement and learning, leading to increased educational equity in California and beginning this school year, in Wisconsin. Rocketship clearly indicates that Rocketship grew from one school serving less than 200 students to a network of nine schools serving more than 5,000 students across two states. The applicant reports a clear record of success indicating that Rocketship students performed in the top five percent of all California school districts. The applicant reports that every year from 2007 to 2013, each of Rocketship's California schools have exceeded the Academic Performance Index (API) standard for excellence of 800 on the CST, demonstrating a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning. The applicant demonstrates evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement, and increasing equity in learning and teaching, including evidence that demonstrates this success in improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its participating schools; and making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship demonstrates a high level of transparency in LEA processes, and investments by making public, school, actual school-level expenditures for instruction, instructional support, public support, and school administration. The applicant clearly indicates that their records are open to public inspection as required by all local, state, and federal rules, and regulations set by the U.S. Department of Education. The applicant, in compliance with the California Department of Education (CDE), posts each school's annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC) on the Rocketship website. The SARC includes demographics, parent involvement opportunities, academic data, API, AYP, program improvement, criteria for teacher evaluations, and the total dollars spent by the school, and per student spending. The applicant indicates that all Rocketship Board of Education meeting and committee meeting agendas are posted on the website in accordance with the Brown Act, a California law designed to provide public institution transparency.

The applicant effectively reports that Rocketship schools were included in the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) survey conducted by the United States Department of Education in 2011-2012. The applicant indicates that all of their schools will participate in the next universal CRDC survey, as well, which takes place in 2013-2014, and includes the following public information: school characteristics, such as enrollment, policies, and FTEs; and school finance data including (a) actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff; (b) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (c) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and (d) actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. The applicant provides evidence that their website will link to this information on a school-level once the CRDC goes live for the public. The applicant provides two website screenshots of their webpage where they will link to a page where anyone can link to each school's data, when it is published during the 2013-2014 school year.

Rocketship ensures accessibility and transparency for all stakeholders since the Rocketship website provides current information for parents, student, community members, and external stakeholders to ensure that everyone in the community is aware of news and events in the Rocketship community. Rocketship ensures that parents and other stakeholders are able to participate in schools. A strong aspect of the Rocketship model, and one of the focus areas of their RTT-D proposal, is that engaged parents are essential to eliminating the achievement gap. Parents are encouraged participate in school activities and to attend the monthly parent/family meetings held at each school with he goal of engaging parents and families in learning activities at their schools, and in exploring the community resources available to them. The applicant reports that over 70 percent of their families regularly engage in school meetings and activities. This indicates demonstrated evidence and commitment to both transparency and equitable access.

This criterion is scored in the high range because the applicant demonstrates evidence of transparency in processes, practices in making actual school-level expenditures available for instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration available to the public. The applicant effectively reports

that Rocketship schools were included in the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) survey conducted by the United States Department of Education in 2011-2012 and all of their schools will participate in the next universal CRDC survey, as well, which takes place in 2013-2014, and includes the following public information: school characteristics, such as enrollment, policies, and FTEs; and school finance data including (a) actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff; (b) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (c) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and (d) actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship has articulated a comprehensive state context for implementation and as demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legislative, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments that are described in the proposal because of the public charter status of all participating schools. Rocketship operates schools in states and communities that are very supportive of public charter school education. The applicant indicates that shortly after the first charter school legislation in the country passed in 1991, California passed its charter school law in 1992, and Wisconsin in 1993. This provides evidence that the nine current Rocketship elementary schools operate in states that have long recognized the value of charter school autonomy and flexibility, which allow Rocketship to have the opportunity to provide innovative opportunities for teachers to teach and children to learn using personalized learning environments.

Rocketship has autonomy in both California and Wisconsin, with eight elementary schools in California, all of which will participate in the Race to the Top-District initiatives. The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) charters seven of Rocketship's schools, while the Franklin-McKinley School District (FMSD) charters one California Rocketship school. The applicant effectively indicates that all eight California Rocketship schools are aligned with the philosophy of the California Charter Schools Act (CSA) of 1992, which promotes accountability and oversight with minimal bureaucracy. The CSA, and in turn, the Rocketship schools provide for the charter schools to improve pupil learning, increase opportunities for academically low-achieving students, encourage different and innovative teaching methods, provide expanded choice, and create new professional opportunities for teachers. In August 2013, Rocketship opened its first elementary school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Rocketship Southside Community Prep. The applicant indicates that the City of Milwaukee authorized the charter in 2011 under Wisconsin Statute §118.40 (2r). As aligned with Wisconsin charter law, Rocketship is exempt from most laws and rules governing public schools.

Rocketship's authority and autonomy as a charter school in California and Wisconsin provides the following conditions across the core areas of (a) standards and assessments; (b) data systems to improve instruction; and (c) effective teachers and leaders. Rocketship's authority and autonomy as a charter school in California and Wisconsin provides the following conditions across the following core assurance areas:

(a) **standards and assessments**

California and Wisconsin both adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010. Each state belongs to the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium in which twenty-five states are collaborating to develop high-quality, common assessments that improve classroom instruction. All Rocketship school have aligned their curricula with CCSS. California's current accountability system, the Academic Performance Index (API), monitors academic achievement of all the state's public schools, including charter schools, and LEAs that serve students in kindergarten through 12th grace, based on state requirements established by the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 and federal requirements through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). California utilizes the API system based on the proficiency levels of students on the CST at the end of each year. The applicant indicates that a score of 800 is the California standard for excellence; all Rocketship schools exceed this standard, with an overall average API of 822 in 2013. California will move to CCSS-aligned assessments by school year 2014-2015. The applicant indicates that all of the Rocketship students take the NWEA Measure of Academic Progress test (MAP) three times a year to measure individual student progress, in addition to participating in the California State Test and its CCSS-aligned successor(s). The applicant indicates that they will continue to use NWEA MAP during and after the transition from the API to CCSS-assessments to ensure that they have student-level achievement data to assess their progress toward the goals they set for their students, including the goals set both before this proposal and as a part of this proposal.

(b) **data systems to improve instruction**

The applicant effectively indicates that all California Rocketship schools participate in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), which provides a central system to collect and maintain student-level data and track student enrollment and achievement data. As required by law, each Rocketship school office maintains and submits student data to CALPADS, in compliance with state and federal privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Parents may access CALPADS data through the California Department of Education website for full transparency. In Wisconsin, Rocketship Southside Community Prep will participate in the Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE). The applicant clearly describes Rocketship's commitment to personalized learning that means that summative student data required by their authorizing states will provide just one view of student progress. Rocketship will collect supplemental data to more fully identify each student's level of mastery and need. School leaders and teacher will analyze these state-testing data as well as national benchmark assessments (NWEA MPG and NWEA MAP), STEP literacy assessments, formative mathematics and ELA assessments. These results will be used to direct learning plans, improve instruction, and provide meaningful educator interactions with students.

(c) **effective teachers and leaders**

Rocketship has implemented a leadership development program that creates sustainable careers for highly effective educators. Their autonomy as a network of charter schools allow them to set their own education expectations, determine their own teacher and principal evaluation system, and support heir educators in a meaningful way for their schools. The applicant indicates that Rocketship teacher salaries are approximately 20 percent higher than surrounding districts. The applicant indicates that by 2014-2015, Rocketship will include student growth as a key component of teacher and principal evaluation. The applicant indicates that Rocketship teachers do not belong to a union, they believe that their practices exceed standards traditionally set by labor unions. Rocketship describes its initiative to create instructional pathways, which provides for continuous improvement which will drive increased student achievement and improved retention levels of their most effective teachers.

This criterion is scored in the high range because each of the primary components of this project fits within the current state legislative, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments that are described in the proposal because of the public charter status of all participating schools. Rocketship's authority and autonomy as a charter school in California and Wisconsin provides for successful conditions in the core areas of standards and benchmarks, data systems to improve instruction, and effective teachers and leaders.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship describes the comprehensive review process in which they engaged students, families, teachers, and principals in the development of this proposal.

(a) The applicant effectively describes their multi-faceted stakeholder engagement process that they used to ensure that the proposed initiatives meet student, parent, teacher, principal, and community needs. The applicant clearly indicates that the engagement process has included the following: staff e-mail (Preston Smith, Rocketship's CEO and founder, distributed an e-mail to all staff who were invited to contact his national office to ask questions and provide any comments that they had on the proposal); focus groups (Rocketship invited Bay area school faculty members and national and regional staff to attend three different focus groups each focused on one of the three pillars of the proposal - Learning; Teaching and Leading; and Parent Engagement); school leader meeting (regional and national staff presented the proposal during a Bay Area regional school leader meeting and invited principals to provide feedback, ask questions, and offer ideas for improvement); and the Bay Area all staff meeting (the executive team spent time with the entire Bay Area staff on September 19, 2013, to explain the goals of RTT-D, provide information on how the proposal will increase achievement and provide supports to teachers and parents, and ask for teacher/principal/school staff feedback on the proposal). The applicant identified Rocketship's executive leadership team, including: Preston Smith, (CEO); Lynn Liao, (CPO); Kristoffer Haines, (SVPGD); Andy Stern, Chief Business Officer (CBO); and Carolyn Davies Lynch, Senior Director of Scalability and Sustainability. The applicant indicates that following the Bay Area staff meeting, optional office hours were held at each school for teachers, principals, and school staff to ask questions and get additional information on the proposal. This same opportunity occurred at the Milwaukee school. The applicant clearly describes the input and surveys that were provided to teachers, families and students to gather their feedback on the proposal. The survey for families informed parents about the primary focus of Rocketship's grant proposal; asked for comments and feedback from the parents; and provided contact information to parents if they wanted to provide more input to the proposal. The applicant describes the process they used to gain feedback from students in 4th and 5th grades during an in-class activity. Sample student response sheets are provided in the Appendix of the proposal. One student indicated that it is important for students to be able to use computers outside of school to do their online homework but some students do not have Internet access in their homes.

(a)(i) The applicant indicates that Rocketship does not have collective bargaining representation. The applicant clearly describes the process on how the proposal was refined based on input from their team by using the Learning Management System, which became an important element of their Learning supports. The applicant indicate that principals at the school leader meeting and teachers at the Learning focus groups indicates that there was a critical need for a platform through which content could be managed because teachers expressed a need for more trusted, differentiated student content. This element was integrated into the proposal. After modifications were made to the proposal, a survey was given to the teachers, which indicated 93 percent support for the proposal. The applicant provided a summary of the teacher survey, indicating support, in the Appendix.

(b) The applicant describes its process to not only secure letters of support from key stakeholders, but to engage external stakeholders in the design of the proposal by inviting community members to comment and provide input into the proposal. The applicant provides information that they received 36 letters of support from stakeholders in the community. The applicant indicates that they received letters from parent organizations, early learning programs, the business community, civil rights organizations, and institutions of higher education. The letters of support are from both California and Wisconsin. They also received letters of support from other local schools in which they partner, including Franklin-McKinley School District, which authorizes one of their charters.

This criterion is scored in the high range because Rocketship has demonstrated clear evidence of stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and stakeholder support for the proposal. The applicant indicates that Rocketship does not have collective bargaining representation, and a survey of the teachers indicated that 93 percent of the teachers support the proposed RTT-D project. The applicant provides clear letters of support from key stakeholders such parent organizations, early learning programs, the business community, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education. The applicant describes deep relationships with community partners, including the business community; civic, advocacy, and community-based organizations; and representatives of the education community (higher education, nonprofits, local schools with whom they partner).

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant provides a comprehensive plan that includes mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

(a)(i) The applicant describes a clear plan for students to understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. Rocketship helps students to take ownership of their learning by developing an understanding of their own needs and goals and giving them opportunities to practice independently; provide access to personalized content, with the duration of the engagement with that content tailored to the students; and support students to understand the resources available to them. The applicant effectively demonstrates plans to accelerate independent student learning through increased student and family access to technology-enabled supports during out-of-school time (increase access and compatibility for students and families to take ownership and make independent learning progress during non-school time); and innovate to improve the blended learning model (continue the flexible classroom model in grades four and five and make ongoing innovations to the pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade instructional approach; this approach includes launching a Learning Management System to support student ownership of learning, and codifying and sharing successful school-developed student lessons and content across the network).

(a)(ii) The applicant describes a comprehensive plan for students to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college-ready curriculum, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. The applicant effectively describes the process for setting individual goals for both overall learning goals and goals for Online Learning Program (OLPs).

(a)(iii)(iv) The applicant describes a clear plan for students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The applicant describes an approach that focuses on the mastery of standards, not seat-time, to determine when students are ready to move onto the next standard or lesson. The applicant provides a clear plan for students to have access and exposure to contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. The applicant indicates that Rocketship will accommodate student areas of deep interest that fall outside their core curriculum, and describes the opportunities that will be offered to support learning in other topics, including an enrichment block and the 5th-grade student thesis project.

(a)(v) The applicant describes a comprehensive plan for students to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting and critical thinking. Rocketship provides an environment in which students develop into confident, self-motivated, competent, and productive life-long learners, based on the research that supports non-cognitive skills as essential to success. The applicant indicates that Rocketship students demonstrate ownership and resiliency which is strengthened through home visits, ownership of core values (respect, responsibility, persistence, and empathy), socio-emotional learning (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports),

(b)(i) The applicant thoroughly demonstrates that each student will have access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and to ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready. The applicant describes the following elements that will be developed to expand and deepen personalized learning: out-of-school time learning approach, devices to support independent learning, compatibility and access for families (develop compatibility that families can use; access to Rocketship computer labs after school). The applicant clearly discusses the primary reasons for prioritizing these investments: need for independent learning practice during out-of-school time, student and family ownership and engagement, and needs of a flexible model.

(b)(ii) Rocketship provides evidence that students will experience a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments. The applicant clearly describes the key elements of Rocketship's personalized elementary school model that includes the following key elements: Individualized Learning Time (ILT) and a flex instructional block. The applicant demonstrates a clear personalized learning approach by grade level and aligns grade levels (Pre-K/TK; K-3rd; 4th-5th) to the instructional model that will be used, the staffing required, and the rationale for choosing each model.

(b)(iii) The applicant describes a clear plan for students to be involved in high-quality content, including digital learning content aligned with college-and career-ready standards. The applicant effectively summarizes the vision, strategies, goals, and milestones for the Blended Learning Model Innovation that includes investing in continued implementation of a flexible classroom model in grades four and five; support ongoing innovations to the pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade; purchase and implement a Learning Management System (LMS) to support student ownership of learning; and create Rocketship-developed content for the LMS to enable them to share successful school-developed activities and lessons that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards.

(b)(iv)(A) The applicant details clear plans to frequently update individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant describes their plans to implement a Learning Management System (LMS) to support student ownership of learning. This infrastructure delivers and manages instructional content; identifies and assesses individual learning goals; tracks progress towards meeting these goals; and collects and presents data for supervising the learning process or the organization as a whole. Students will sign-in and be able to track their own progress to the goals across all courses and online learning programs.

(b)(iv)(B) The applicant demonstrates plans for students to receive personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant describes detailed implementation plans for their approach to personalized learning, including goals, rationale for activities, flexible implementation of activities, adjustable timelines, outlined deliverables, and ownership for plan components. Students will

be given individualized instruction that meets their needs, whether their achievement falls below the basic proficiency level or if they have been identified as accelerated learners.

(b)(v) The applicant demonstrates a plan to provide accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant clearly describes multiple strategies and opportunities for students to gain mastery skills. For students whose achievement falls below the basic proficiency level, teachers write an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) to support the development of English proficiency and academic growth. Rocketship organizes special education programs and services to provide integrated service delivery to each school. This integrated service delivery approach requires schools to align educational services for students with special education needs within existing structures (grade levels, groupings, looping, Individualized Learning) rather than exclusively through special and segregated programs.

(c) The applicant clearly describes mechanisms that are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Rocketship effectively indicates that to accelerate independent student learning through increased student and family access to technology, they will equip older students with technology devices provide compatibility diagnostics and solutions to Rocketship families; and open computer labs after-hours and on the weekends tor students and families. The applicant provides a plan for their Director of Instructional Technology to oversee the development of an approach to train both the students and families to use the devices and access provided as part of this initiative.

Overall, the applicant provides a 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. This criterion is scored in the high range because the applicant has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment.

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

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant thoroughly aligns the *Rethinking Elementary School from the Ground Up* goals (blended learning model instruction; access to out-of-school supports); activities; timeline; personnel responsible). The applicant, in the proposal, also describes the rationale for the activities and the deliverables for the proposed project. The applicant provides an exceptional plan for recruiting, selecting, onboarding (training emphasizing foundational knowledge in culture and classroom), developing, and evaluating educators and leaders. This is central to Rocketship's vision that all students graduate from grade five performing above grade level, so that they are prepared for success to complete high school, graduating college- and career-ready.

(a)(i) The applicant clearly describes a strong approach to teaching and leading that includes training and professional staff development that supports their individual and collective capacity to support the implementation of personalized learning environments and the strategies that meet each student's academic needs. Rocketship describes the foundational piece of their ongoing staff development to customize one-on-one coaching provided by assistant principals or principals. The principals and assistant principals at each school facilitate and organize sessions at each school, targeting the areas of development they see as most beneficial to the staff, personalizing supports for individual teachers. The applicant thoroughly describes the coaching and development cycle that they use to develop teachers in the most efficient and effective manner and in a way aligned to the teacher's learning style and readiness. This coaching and development cycle includes the purpose, target outcomes, frequency, and length aligned with how they will analyze, align, and act each component of the coaching and development cycle.

(a)(ii) The applicant clearly demonstrates how the approach for teaching and leading will help educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress by adapting content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and learning approaches. The applicant describes the approach to professional development throughout the school year that includes analyzing and planning using formative assessment data, creating rigorous independent work, exploring whole brain teaching, unit planning using the Understanding by Design Framework, launching literature circles, and facilitating small group instruction for struggling readers in the upper grades. Rocketship has had peer-led trainings at their school sites to launch the RULER approach, a socio-emotional learning curriculum for 3rd through 5th grade. They have also experienced training from outside partners that include Project GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) leaders who work with teachers on strategies for working with English Language Learners and RAFT (Resource Area for Teachers) trainers to do tutorials on hands-on math and science instruction.

(a)(iii) It is quite clear that professional development opportunities will allow teachers to come together as teams and to review learning expectations in order to select the most effective methods of teaching and assessment. Their goal is to select the most appropriate assessment techniques that will allow students to demonstrate comprehensive mastery of college- and career-ready standards. Rocketship will provide teaching and leading initiatives enabled by RTT-D to increase student achievement with personalized learning approaches. Rocketship clearly indicates that the training will improve educators' understanding of professional practices as well as student performance data, and will include access to training, support, and professional communities; tools, data, resources, and policies that support high-quality personalized instruction. Rocketship educators build common expectations and culture through their teacher and leader effectiveness model to improve student performance by using personalized learning approaches in an extraordinarily high-need area. Their teaching and learning initiatives include instructional career pathways and support, educator development and supports for personalized learning, and tech-enhanced professional learning community. Rocketship's ongoing real-time support and coaching will include Vision of Excellence (VOE) that outlines the most

foundational teaching practices in the areas of instructional planning, classroom management, and culture necessary for success in teaching and leading.

(a)(iv) The applicant describes the approach that will be used to improve teachers' and principal's practices and effectiveness by using feedback provided by Rocketship's teacher and principal evaluation systems. Rocketship describes conversations of teachers and principals that will incorporate the Rocketship Top 10 Teacher Actions, outlining the skills that educators need to develop in order to effectively implement personalized learning to meet each student's academic needs. Assistant principals or principals conduct formal evaluations of each of the teachers that they supervise twice yearly. The evaluations are then made available to the leadership team to ensure that they understand the needs of the educators across the school. Their current teacher evaluation system will benefit from the input of educators as well as from feedback from focus groups to develop and implement a teacher and principal evaluation system that incorporates student growth. Student growth measures have been and will continue to be a critical part of their evaluations. A new principal evaluation system that is linked to core competencies for the principal role will also include student growth, and the improved teacher evaluation system will provide school leaders with improved data about their teachers. Both of these evaluations will be in place for the 2014-2015 school year and will be complemented by their CEO evaluation that will include student growth measures and the feedback of many stakeholders. Rocketship uses a series of dashboard metrics that includes student achievement and parental engagement to evaluate teachers.

(b)(i)(ii) The applicant thoroughly describes how all participating educators will have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant describes how Rocketship will provide more just-in-time data training rather than focusing data training primarily during the summer professional development period. The applicant will increase the amount of real-time professional development that teachers have at the times when they need it most to be able to analyze and incorporate data to adapt their content and instruction in response to students' academic needs. They will expand their use of formative data and provide additional supports for the tools that they are creating. The applicant will partner with a provider to provide hands-on, enhanced data training and development to their team throughout the year for both formative and summative purposes. Rocketship will develop improved tools for formative assessment delivery and analysis. The principals and teachers will decide what types of assessments and methods best meet their needs, while aligning with the Rocketship formative assessment strategy.

(b)(iii) The applicant clearly describes the professional development process in which the student mastery unit data system allows for the transparent sharing of data. The applicant describes the professional develop process that will be used for educators to be able to use the following tools and resources to accelerate student programs: online learning programs (*i-Ready* to inform literacy instruction); *Illuminate* (to provide educators with easy assessment items, and supports the scoring and data capture of assessments; educators can select standards-aligned assessment, create their own assessments, deliver them to students, and easily score them using this program); and the cloud-based *Schoolzilla* (data warehouse to collect and organize student data).

(c)(i) The applicant clearly describes the process in which all participating school leaders and school leadership teams will have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that will enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. The training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps are clearly described in the proposal. These college- and career-ready aligned digital resources will ensure that educators can effectively measure the progress of their students and modify their approach as needed. An online platform will allow trainings, collaboration, and sharing to occur both remotely and in flexible time. The applicant will use webinars, Google Hangouts, and online professional communities to enable increased capacity across the team to personalize learning for students. The applicant will develop school leader toolkit and trainings to be available at the time and place the leader needs it. The applicant provides information on the Rocketship Professional Growth Plan for Teachers (2013-2014) for evaluation and growth. Rocketship clearly describes the coaching and development cycle, personal Professional Growth Plans (PGPs), and the Rocketship Vision of Excellence (VOE) that are all designed to enhance their professional development program that increases educators' capacity. The applicant describes career pathways, which involves part-time teaching and part-time leadership roles to develop and retain quality high quality educators in the Rocketship schools.

(c)(ii) The applicant provides information on training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. The applicant describes a thorough plan for their initiative to create a tech-enhanced professional learning community that will ensure that all educators will have access to the tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready goals. Rocketship indicates that they will be successful because they will develop a knowledge sharing system and platform for accessing trainings and materials at the time and the place the teacher needs it. Rocketship's training materials have been on their coaches' and assistant principals' hard drives, on Google Drive, or in Box, but their development of a knowledge management and knowledge sharing system will ensure that training materials across all topics are easily organized and available online when teachers need support.

(d) The process of providing high-quality instruction from effective and highly effective teachers is clearly defined in this proposal. Rocketship will enable access to the most effective practices and teachers through tech-enhanced training methods. The applicant thoroughly describes the process of providing high-quality instruction from effective and highly effective teachers through the following methods: subject specialization, collaboration and team teaching, grade level lead position, and growth opportunities. The applicant also discusses Rocketship as a RTT-D Consortium that will enable an increase in the number of students who have effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The applicant aims to increase their annual retention of teachers to 85 percent within the network and 75 percent within the classroom, and maintain their annual school leader retention at or above 85 percent.

This criterion is scored in the high range because 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 applicant provides an exceptional plan for recruiting, selecting, onboarding (training emphasizing foundational knowledge in culture and classroom), developing, and evaluating educators and leaders, which is central to Rocketship's vision that all students graduate from grade five performing above grade level, so that they are prepared for success to complete high school, graduating college- and career-ready.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant clearly describes how the central office will be organized to provide support for the proposed project to facilitate personalized learning. The entire central office senior leadership team will be involved in providing leadership, support, and services to the participating principals and teachers, as part of this grant. The central office will be organized to ensure the commitment to prioritizing data-driven, standards-based instruction; implementing a coherent assessment strategy that is clear on purpose; reinvesting in professional development of teachers and leaders aligned to each specific school and teachers' needs; and provide supports and services to all participating schools. Rocketship's application includes nine LEAs, each of which is a single public charter school, supported by Rocketship Education, a single 501(c) 3. The applicant describes the central office and Regional Support Offices (RSO) that provide schools with operational sand instructional support, such as professional development and technology support, to assist school leaders in meeting goals by focusing on developing their staff and driving student achievement results. The applicant indicates that in California, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) charters seven of Rocketship's schools, while the Franklin-McKinley School District (FMSD) charters one Rocketship school. The Milwaukee City Council authorized Rocketship's charter that opened this year. The applicant, in practice, indicates that all Rocketship schools receive support from the same central office personnel. They also have Regional Support Offices (RSO) in San Jose and Milwaukee that provide the support the schools need because their central office is located in San Jose, California. This model enables Rocketship to support rapid growth of their charter school model while increasing student achievement and college readiness. The organization is clearly structured to provide support and services to all participating schools, and the practices of Rocketship align with the personalized learning strategy.

(b) The applicant demonstrates that it has practices, but not specific policies and rules, that facilitate personalized learning by providing school leadership teams in the participating schools. The applicant provides the organizational executive-level structure for Rocketship's central office. Rocketship believes in keeping decisions a about learning and teaching as close to the classroom and to the students as possible. Rocketship is structured so that all school personnel decisions are made by the leaders of each school. The Rocketship principals define the specific roles and responsibilities for the members of his or her team, including teachers. Rocketship principals receive support to formulate their school budget each year, based on per-pupil funding to maintain financial sustainability. The Rocketship calendar closely follows the district calendar of the surrounding schools to facilitate ease of scheduling for parents with students in multiple schools. Rocketship schools operate on an extended day schedule, which is vital to increasing their ability to improve student achievement. School principals maintain flexibility in scheduling professional development and data days at their schools. Principals adjust elements of the daily schedule, such as the bell schedule, as needed to meet their instructional vision for their schools. The applicant identifies leaders who will take on the responsibility for overseeing or implementing initiatives, the leaders who will provide an advisory role, and the positions for leaders that will be created as part of this grant proposal. The applicant identifies the position of Chief Programs Office and describes the responsibilities for this position (to implement this proposal for learning, teaching, and leading); the position of Director of Curriculum and Assessments; Director of Blended Innovation (to implement the first pillar of their approach, Personalized learning to meet each child's needs); Director of Talent Management (to oversee the second pillar of their approach, Excellent teachers and leaders); Grant Director, RTT-D (to lead the overall implementation of the grant, including leading program design, implementing the budget, and leading the ongoing stakeholder engagement process); Grant Reporting Manager, RTT-D (to coordinate the development of the Scopes of Work and the RTT-D budget with the U.S. Department of Education); Chief Executive Officer (CE) and Founder, Preston Smith (to oversee the vision for the third pillar of the grant proposal, Engaged parents essential to closing the achievement gap); Director of National Parent Engagement (to lead the implementation of engaging parents): Director of Schools (2 - experienced Rocketship teacher and school principal to support school principals in implementing key grant initiatives at each participating school); and Senior Vice President of Growth and Development (to secure all private and federal grant support and manage the team responsible for grant reporting and compliance for the RTT-D grant); Chief Business Officer (to provide fiscal oversight of the RTT-D grant).

(c) Rocketship describes the practices, but not the policies and rules, that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery through credit by exam. The CEO of Rocketship describes an optimal learning zone in which students maximize their ability to best learn. Therefore, the learning zone involves aspects of both the student's learning style and the learning space configuration. The applicant provides research by Lev Vygotsky, a social cognitive theorist and psychologist, who first identified the zone of proximal development as the space between what learner has already mastered, and what the student can achieve with proper educational support. The applicant clearly indicates that Rocketship's blended learning model provides opportunities for students to reach this optimal learning zone by rotating the type of instruction throughout the day to reach the students with all types of learning experiences. Rocketship demonstrates that both their educators and their online programs offer instruction designed to meet each student at their ideal learning zone. Rocketship's personalized learning model is designed to ensure that students are able to progress through the elementary school curriculum based on mastery rather than grade level in both the blended learning labs and the core classrooms (for pre-k/TK to 3rd grade and in the flexible classrooms (for 4th -5th grades).

(d) Rocketship describes the practices, but not the policies and rules, indicating that students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards by allowing multiple opportunities to meet mastery. Teachers at Rocketship use a variety of assessments, drawing on different modalities, to gauge student mastery of standards at different times during the year. These include quarterly NWEA: MAP and MPG benchmark assessments in Math and Reading. Pre-k and transitional kindergarten students also take NWEA exams, called the Children's Progress Academic Assessment (CPAA). Rocketship administers STEP

literacy assessments for all students five times a year covering topics such as reading fluency, accuracy, speed, use of expression, and comprehension. These can be given more often if teachers need further assessments of student progress. The CCSS-aligned state tests are taken in California near the end of the year, and Wisconsin in October, in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. Rocketship gives students informal formative assessments weekly and daily, to allow teachers to plan instruction and schedules designed to maximize the effectiveness of personalized learning. Rocketship will develop educators at all levels to integrate student-learning data. After a baseline assessment day early in the school year, Rocketship gives benchmark assessments every eight weeks to assess how a student is performing on every standard at grade level. Between benchmark assessments, each Rocketship school builds in at least two formative assessments: some schools administer formative assessments weekly, others do so on a biweekly schedule. These assessments allow for corrective instruction to bring students into alignment with the standards before the next benchmark assessment. If a teacher finds that 80 percent or higher of the students understood the standard, the teacher can pull out a small group of students who need extra instruction to teach to the standard in a corrective manner that will bring them up to standard. If less than 70 or 80 percent understood the standard, the teacher will again teach the material, but in a different manner to correct that lack of understanding.

(e) Rocketship describes the practices, but not the policies and rules, indicating that learning resources and instructional practices will be provided that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Rocketship indicates that most of their schools have a student population in which four to seven percent are students with disabilities (SWDs). Rocketship will use adaptive software to personalize their learning experience and their Response to Intervention (RtI) system to identify struggling students, including SWDs and provides referred students targeted, supplemental instruction. The applicant indicates that an integrated service delivery system aligns educational services for SWDs within existing structures rather than through special or segregated programs. Rocketship describes a high percentage of English Language Learner (ELL) population that benefit from adaptive software that aligns learning to their current level. The applicant indicates that the communications that go home with the students are translated into Spanish for parents, as well as Vietnamese at one school. Teachers are provided with professional development that uses the Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) to ensure that ELL students receive personalized learning programs based on their learning needs. Rocketship also focuses on individualized instruction that meets the needs of accelerated students. High-ability learners experience a positive impact on their academic achievement as well as social-emotional development when they are provided with opportunities for accelerated learning experiences. High-ability students experience differentiated in-class instruction as well as individualized online instruction. All Rocketship students, in their final year, complete an Extended Analysis Project prior to leaving for middle school, which addresses student needs and abilities, as well as the interests of all students in their personalized learning environment.

This criterion is scored in the high end of the middle range of points because Rocketship describes a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive practices, but not policies and rules, to facilitate personalized learning. The applicant clearly describes how the central office will be organized to provide support for the proposed project to facilitate personalized learning. The entire central office senior leadership team will be involved in providing leadership, support, and services to the participating principals and teachers, as part of this grant. The applicant describes the central office and Regional Support Offices (RSO) that provide schools with operational sand instructional support, such as professional development and technology support, to assist school leaders in meeting goals by focusing on developing their staff and driving student achievement results. The applicant did not provide all of the components of a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and rules.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Rocketship describes the LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, will have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the proposed project. Rocketship provides laptops for all educators, providing instant access within each classroom to student assessments, behavioral and attendance reports, schedules, and their own Professional Growth Plan (PGP). All schools have wireless Internet access and a cloud-based computing system. The applicant indicates that teachers can log in from any Internet connection, either at school or out-of-school, with either their laptops or their handheld devices. Rocketship provides professional development supporting all software, the knowledge management platform, and student-based assessments and data usage. The Rocketship model features online learning programs (OLPs), which provide data the teachers can immediately use for their classroom planning. All Rocketship students have full access to content, tools, and other learning resources. Students are able to read with *iReady for Reading* and mathematics with programs, such as *S.T. Math* and *iReady for Math*. The applicant clearly describes Rocketship's online learning programs and curriculum. The applicant effectively describes indicates that Cloud-based computing is used in classrooms, usually with portable Chromebooks, and Learning Lab settings where desktops are used. As part of their personalized learning Model, Rocketship will launch a Learning Management System (LMS) to support student ownership of learning. The applicant clearly indicates that parents have access to student-level dashboards that share information about their child's progress in the blended learning environment. Rocketship parents receive regular reports on student behavior and assessments. Monthly parent meetings are used to engage parents in school activities and student achievement, as well as to provide information about low-cost Internet service plans. The proposed RTT-D plan will increase independent student learning with increased student and family access to technology-enabled supports during out-of-school time. Families will have access to Rocketship computer labs during non-school hours. Rocketship will offer opportunities to families to increase Internet connectivity in their homes, including low-cost-plan offers from Internet providers, a Wi-Fi hotspot directory in Rocketship neighborhoods, and smartphone access to Rocketship data, where possible.

(b) Rocketship effectively describes the LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which will be provided through a range of strategies. Rocketship educators receive between 250 and 300 hours of professional development annually, much of this time devoted to effectively interpreting data and using assessment results to inform instructional

planning for their classes and for individual students. Educators have technology supports from the RSO and central office. Students are supported in their usage of OLPs in class by Instructional Learning Specialists (ILSs) who assist students who need either content or operational assistance. Parents regularly receive written guides, translated if needed, to support their understanding of student data, but not technical support on how to use technology resources.

(c) Rocketship describes the LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. The applicant clearly indicates that parents and students currently can access data that provides information about daily and weekly progress, assessment performance, and progress to college and career readiness (as measured by summative state test results). the applicant indicates that through the Rocketship data portal, parents can monitor students' academic progress and behavioral/class participation results. The applicant proposed to make all of this data available to parents and students in an open data format so they can use information in all programs.

(d) Rocketship effectively demonstrates the LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by ensuring that schools use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data. Rocketship uses *Schoolzilla* as the primary data warehouse to collect inputs from Powerschool, NWEA, *Illuminate*, and assessments. It can be used to generate a variety of reports for data analysis. *Schoolzilla* helps to link data systems across the organization and pull reporting data from many different data systems. Rocketship schools in California already use the interoperability of their data systems to regularly report to the California Department of Education and other local, state, and federal agencies that require and collect school level data. In Wisconsin, Rocketship schools use interoperability to participate in the WISE system, as well as for submitting data to local, state, and federal agencies.

This criterion is scored in the middle range of points because the applicant has provided most of the components a high-quality plan, but did not indicate who is responsible or provide a timeline, to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure to support personalized learning that will provide every student and educator with the support and resources that they need. The applicant did not provide a clear plan for parents to be able to receive technical support on all technology devices.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**13**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide clear timelines or clear activities for the continuous improvement process. The applicant indicates that Rocketship will make improvements to their personalized learning approach based on many inputs including the following: student data feedback from key stakeholders including principals, teachers, students, parents and community partners; educational research; and personalized learning programs across the country. The applicant provides information on using data and feedback to make significant changes to their model during the past few years. The applicant demonstrates their ability to achieve results with high-need students in part because of their commitment to critical analysis and quick response as they work to improve their approach. The title of Rocketship's proposal, "Rethinking Elementary School from the Ground Up," demonstrates and reflects the ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.

Rocketship provides continuous improvement and innovation in their personalized model through the following methods: continuous improvement (the use of frequent assessments, including internal benchmark assessments; NWEA MAP, MPG, and CPAA; and state standardized tests; the executive team monitors a set of academic metrics every six weeks to ensure focus on achievement and accountability, especially for their high-need students); and innovation to their model (flexible organization with the ability and commitment to innovate and Rethink Elementary School from the Ground Up through four areas of innovation for personalized learning: develop an explicitly K-5 developmental trajectory; develop grade level cohorts to enhance grouping and collaboration; align online learning programs and tutoring with traditional instruction; and redesign teaching and learning programs to build a stronger professional growth trajectory).

Rocketship has proposed a plan to monitor the RTT-D grant with a continuous improvement management plan. Rocketship will dedicate senior leadership time to implementation, as well as form oversight and advisory committees, and have three full-time employees dedicated to vision and development, implementation, and continuous improvement. These three employees will be a Grant Director to manage the grant's effective implementation and continuous improvement process, a Grant Finance Manager, and a Grant Reporting Manager. The applicant thoroughly describes the responsibilities for each of these positions: Senior Leadership; Oversight Committee; Advisory Team; Grant Director, RTT-D; Grant Reporting Manger, RTT-D; and Grant Finance Manager, RTT-D.

Rocketship will monitor and measure performance measures and leading indicators of grant goals to determine the quality of RTT-D investments and make these available to all stakeholders. The applicant clearly indicates that the Grant Manager, the Grant Reporting Manager, and the Grant Finance Manager will work as a team to monitor and measure the quality of the RTT-D investments and share that information, with full transparency, with the stakeholders. The involvement of senior staff with the Oversight Committee and the perspectives of the Advisory Team will provide internal and external perspectives. Rocketship will monitor yearly and quarterly goals and performance measures throughout the grant period and performance measures will be reviewed quarterly by the Oversight Committee, the Advisory Team, and the Grant Director to ensure that they reflect current school objectives. Student achievement will be measured by the capacity of schools, grades and students to meet or exceed targeted performance measures. The applicant indicates that this process will continually identify areas for improvement or opportunities for innovation. The internal management system will contain an updates page for RTT-D. The

Grant Manager will post updates to allow all staff to access and understand progress to date. The Grant Manager will develop a Rocketship RTT-D section of their public website, which will include a statement of progress toward meeting annual goals, action plans for continuous improvement, and examples of successful practices.

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the high range because the District has proposed most of the components of a high-quality plan (key goals, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan), but did not provide clear timelines or clear activities for the continuous improvement process. The applicant describes how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top-District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship documents a description of the existing meetings in which RTT-D will be discussed and aligns meetings, participants, reports to be discussed, and the focus of the meeting. The existing meetings include: grade-level meeting (biweekly); principal cohort and assistant principal cohort meetings (biweekly - two hours); regional school leadership team (monthly); regional level data analysis meetings (monthly); central office meetings/oversight committee (weekly eStaff updates, 2-3 hours/monthly; advisory team meetings (quarterly). However, components of the high-quality plan are not clear, such as a timeline for the ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

The applicant indicates that participants from all areas of the organization will be able to continuously assess and monitor needs, share best practices, provide feedback, participate in decision-making, and assist in making necessary adjustments to the RTT-D initiatives. The applicant proposes to regularly update parents and students on the RTT-D initiatives to keep them engaged. The applicant proposes to use student focus groups with their flexible classroom model to gauge student feedback. The applicant proposes to communicate with parents through school-wide events, such as Back to School Night, monthly parent meetings, in-home visits by teachers, and newsletters or informational updates sent home with students. The applicant proposes to use take-home surveys to enable parents to give feedback on the progress of the project. The applicant proposes to involve parents as members of the Advisory Team to strategize on how best to disseminate knowledge.

Rocketship proposes to externally use the RTT-D website, annual reports, and system-level reporting documents to share aggregated student performance data and RTT-D progress reports. Semi-annual progress updates will be shared with stakeholders on the dedicated RTT-D website.

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the high range of points because the applicant demonstrates that participants from all areas of the organization will be able to continuously assess and monitor needs and provide feedback, but several components of a high-quality plan, such as the timeline and the parties responsible for implementing the activities are not described in the proposal.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship thoroughly describes ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant has posted the student performance measures that are going to be used to monitor the success in the project.

(a)(b)(c) The applicant clearly aligns each performance measure description, performance measure, rationale for selecting the measure, how the measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information; and how Rocketship will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. Rocketship clearly describes how each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action. Rocketship provides information on how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. The applicant will measure the percentage of students achieving at least 1.5 years of growth between the beginning and end of the school year. The growth will be measured using the NWEA-MAP assessment for 2nd and 3rd grade, NWEA-MPG assessment for kindergarten and 1st grade and STEP for PreK/TK. This measure will be taken in three areas: K-3 Mathematics; K-3 Reading; and PreK/TK Literacy.

The applicant indicates that the NWEA-MAP/MPG, and STEP are nationally administered, norm referenced tests used to judge student achievement and growth compared to a nationally representative sample. The tests are administered three times a year allowing formative assessment of student performance at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. The tests are computerized and adaptive, aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and correlated with CST results. Throughout the year teachers and leaders will adapt instruction for students who are not making sufficient progress. Rocketship will track the progress of student growth three times a year to ensure adequate progress is being made. With analysis during the school year, adjustments will be made in instruction and human capital decisions more frequently, maximizing performance measure success. If Rocketship sees that NWEA-MAP/MPG and STEP are insufficient or too infrequent to adequately measure growth, they will consider other measures.

Rocketship provides the following required number (12-14) of written performance measures that will be used in the proposed project:
For all students in all grades:

a. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal are a highly effective teacher and a highly effective principal, as defined in this notice; and

b. The number and percentage of participating students whose teacher of record and principal are an effective teacher and an effective principal, as defined in

this notice.

For students in grades Pre-K-3rd grade:

a. The percentage of students who achieve 1.5 years or greater in these three areas:

- PreK-TK literacy;

- K-3 reading;

- K-3 mathematics; and

b. The percentage of students rated as adhering to Rocketship core values of empathy, respect, responsibility, and persistence (the data for baseline will start being collected in 2013-2014). The applicant clearly provides the following: performance measure description (age-appropriate non-cognitive indicator of growth); performance measure (total percentage of students rated as demonstrating Rocketship core values of empathy, respect, responsibility, and persistence based on a rubric describing behaviors that align with the core values; this rubric will be developed and shared with teachers and students for a common understanding of expectations); rational for selecting measure (adherence to and demonstration of these core values is a leading indicator of emotional maturity and character development that is critical for future success); how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information (students are evaluated by educators throughout the school year based on their interactions both inside and outside the classroom environment; a modification in the socio-emotional supports provided to students will be provided to students who are not demonstrating adherence to core values will be considered); and how Rocketship will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress (Rocketship will use behavior monitoring already in place to gauge where students are and what values need reinforcement through classroom programs and parent information will be sent home; if this measure proves insufficient, Rocketship will consider other non-cognitive indicators).

For students in grades 4th-8rd grade:

a. The number and percentage of participating students who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator, as defined in this notice (percentage of 4th and 5th grade students with a yearly attendance rate of 96 percent or higher; percentage of 4th - 5th grade students ending the year scoring at or above the 75th percentile measured by NWEA MAP, as measured in 4th-5th mathematics and 4th - 5th reading):

- 4th-5th yearly attendance;

- 4th-5th reading;

- 4th-5th mathematics; and

b. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who have achieved 1.5 years of growth in reading and mathematics as measured on the NWEA-MAP:

- 4th-5th reading;

- 4th-5th mathematics; and

c. The percentage of students rated as adhering to Rocketship core values of empathy, respect, responsibility, and persistence (the data for baseline will start being collected in 2013-2014). The applicant clearly provides the following: performance measure description (age-appropriate non-cognitive indicator of growth); performance measure (total percentage of students rated as demonstrating Rocketship core values of empathy, respect, responsibility, and persistence based on a rubric describing behaviors that align with the core values; this rubric will be developed and shared with teachers and students for a common understanding of expectations); rational for selecting measure (adherence to and demonstration of these core values is a leading indicator of emotional maturity and character development that is critical for future success); how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information (students are evaluated by educators throughout the school year based on their interactions both inside and outside the classroom environment; a modification in the socio-emotional supports provided to students will be provided to students who are not demonstrating adherence to core values will be considered); and how Rocketship will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress (Rocketship will use behavior monitoring already in place to gauge where students are and what values need reinforcement through classroom programs and parent information will be sent home; if this measure proves insufficient, Rocketship will consider other non-cognitive indicators).

d. The percentage of 5th grade students passing the California State fitness test (the test designated for this purposed by the California State Board of Education is the Fitnessgram, developed by the Cooper Institute).

This criterion is scored in the high range because the applicant describes ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for the required performance measures and the applicant-proposed performance measures.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship describes a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top - District funded activities that evaluates investments in the following three key areas: improving the personalized learning model; supporting excellent teachers and leaders; and enabling deeper parent engagement. The applicant indicates that investments in data systems and technology are included in these three key areas. The applicant describes an evaluation management plan and aligns RTT-D initiatives, activities, timeline, deliverables, and person(s) responsible.

Rocketship will follow an evaluation process to assess how the goals and activities are implemented, review the activities to reflect the rationale for using them, and stay accountable to their timeline and deliverables through strong, well-defined leadership responsibilities. An external evaluation begins in 2013-2014 to track the progress of Rocketship students toward college after they graduate from Rocketship's 5th grade. This external evaluation, funded through support from the Charter Schools Program Grant for Replication and Expansion, complements the evaluation process described in this proposal, because the students who are tracked in this evaluation will benefit from the grant investments that began in spring 2013-2014.

The applicant indicates that quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to measure performance objectives and the quality of programs and services in the investments related to the six initiatives: (1) innovating to improve our blended learning model; (2) accelerating student learning through increased student family access to technology-enabled supports during out-of-school time; (3) creating robust instructional career pathways; (4) developing educators at all levels to effectively implement the learning model; (5) building a tech-enhanced professional learning community; (6) and supporting family engagement and leadership to enable our students to succeed to and through college. Formative data will be collected on an ongoing basis to inform decision-making and guide the continuous improvement process and summative data will focus on collecting information related to the impact of the program for annual performance reporting to our stakeholders.

The Rocketship data warehouse will collect student-level data, such as attendance, academic growth indicators, and grade level mastery of the Common Core State Standards, reflecting college and career readiness. The applicant indicates that survey instruments and observation measures will be developed to measure teacher efficacy, student engagement, parent satisfaction, professional development effectiveness, and technology use.

The applicant clearly describes the approach to continuously improve its plans. The applicant indicates that implementation research and performance feedback will be provided through: the collection and analysis of information about the key elements and approach; periodic assessment of progress-toward achieving outcomes; and data collection and analysis of student achievement and teacher effectiveness. The project evaluation will include bi-annual formal site visits by the RTT-D Grant Director and/or members of the Oversight Committee to observe teachers, classroom procedures, and professional development activities. The applicant will use surveys, focus groups, observation of student performance, document reviews, and the Advisory Team feedback to complete the qualitative evaluation of the RTT-D investments.

This criterion is scored in the high range because the applicant provides a high-quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship proposes a detailed budget narrative and tables for the proposed project. The budget is sufficient to support the development and the implementation of the applicant's proposal. The applicant provides the rationale for the investments and priorities, including a description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal.

(a) The budget narrative and the tables clearly identify all of the funds identified for the application, including $21,056,100 from RTT-D for funds to support the project and $1,056,100 (from other sources). The applicant did not identify the sources of this $1,056,100.

(b) The proposed budget is comprehensive and reasonable to support the development and the implementation of the applicant's proposal as evident in a specific breakdown for personnel ($9,905,885), fringe benefits ($2,226,924), travel ($150,650) equipment ($3,409,000), supplies ($170,000), contractual ($3,005,913), training stipends (123,177), and indirect costs ($1,008,451). The salaries associated with the additional hiring of employees and personnel to implement the grant are justified and appropriate. The general supplies, instructional materials are minimal and reasonable for successful implementation. The applicant provides a thorough alignment of grant funds, requested from RTT-D, to support each of the following areas to support the development of the applicant's proposal: innovate to improve personalized learning model $4,000,852); increase access to technology enabled supports during out-of-school time ($2,226,765); instructional career pathways and support ($4,107,925); educator development and supports for personalized learning $4,616,512); tech-enhanced professional learning community ($1,810,043); community partnerships to support family engagement ($1,619,814); and RTT-D implementation and grant management ($1,618,089); for a total of $20,000,000 grant funds requested from RTT-D.

(c)(i) The applicant provides a clear rationale for investments and priorities including a description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal. The applicant indicates that Rocketship investments align with the current organizational priorities and proposed RTT-D initiatives. Each of the projects for which the applicant is requesting funding clearly align with Rocketship's vision for personalized learning. The applicant indicates that this vision will be accomplished by improving the personalized learning model; supporting excellent teachers and leaders; and enabling deeper parent engagement.

(c)(ii) The applicant indicates that the budget for the RTT-D proposal will fund 41 percent one-time investments and 59 percent ongoing operational costs during the grant period, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. Included in one-time costs are the following: the implementation of the Learning Management System; the conversion of additional classrooms in each of the schools to accommodate the innovative flexible model and best practices from the current 4th and 5th grade classrooms; implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluations and the software platform to support easy access to performance management tools; data on professional development which will be reduced through the grant; technology upgrades including bandwidth and videoconferencing installation, and nearly all of the grant management support. The applicant indicates that pilots, such as one-to-one devices to support student ratio in 3rd through 5th grade; extended lab access and home technology compatibility support; increased career pathway training and support; and expanded community partnerships are also included in one-time costs.

Overall, Rocketship identifies all of the funds that will support the project. The applicant provides the rationale for the investments and priorities, including a description of all of the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal. The applicant indicates that the work of this proposal is central to their personalized learning model, not a supplement. The applicant indicates that their personalized learning model is already embedded into their existing school financial model. The applicant provides a thorough alignment of grant funds, requested from RTT-D, to support each of the following areas to support the development of the applicant's proposal: innovate to improve personalized learning model $4,000,852); increase access to technology enabled supports during out-of-school time ($2,226,765); instructional career pathways and support ($4,107,925); educator development and supports for personalized learning $4,616,512); tech-enhanced professional learning community ($1,810,043); community partnerships to support family engagement ($1,619,814); and RTT-D implementation and grant management ($1,618,089); for a total of $20,000,000 grant funds requested from RTT-D. However, the applicant did not identify the sources of $1,056,100 (from other sources). Therefore, this criterion is scored in the high range of points.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly aligns the elements of the plan for sustainability with a description of the high-quality plan: (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan).

Key goal: The applicant will sustain the goals of the RTT-D initiatives after the term of the grant, by modifying the investments based on the effectiveness of their past investments with limited or no philanthropic funding.

Activities & rationale: The Oversight Committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the investments made through the grant based on their performance measures, as well as the input of the Advisory Team.

Timeline: The plan for sustainability includes a continuous improvement cycle, as well as a plan in which the Advisory Team will partner with the Finance Team throughout the final year of the grant to determine the investments needed in the future.

Deliverables: The Oversight Committee will report out early spring 2017 on the elements of the projects to be continued after the life of the grant and work with the Finance Team to develop a budget and funding sources to support those continued investments.

Responsible parties: The Grant Director, as the leader of the Oversight Committee, will be responsible for coordinating the Oversight Committee and Finance Team, as well as gaining input from the Advisory Team.

Rocketship strongly indicates that growth in enrollment and per pupil funding will drive project sustainability. The applicant clearly indicates that each Rocketship school is designed to operate on the per pupil funding that it receives from local, state, and federal sources once it reaches full enrollment. The applicant indicates that each school also contributes 15 percent of the per-pupil funding that it receives to support the ongoing operations of the national and regional offices. The applicant indicates, that as the organization is scaling up, their national and regional offices must fundraise in order to provide full levels of support to their schools, but the schools will operate on public funding alone once they achieve full enrollment in their third year of operation. The applicant indicates that much of the funding for the work in their RTT-D proposal will support staff at their national and regional offices to enhance and extend their personalized learning model and supports so that teachers and principals can focus on providing the participating students with an excellent personalized education. The applicant clearly indicates that as their enrollment grows in both of the participating schools, as well as new Rocketship schools, the external funds, such as the RTT-District funding, will no longer be needed because schools will be able to fully fund the support provided by the central office staff.

The applicant demonstrates that their continuous improvement cycle and performance measures will inform the future investments needed in their Race to the Top initiatives. The applicant will monitor and evaluate progress against performance measures continually during the grant period. Rocketship will implement changes necessary during the proposed project to ensure that they are learning from their past investments and outcomes. The Oversight Committee, during the 2016-2017 school year, will dedicate a portion of its meeting time to discussing the elements of the grant-funded initiatives that should continue, and identifying the sources of funds to support those initiatives. Input will be gathered from the Advisory Team and outcomes on the performance measures will be assessed before making any decisions about future investments.

This criterion is scored in the high range of points because the applicant describes a high-quality plan for sustainability (key goal, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan). However, the applicant did not describe the extent to which there is support from state and local government leaders to sustain the project's goals after the term of the grant. The key goal of the plan for sustainability is to sustain the goals of the RTT-D initiative after the term of the grant, by modifying the investments based on the effectiveness of their past investments with limited or no philanthropic funding. The Oversight Committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the

investments made through the grant based on their performance measures, as well as the input of the Advisory Team. The plan for sustainability includes a continuous improvement cycle, as well as a plan in which the Advisory Team will partner with the Finance Team throughout the final year of the grant to determine the investments needed in the future. The Oversight Committee will report out early spring 2017 on the elements of the projects to be continued after the life of the grant and work with the Finance Team to develop a budget and funding sources to support those continued investments. The Grant Director, as the leader of the Oversight Committee, will be responsible for coordinating the Oversight Committee and Finance Team, as well as gaining input from the Advisory Team.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship demonstrates a strong commitment to address the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students and families who live in both San Jose, California and Milwaukee, Wisconsin by providing supports through community partnerships. The applicant provides clear focus on engaging and empowering parents to advocate for more and improved learning activities for their children.

(1) The applicant provides a clear description of the partnership that it has formed with organizations, to support the plan described in Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments, to build an extensive school to career component of this project and for the after school program. Rocketship will strengthen and expand its partnership with People Acting in Community Together (PACT) in order to develop leadership among San Jose parents; and to create a toolkit and resources that can be used to launch similar parent engagement strategies and/or partnerships in other communities in which Rocketship operates. The applicant describes the following community organizations that Rocketship currently partners with to address the socio-emotional and behavioral needs of their students: after-school programs (YMCA); early learning programs (FIRST 5); and social service providers (The Healthy Living Initiative; The Healthy Communities Initiative).

(2) The applicant clearly identifies population-level desired results for students in the targeted schools that align with and support the applicant's Race to the Top-District proposal, which include parent leadership, parent engagement, community service, school attendance, and core values. The applicant aligns the community partnership desired results with RTT-D desired outcomes: 75 percent of students will demonstrate 1.5 years of growth in mathematics; 75 percent of students will demonstrate 1.5 years of growth in reading/literacy; 90 percent of graduates matriculate to college; and 70 percent of matriculants graduate from college.

(3)(a)(b) The applicant clearly describes how the partnership will track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level in the school to career cluster. The National Director of Parent Leadership will develop an accessible, school-by-school and summary dashboard to track the results of the data measures and report this data on the dashboard to the Oversight Committee quarterly. The Rocketship staff members and community partners can use the aggregate and student-level academic and non-academic data to identify district-wide trends and individual student data.

(3)(c) Rocketship will develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students. Rocketship will focus on expanding family support and engagement with PACT and provide a needs assessment of its participating schools to better understand the root causes that limit family engagement. The applicant will review best practices from schools with successful community partnership pilot programs. Campuses that exhibit characteristics likely to support the successful implementation of programming will pilot new partnerships. The applicant will create an asset map of the community partnership resources available in a region to match service providers to the need of a newly opened Rocketship campus that was not open at the time of this grant period.

(4) The applicant clearly describes how the partnership will improve results over time. Rocketship will continuously monitor the community partnership results, in order to continuously improve family engagement over time. The National Director of Parent Leadership will develop a school-by-school and summary dashboard to track the results of data measures. If the Oversight Committee sees leading indicators indicating that family engagement and academic results are not being positively impacted by this proposed project, the applicant will quickly identify the root cause of that problem and make a change.

(5)(a)(b) The district describes how the partnership will build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of participating students. As part of the partnership with PACT, the capacity of school staff to support parent engagement will be developed with a toolkit and resources to expand and scale parent engagement. Rocketship will hire a Regional Manager of Parent Engagement for each region, who will work closely with the principal at each school to develop this capacity. School principals will learn from PACT about how to access, identify, and inventory the needs of participating students and families.

(5)(c)(d)(e) The applicant will build a capacity in participating schools to create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports and engage parents and families, and to assess progress in implementing the plan. Rocketship will hire a Regional Manager of Parent Engagement for each region, who will work closely with the principal at each schools to assist the principal in developing the capacity to select, implement, and evaluate community partnership supports and engage parents and families around these supports. Rocketship will also work with partners to host parent/student and teacher focus groups at least two times a year to identify aspects of the partnership that are working and those that need to be improved.

(6) The applicant provides a clear plan to identify its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describes the desired results for students. Rocketship's social, emotional, and behavioral performance measures support the parent engagement and college matriculation goals

for students. The applicant provides an overview of Community Partnership performance measures and the desired results. The applicant aligns the student population to the assessment and/or targeted result.

Rocketship provides a comprehensive description of the coherent and sustainable partnerships that it has formed with public organizations, to support the plan described in Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments, to build an extensive school to career component of this project and for the after school program. Therefore, this Competitive Preference Priority is scored in the very high range.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship comprehensively addresses how it will build on the four core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching.

1. The applicant provides clear information on how the district will adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. The applicant clearly indicates that both California and Wisconsin have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The applicant effectively demonstrates that Rocketship's instructional approach aligns to these standards and strives for equity by proving a rigorous curriculum for all students, a focus on formative assessment, and a culture of high expectations and support. The applicant indicates that their reform vision will build on the implementation of their core curriculum, which is supported by the use of diagnostic, formative, benchmark, and summative assessments aligned to the standards. The applicant indicates that their primary CCSS-aligned assessments include NWEA-assessments including CPAA, MAP, and MPG; California and Wisconsin Standards Tests; and STEP Literacy. They also use a progress monitoring system called AIMSWEB, which tests foundational academic skill levels against national norms. The applicant indicates that many schools with fully-developed Response to Intervention (RtI) frameworks use AIMSWEB, and these progress monitoring components improve teachers' ability to make adjustments in teaching and identify students for intervention based on this data. The applicant effectively indicates that these standards and assessments prepare students with the knowledge and skills that set them on a clear path to success in college and the workplace.

2. The applicant clearly describes how the district will build data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction. The applicant effectively indicates that student data are collected, organized, and accessed through *Schoolzilla,* Rocketship's data warehouse system. The applicant clearly indicates that this system features toolkits designed to make student data easy for educators to use by helping them to access data to immediately identify the net steps in student learning. The applicant demonstrates that *Schoolzilla* is useful in providing the big picture, as well as student-level strand-level data, and growth and value added data based on the NWEA assessments. Rocketship uses interoperable data systems, which allow for the exporting of data in open format for teachers, students and parents. The applicant clearly indicates that Rocketship participates in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADs) and Wisconsin Information System for Education (WISE) data system, which allow for the receiving and matching of student-level preschool-through-12th grade and higher education data.

3. The applicant clearly demonstrates how the district will recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. The applicant clearly describes their reform vision that involves recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining the best teachers to ensure that their students attain a world-class, college- and career-ready education. The applicant effectively describes the roles of teachers and leaders by creating instructional pathways (expanding the number of highly effective teachers and principals by creating an individualized approach to evaluating and retaining instructional team members and leaders); developing educators at all levels to effectively implement the learning model (invest in training so that educators are effective in a non-traditional teaching environment and can adapt and personalize instruction based on data about student learning and student needs); and building a tech-enhanced professional learning community (develop process and tools to support the collaboration and dissemination of effective instructional practices for personalized learning). The applicant indicates that Rocketship offers a leadership fellows program, including coaching and formal professional development opportunities. Each Rocketship school staff includes two assistant principals to manage and support two grade levels, with the principal supervising the remaining two grade levels. Administrators spend a significant proportion of their days coaching teachers and providing feedback. The applicant indicates that all teachers spend several weeks together before school starts to build a collaborative culture of trust, to create a strong school culture, and to gain alignment with school and grade level goals.

4. The applicant clearly demonstrates how it will turn around the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant indicates that Rocketship does not have any schools that meet the definition of "low-performing" or "lowest-performing" schools. The applicant indicates that the Rocketship schools are located in communities that include many schools that qualify as "low-performing." The applicant indicates that by providing high-quality schools in these high-need areas, Rocketship serves a large number of students who would otherwise attend low-performing schools.

The applicant thoroughly articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that provides a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student

achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. The applicant, over the past six years, has achieved outstanding results for students while growing student enrollment at over 20 percent annually. The applicant thoroughly describes their vision as Rethinking Elementary School from the Ground Up, where educators make data-based decisions to provide students personalized instructional experiences that will provide greater student independence and ownership for their learning over time. The applicant effectively indicates that this reform vision is accomplished with personalized learning to meet each child's needs; excellent teachers and leaders; and engaged parents who are essential to closing the achievement gap. The applicant clearly describes the following key initiatives to personalized learning to meet each child's needs and interests: innovate to improve a blended learning model (ongoing innovations to the pre-k through 3rd grade models and invest in continued development of the flexible classroom model in the 4th and 5th grades); and accelerate independent student learning through increased student and family access to technology-enabled supports during out-of-school time (increase access and compatibility for students and families to take ownership and make independent learning progress during non-school time).

The applicant articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that effectively describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. The applicant effectively describes Rocketship's personalized learning model that combines individualized practice time with deep learning experiences in core subjects. In pre-kindergarten or transitional kindergarten, students attend school in a single classroom and participate in small-group instruction, spend time in the learning lab working on Online Learning Programs (OLPs), and participate in independent center activities. In kindergarten through 3rd grade, students participate in a targeted extended block daily schedule with a 200 minute block of English, language arts, and social studies; a 100 minute block of math and science; and 100 minutes in the learning lab. Students also participate in an enrichment block in which they have the opportunity to deepen learning in other areas including art, music, dance, and physical education. Teachers lead instructional blocks based on their areas of specialization. The applicant effectively describes the personalized learning model in grades four and five, in which students learn in a grade-level cohort. Students share two to three teachers and one paraprofessional who provides tutoring and targeted individualized support to students. This model is adapted to student learning needs to that students can engage in a wide variety of learning opportunities, including project-based learning, working in multiple groups to build self-direction and independence to prepare for middle school. The applicant thoroughly describes the personalized learning approach by grade level, aligning grade level instructional model (PreK/TK in-classroom rational model; K-3rd enhanced rational model; and 4th-5th flexible model), staffing, and rationale for the learning approach.

Rocketship proposes to implement a three-part approach to personalized learning across the participating LEAs, utilizing the following strategies: Year 1 - improve the blended learning model by hiring a Director of Blended Learning and Innovation, who will be a Manager of Learning Management System (LMS) Content and identify contractors to develop a scheduling solution; Year 2: invest in curriculum, materials, and tools to support the implementation of the grades four and five flexible model and expand the flexible model to an additional grade (3rd grade) for three of the nine participating schools; and review literature on developmentally appropriate blended learning models to determine how to best expand practices from the flexible model to other grades; assess results from the pilots in kindergarten through 3rd grade completed during school year 2012-2013; and make recommendations to the RTT-D Oversight Committee. To choose the specific participating schools for implementation in 2014-2015, the Director of Blended Learning will develop a rating tool to assess the readiness of participating schools to implement the model in a new grade. In Year 3, the contractor will complete the work of scheduling and an additional flexible classroom will be implemented in three additional participating schools. In Year 4, the applicant will implement their last three new flexible classrooms. All participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.

The applicant provides a thorough logic model for achieving impact by aligning current situation, theory of action (personalized learning; excellent teachers and leaders; and engaged parents), intended impact (achieve 1.5 years of student progress annually; close the achievement gap in ELA and math; 90% of Rocketship students will complete high school; 90% of graduating Rocketship students will matriculate to college; 70% of college enrolling Rocketship students will obtain a postsecondary degree; 100% of students will have an effective teacher and principal and 93% will have a highly effective teacher and principal; and 70% of parents/guardians will be deeply engaged in their school community), theory of change, and the ultimate goal (By Rethinking Elementary School from the Ground Up, they will close the achievement gap in their lifetime). The applicant provides an effective implementation roadmap: scaling up across initiatives, aligning activities, timeline, and personnel responsible.

In summary, Rocketship's proposal is focused on improving their personalized learning model, supporting excellent teachers and leaders, and enabling deeper parent engagement. Rocketship will maximize the benefit of personalized learning environments as they "Rethink Elementary School from the Ground Up." The applicant indicates that Rocketship will continue to build a stronger college-going culture for their students through their innovative, improved blended learning model that personalizes instruction for all students. Rocketship will support excellent teachers and leaders through professional development, data training, technology-enabled professional learning communities, and clear career pathways to increase teacher capacity.

Therefore, Rocketship has met Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments.

Total	210	192

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0129CA-2 for Rocketship Education - Lead: Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. For example, this program of work builds upon the four core educational assurance areas that Rocketship has already engaged in, such as the alignment of Rocketship educations instruction and assessments with the common core state standards, the use of student data and data systems with the Schoolzilla platform and tri-annual assessments, and the development of dashboard metrics to evaluate and support teaching. Rocketship's focus on great teachers and leaders has been focused on both hiring excellent candidates and creating professional learning opportunities.

As the project builds on these core assurance areas, this proposal seeks to provide additional training for teachers to learn and effectively adapt to students' needs within a personalized learning environment. This is a key aspect for their vision of an effective teacher. Moreover, this proposal seeks to increase the use of student data to support learning through the use of a learning management system aimed at incorporating online learning platforms. Finally, Rocketship seeks to further their standards-aligned curricula and assessments by incorporating formative assessements into their learning management system and increasing the standards-aligned curricular options that are online for their students.

In addition, through the approach to blended learning, supporting teachers and garnering more parental engagement, the proposal suggests that there is a credible approach to accelerating student achievement. For example, students in classroom time is dedicated to individual students' skill building time based on where they need help, such as math or literacy. The proposal states that this dedicated time enables students to engage in computer-based work, independent reading or small group learning activities to ensure that the students skills are at grade level. In the upper grades, it is worth noting, time is built in for students to engage in an array of individual learning opportunities that are intended to address students' needs, build self-direction and prepare students for middle school. These two examples suggest that the learning arrangments seek to accelerate student learning for all students to grade-level competencies and above.

Moreover, the school model was developed to address the conditions of low performing schools within specific communities. While the proposal makes it clear that Rocketship does not engage in school turnaround or school transformation efforts, it is fair to say that based on the demographic that the school is serving and comparing their students' academic performance with nearby schools, the LEA is addressing the fourth core educational assurance area.

The proposal also sufficiently describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers. For example, the proposal provides a table that includes the instructional model for different grade bands, what staffing would be provided and the rationale for carrying out the instructional model. In addition, the proposal provides a narrative description of the classroom learning environment for the K-3 and 4-5 grade bands. For example, the proposal notes how long the learning blocks will be, what content will be covered, what activities students will engage in and how the teachers will support the students during the learning block.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents a program that supports high quality LEA-level and school level implementation. For example, the proposal states that all Rocketship schools and students will participate in the proposed work. The schools are listed in a table within the proposal.

The table includes the number of students as well as the percentage of these students that are identified as high needs as well as coming from low income families. The proposal makes clear that all of the grade level educators will participate in this program since all of the students will participate.

In addition, the proposal describes the specific approach by which schools will be chosen for participation in the expansion

or scale up of this work. Specifically, the proposal states that the Director of Blended Learning will use a rating tool to assess the readiness of participating schools and make recommendations to the oversight committee. The proposal also states how the program intends to increase the access of students and parents to content on the Learning Management System and a school computer laboratory.

However, it is worth noting that the proposal does not describe the process through which the schools were selected. While the initial group of schools was listed--which is all of the Rocketship schools--that will participate in this project, the proposal does not provide a rationale for why these schools were chosen.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides a high quality plan that describes how the proposed program of work will be scaled and translate to improved teaching and learning. For example, the program provides a logic model in the proposal that highlights the current situation within the schools and the intended impact of the selected actions within the proposal. This makes explicit the program's theory of action and theory of change.

Moreover, a timeline is provided for the proposed work—referred to as an implementation roadmap—that lists the planned activities, the timeframe within which those activities will take place and the parties responsible for those activities. The plan for scale up suggests a reasoned approach to expanding this work based on the demonstrated knowledge of the existing schools and articulates a rationale for the plan. In the implementation roadmap, a responsible party is linked to all of the activities listed.

The proposal makes mention to a rating tool that the Director of Blended learning will use to select future participants in this program. As Rocketship is a growing network of schools, the proposal makes note that additional schools could be taken on beyond the schools that are already listed in the proposal.

The proposal states that the ultimate goal of this program of work is to close the achievement gap.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents achievable annual goals, which suggest that a result from this program of work will be improved student performance and a decrease in the achievement gap between student sub-group performance at their school and the mean performance for students in the schools' two states. These measures are ambitious yet achievable since they are anchored in current baseline data and represent incremental growth annually.

These annual projections are evident in the data tables in the proposal, which offer projections of improvement for college enrollment, graduation rates, overall performance and sub-group performance, and post-secondary student success. These tables are found within the proposal for each of these measures and consist of goals, baseline data and projections of performance for all subgroups.

However, it is worth noting two aspects of the presentation of data for this criterion. First, the LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes are provided with assessments that are not the state performance assessments, but rather assessments produced by NWEA and STEP. These tests make it impossible to infer that student performance will be equal to or exceed ESEA targets.

In addition, the goals for students' performance on summative assessments and decreasing achievement gaps is not broken up by LEA. The data and goals for graduation rates and college enrollment are presented by school or LEA, but the data and goals for decreasing achievement gaps and performance on assessments are not.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal communicates that Rocketship has had a clear record of success. For example, the proposal states that each of the Rocketship schools have scored in the top quartile in California on state assessments. In addition, the proposal demonstrates that Rocketship schools have performed higher than nearby schools and the California state average for

performance by students from low income backgrounds and students identified as English Language Learners. Moreover, the proposal states that Rocketship's Hispanic students have performed higher than California's highest performing racial subgroup as evidence for eliminating the achievement gap. For example, the Rocketship average for Hispanic performance was above the proficiency target set by the state--their average score was 817--while the state average performance for Hispanic students was below the proficiency target set by the state, 785.

Although Rocketship schools do not operate low performing schools or turnaround low performing schools, the proposal shows that Rocketship schools outperform their neighboring schools measured by the California Academic Index. Finally, the proposal describes the ways in which they make data available to all relevant stakeholders. For example, data walls and celebrations serve as one means for making data public to students and teachers. Teachers receive professional development on data use and carry out the RTI model. The proposal elaborates that Schoolzilla and Illuminate serve as tools to house, analyze and represent data for educators. Plus, Schoolzilla provides online access to parents as well as regular reports from teachers to parents so that parents can track their child's progress.

It should be noted that Rocketship schools began in 2006 and educate K-5 students. Therefore, they do not have graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

While there is substantial evidence of the recent success of Rocketship schools' efforts to maintain and improve student achievement in mathematics and reading, it is not clear what the trajectory of student performance has been for reading and language arts over the past four years. While the proposal provides historical data for the percentage of students scoring above the 50th percentile in math over the past four years, a similar comparison is not provided for student performance in reading / language arts for the past four years.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal asserts that Rocketship Schools maintains a high level of transparency. This is primarily shown through Rocketships schools' participation in the Civil Rights Data Collection survey. This provides data such as personnel salaries for instructional and support staff as well non-personnel expenditures. These data are made public by being linked to each school's web site.

To further communicate the schools' transparency in this regard, the appendix of the proposal provides a screenshot of the web page that offers links to the school expediture data.

In addition, the proposal adds that as a public education entity, all of their data are open to the public.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal conveys the extent to which the program of work will take place within a state policy context that will support implementation. First of all, the proposal states that all Rocketship schools were granted charters within their respective states and these charters afford the schools to operate outside of some constraints of regular public schools and encourages innovative teaching and learning strategies. This is reflected in the California charter school law mentioned that encourages accountability and oversight with the least amount of bureaucracy that is needed.

In addition, the proposal notes that the schools' will participate in state data systems that will provide summative data that can inform their personalized learning environments.

It is worth mentioning that both California and Wisconsin, the two states in which the Rocketship schools will be operating, have both adopted the common core state standards. Rocketship's curriculum and instruction is aligned with these standards, which ultimately support a path for students to be college and career ready.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal demonstrated extensive stakeholder engagement in the development of this program of work. First, the proposal stated that 93% of the Rocketship teachers were in favor of the proposed work. The appendix provides sample questions and survey results. Second, the proposal listed the variety of means by which Rocketship schools attempted to engage stakeholders in the proposed project. This includes strategies such as email, focus groups, and a Bay Area all staff meeting.

Also, the proposal provided an example of how this engagement process resulted in a modification to the proposal;

namely, the prominence of the learning management system in the program of work.

The proposal additionally provides examples of how parents were afforded the opportunity to inform the development of this project. This was done via a survey that was made available to the parents in three languages. The proposal also mentions that there were opportunities for students to provide input for the proposed project, for example, by providing feedback through a brief classroom-based activity.

Finally, the proposal included many letters of support. These included not only organizations with which Rocketship schools currently have active partnerships, but also additional organizations that are stakeholders within the Rocketship school communities.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal generally presents a high quality plan for improving teaching and learning through personalized learning. For example, the proposal describes how goal setting and monitoring progress toward goals is fundamental to how learning is organized both at the classroom level and the individual level. At the individual level, goal setting is buttressed by the weekly individualized goals that are facilitated by the online platforms in reading and math. Moreover, the proposal states that the schools attempt to link learning with a college going culture by using college and university banners, naming classrooms after university mascots and exposing students to college visits.

In addition, the proposal lists some of the digital tools that would be utilized to facilitate teaching and learning. These include: STMath, DreamBox and Lexia Reading, to name a few. These examples are notable not only for how they support personalized learning experiences for students, but also how they provide data that the teachers can monitor and use to guide instruction.

The proposal also highlights the importance of deep learning to their program of work. This is evidenced by the descriptions that are provided for each content area, including the curricula, technologies and guiding questions that are used for the content areas. Moreover, the enrichment activities and an extended project for the fifth grade year provide further evidence that depth is important to the learning experiences students are provided in the schools' programs.

The personalized learning experiences within the proposed program of work are supported by technology tools such as chromebooks and a learning management system. These are intended to enable more involvement from families as well as provide greater access for learning during out of school time.

The proposal mentions that students will have access to diverse cultures and perspectives to motivate their learning. One example of this provided in the proposal was in the description of the integrated reading and writing unit. Through this, students will study historical fiction, stories of cinderella from around the world and schools from around the world.

The proposal also describes how students will experience opportunities to develop critical academic skills. For example, in the design of Individual Learning Time, students will have regular one-on-one meetings with teachers to engage in goal setting, review their progress toward goals and modifiy their goals for learning. The proposal states that this process seeks to develop students' goal setting and self-regulation skills in their learning.

The students Individual Learning Time is informed by multiple sources of data such as different interim assessments developed by NWEA. These assessments are provided at different time frames and aligned to college and career standards. Through the students development and mastery of concepts and content, they are able to progress to deeper and / or more sophisticated content.

The proposal further notes that accommodations and high-quality supports will be incorporated into the personalized learning environments. For example, English Language Learners take a nationally recognized test (ADEPT) to monitor their language learning progress. These data are incorporated into the students' Individualized Learning Time. Moreover, teachers are provided specific professional learning opportunities to develop their capacity to support English Language Learners. Moreover, students identified with learning disabilities will be provided with the least restrictive environment for learning within the general structures of the schools. Also, the proposal adds that general education and special education teachers collaborate before and during instruction to provide necessary instructional supports.

It is worth mentioning that the approach to personalizing learning shifts for different grade bands. As the students get older through the elementary grades, the program's rationale is that the classrooms need more flexible staffing arrangements to

support more diverse learning activities than the students in kindergarten and first grade. This thoughtful approach suggests that the program seeks to create the most effective learning environments possible for the students.

The proposal describes several mechanisms that are in place to support students' understanding and use of the learning resources that Rocketship schools provide. For example, the Individual Learning Time serves as a means for teachers to direct students to available school resources to further their learning based on their performance data. The schools implement a leadership program for students called "junior tech" that serves to support younger students use the technology tools available. Also, the Director of Instructional Technology will oversee the development of additional learning and training opportunities for students and their families to utilize technology devices provided by the school to support student learning.

The proposal also includes activities, a timeline and goals and milestones related to the ways in which the proposed program of work will support improved teaching and learning. Additionally, the responsible parties for carrying out the activities is provided in the tables in the proposal. These elements suggest that this proposed plan is of high quality.

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

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides evidence for how the program of work will include substantial and extensive staff development to support the implementation of personalized learning experiences for students. For example, the proposal states that one on one coaching is an organizational routine within Rocketship where the assistant principals and principals meet with each teacher weekly and attend teacher meetings. These coaching meetings are augmented by the teachers' professional growth plans, which establishes learning goals and priorities to guide their learning over the school year. In addition, Rocketship schools maintains a summer training period and 150 hours of professional development time over the school year. Many of these professional learning opportunities are peer lead.

In addition to professional learning opportunities, the Rocketship schools have established dashboard metrics and criteria to evaluate teachers and school leaders. The focus on data for professional learning is not solely focused on teachers and leaders. Student data generated by blended learning platforms and periodic assessments serve to guide the coaching opportunities.

The initiative proposes to build upon the professional community that already exists to support teacher learning and school leader learning with new technologies and tool kits that scaffold teachers' use of tools such as Schoolzilla and Illuminate.

The proposal states how the program of work will provide all participating educators with access to tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress as well as develop their capacity to use these tools. For example, the schools will provide instructional coaching for teachers specifically to support their flexible model of incorporating technology-based and non-technology-based instruction. This even includes real time coaching from a school's assistant principal using a microphone in a teacher's ear and observing from the back of the classroom. In addition, Rocketship schools will organize Data days as one avenue for developing teachers' capacity for collecting, analyzing and using data and data tools to support instruction.

The proposal also describes how participating school leaders and school leadership teams will have training and tools to support an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs. For example, school leaders will be participants in the professional learning process through coaching and the data days mentioned above. A data dashboard for the evaluation of teaching will be at the hands of the school leaders to provide timely feedback on instruction. School leaders will receive coaching from Rocketship schools' leadership based on their leadership competency model to ensure that school leadership practice is improving and at a high, agreed-upon standard. Finally, school leaders are provided a three week summer institute to develop their leadership skills and expose them to resources available to schools to support student learning.

This proposal describes Rocketship's plan to ensure that all of the students receive effective teachers and school leadership in Rocketship schools.This includes a targeted recruitment strategy for teachers and school leaders as evidenced by the recruitment calendar and materials in the appendix, a selection process that provides autonomy to each school's principal to choose from a pool of pre-screened teacher candidates, an onboarding process that includes a three week summer institute intended to build teachers' foundational knowledge of Rocketship school culture and effective classroom teaching, and ongoing staff development as mentioned above. The program will incorporate a data dashboard to evaluate teaching and ensure that teachers are provided with timely and actionable feedback. The proposal states that Rocketship school's goal is for all of their teachers to earn the score of highly effective on their evaluations. The capacity of teacher leadership will be supported by the leadership development strategies mentioned above, assistant principals serving as principals in training and a clear career progression developed to provide opportunities for leadership to grow from their current staff of teachers. All these elements suggest that the proposal provides a high quality plan to increase the number of their students receiving high quality instruction.

Ultimately, the proposal describes activities around talent development, knowledge management and career development that are aimed at building the capacity of teachers and leaders to support personalized instruction. In the proposal, a table is provided that illustrates the activities and who will be responsible for each of the activities as well as the time frame within which the activities will be carried out. These elements suggest that the plan is of a high quality.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**11**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In general, the proposal is not clear as to what the time frame would be for these activities to take place, who would be responsible for these activities and what deliverables would be anticipated from the activities. These elements would suggest that the plan is of high quality.

However, there are several significant strengths for this criterion. For instance, the proposal provides a plan for supporting project implementation through policies and the development of infrastructure. To be specific, the proposal states that even though all of the charter schools are LEAs by definition within their respective states, they all receive support from the national and regional Rocketship school offices. In addition, the proposal states that Rocketship schools has established policies that provide local autonomy for their schools specifically with respect to school personnel decisions, school staff roles and responsibilities, school level budgets, and the school calendar and schedule.

Furthermore, the proposal points out that based on the Rocketship schools' personalized learning model and their open learning program, students are able to earn credit based on their demonstrated competency and not the amount of time they spend on a particular skill or content task. The proposal elaborates that students may demonstrate their competency through a variety of assessments that are comparable, yet afford different modalities for assessing the students' skills and knowledge. Some of these assessment tools are listed in the proposal, including MAP, MPG and STEP reading assessment.

Also, the proposal conveys the ways in which the program of work will ensure that learning resources and instructional practices are fully accessible for students. For example, the proposal states that Rocketship schools rely on the RTI model to identify learning needs for students and identify strategies to remediate those needs. The proposal also states that they will seek to provide the least restrictive environment for all learners. And the proposal communicates that Rocketship has experience serving ELL students and ensures that school communication materials are translated and professional develop is provided for teachers to support ELL students.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In general, the proposal does not make clear who will be responsible for all of this plan's activities and in what time frame they will all take place. These missing elements, if they were present, would improve the quality of this plan.

Nevertheless, there are several significant strengths for this criterion. For instance, the proposal provides a plan for implementing the personalized learning program. This is evidenced by the proposed program of work's attention to all stakeholders' accessibility to technology tools and resources. For example, the proposal states that all educators are provided with lap tops in order to access both students' online learning tools and the schools' data systems. Moreover, the proposal states that the program of work would increase parent and student access to technology and technology-based content by extending computer lab hours and adding to the learning content. Also, the school intends to inform parents of neighborhood wifi and computer points of access as well as affordable internet plans to increase the likelihood of internet access for all students during out of school time.

In addition, the proposal states that stakeholders are provided with technical support for using learning tools. For instance, teachers' professional development time is often used to support their use of online data tools as well as other technical topics. Parents are provided with user guides for interpreting student data and these guides are translated, if needed. Plus, all of the schools use the same learning platforms and dashboards, which enables the IT support to be in place for coherent support of teachers and administrators.

Moreover, the proposal communicates that parents and students currently have access to students' various assessment

performance data as well as access to the Rocketship data portal. The proposal includes a screen shot of what a parent and student might see of the data dashboard for the students' DreamBox activities. These data are currently interoperable with their state data systems and the proposal mentions that Schoolzilla enables data to be linked across data sources.

Although the proposal notes that the student data will be in an open format, it is not clear if and how students and parents will be able to access this open data and use it in other electronic learning systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal shares a high quality plan for implementing a continuous improvement process for this program of work. For example, the proposal highlights specific student data from formative and summative assessments, such as MAP, MPG and CPAA (these are the computer adaptive tests that assess students' competencies in English Language Arts and Mathematics), that can provide actionable information. The proposal highlights that piloting projects is an organizational practice and enables feedback to inform the ultimate implementation of initiatives. In fact, the appendix contains descriptions of how previous pilots informed the proposed work.

Moreover, the proposal states that a structure will be put in place to monitor and modify the initiative based on the performance indicators. This structure includes an oversight committee, an advisory team and grant project management staff. The grant manager will provide quarterly updates to staff and create a web site to communicate the work of this initiative.

In addition, a table is provided in the proposal that describes activities, participants involved in the activities, the time frame in which the activities take place and the focus of these activities. All of these activities are related to the proposed program of work and intended to review and revise, if needed, the work for continuously improved implementation. In addition, a rationale is provided for the proposed activities to provide a warrant for their selection in the implementation.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal conveys a plan for ongoing communication of the program of work with internal and external stakeholders. For example, the grants manager will develop a web site to report ongoing news related to the initiative. Also, a table in the proposal describes the various configurations of meetings that may facilitate internal communication and discussion about the ongoing work. These include meetings such as grade-level meetings, advisory team meetings, regional level data analysis meetings and regional school leadership meetings. In addition, parents will be provided with communications about the work through monthly parent meetings, a back to school night, home visits, newsletters and other materials sent home with their children.

However, elements of a high quality plan related to communications—especially external communications—are not clear from the proposal. For example, a timeline is not provided for the communications plan to show when the proposed activities will take place. Moreover, the personnel who would be responsible for the activities are not stated in the proposal.

Finally, it is not evident how the schools will communicate about this work on a regular basis with their community partners.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides ambitious yet achievable performance measures to inform their continuous improvement process. There are approximately 14 measures for this proposed work.

In the proposal, the performance indicators are listed along with a description of the measure that indicates specifically what will be measured, the rationale that Rocketship schools used to select the performance measure, the way in which the measure will provide useful, leading information and how Rocketship will review and refine the measure over time if it appears that the measure is insufficient for the needs of the project.

The performance measures included cognitive and non-cognitive measures of student development and achievement. These included age-appropriate measures of students' academic growth. For example, as an age appropriate measure of students' academic growth, the proposal lists the percentage of students achieving 1.5 years or greater of growth in a subject area. It states that this will be measured by the MPG or STEP assessments (the former being a mathematics assessment and the latter being a reading assessment). Furthermore, the proposal lists the expected annual percentage of students achieving this goal by sub group with the ultimate goal for student performance being 15% more students achieving this goal than evident in the baseline data.

For an example of a non-cognitive measure of student achievement or development, the proposal states that the program will track the percentage of students rated a demonstrating Rocketship core values such as empathy and respect as measured by teachers and students through scoring a rubric. The selection of measures, the rationale behind the selection and how the measures will be reviewed suggest a high quality plan for performance measurement.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides a high quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed activities in a rigorous way. In the proposal, a table is provided that provides the activities that constitute the evaluation plan, when those activities will take place, who will be responsible for seeing that the activities are carried out and the deliverables that are associated with the evaluation activities. It is worth noting that these activities will generate qualitative (e.g. interview) data and quantitative (e.g. survey) data to evaluate the program.

In addition, the proposal provides a rationale for the evaluation questions such as how their students perform in middle school based on academic and non achievement measures and how their students do once they leave Rocketship. And the evaluative approach will seek out qualitative and quantitative data including achievement data, student surveys and family interviews.

One example from the proposal states that the Grants Manager will be the person responsible for conducting interviews and observations and carrying out site visits at individual schools to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the program.

Overall the proposal mentions that all of the evaluation data will reviewed by the Oversight Committee with feedback from the Advisory Group. These data will serve in the assessment of project results with respect to the RTT-D investments and inform judgements about more productive uses of time, staff and money.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed budget presents reasonable and sufficient expenditures in order to carry out the project effectively. Since personalized learning is at the core of the Rocketship model and this proposed program of work, the expenditures in the budget intend to extend and innovate on their current model.

The proposal identifies additional private sources of funding that has been received to support Rocketship schools. These included the Dell Foundation, Schwab Foundation, Walton Foundation and others amounting to more than $25 million over the last six years.

The proposal identifies that 41 percent of the budget will go to one time investments such as technology resources and training for teachers and administrators. This supports the sustainability of the project in that the one-time equipment expenditures are coupled with capacity building training to utilize the equipment.

The proposal provides a rationale and explanation for the project's associated expenditures. To do this, the proposal breaks up the overall project into seven sub projects with labels such as, Innovate to Improve Personalized Learning Model and Tech-enhanced Professional Learning Community. Within these projects, the budget explains the personnel roles with percent estimates of time allocated to the project, equipment descriptions and additional services needed with prices based on previous procurement experiences.

However, the proposal does not make clear how all of the funds will be accounted for in the budget. For example, in the

overall budget summary in the proposal, approximately one million dollars will be used to support the tech enhanced professional learning community that will not be coming from the requested dollars from Race to the Top. It is not clear where these dollars will come from.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides a high quality plan for sustaining the project's goals beyond the term of the grant. For example, the proposal provides a table that describes activities based on the goal of further sustaining the project, lists the responsible parties for ensuring that the activities are carried out, the timeline within which the activities will be carried out and the deliverables that will come from the activities. For example, an Oversight Committee will be formed and will evaluate the effectiveness of the program's activities and make suggestions for furthering the work. Moreover, the Advisory Team will assess the outcomes on the project's performance measures before making a decision about where future investments should be placed.

The proposal also includes many letters of support from partner organizations, funders and local organizations like the Milwaukee Commerce Association. However, the plan does not make clear the extent to which there is support from state and local government leaders to further this work.

In addition, the proposal states that per-pupil funding gained from the gradual expansion of the network will enable this project to continue. With the combined need of the regional and national offices to fundraise and the use of per-pupil funding, it is not clear how this proposed project would continue under those conditions. While the proposal notes the previous success of fundraising from foundations, the plan does not list potential sources for funding this further.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal extensively addresses the competitive preference priority through their proposed deepening of their partnership with PACT, and other organizations. The partnership will create leadership capacity among parents in San Jose and develop a toolkit that can be utilized by parents in Milwaukee.

In order to deepen parental engagement and capacity building that Rocketship schools have already done with PACT, they propose to conduct a needs assessment to identify the socio-emotional needs of families and students. This provides initial baseline data that can serve to facilitate data-informed decisions about moving the project forward.

The table in the proposal provides evidence that this proposed partnership is aimed at improving academic and socio-emotional indicators by listing the vision, goals and milestones that will lead to conducting the needs assessment.

The proposal identifies ambitious yet achievable, population-level indicators that the partnership will address. These include goals for the community partnership as well as academic goals for the students. Moreover, the proposal highlights how the partnership will track and use data. For example, a school by school summary dashboard will be developed that will enable the data to be tracked at the school-community level. The desired outcomes stated for this priority include academic related outcomes such as 90% of graduates matriculate to college and comunity level outcomes such as 70% of parents consistently attend school events.

The proposal specifically states that the needs of the students and families will be assessed. This will include socio-emotional, mental health, and health care needs as well as needs specific to migrant families. Once the needs are assessed, the proposal states that Rocketship, with the help of a newly hired National Director of Parental Leadership and two Regional Directors of Parent Leadership, will develop partnerships with local non-profits and social service agencies to meet the needs identified in the assessment. The proposal states that Rocketship will conduct parent, student and teacher focus groups at least twice a year to assess what is working and what needs to be improved. This suggests that that the program will routinely assess the progress of the work.

This proposal also extensively describes how the program will track and use data. The Director of Parent Engagement will develop dashboards to track results school by school. This dashboard will includes both the community partnership measures and the academically-related measures. These data will be reported to the Oversight Committee quarterly and

modifications to the program can will be made if the leading indicators are not moving the measures in the intended direction.

With the help of PACT, the local partner and the Regional Manager of Parent Engagement, the proposal states that principals will develop the capacity to assess, identify and inventory the needs of participating students and families. In addition, with the help of the Regional Manager of Parent Engagement, the principals will develop the capacity make decisions about community partnerships and appropriate supports to meet the needs of students and families.

In order to develop a model to scale this proposed partnership work, Rocketship schools will collect parent data to better understand the obstacles that hinder parent engagement from happening. This will be carried out by the same position that will gather an inventory of students' needs. This role, the Regional Manager of Parental engagement will be charged with ensuring that educational services are integrated with other services available through the partnership that further the goals of the program.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal makes personalized learning environments the core issue around which this proposed work is designed. For example, as stated earlier, the proposal is building on previous work on the core educational assurance areas. The project proposal describes the online platforms that like ST Math and Dream box that will facilitate the technologically-based personal learning experiences. The professional development approach, with the focus on instructional coaching, aims at building teachers' ability to facilitate blended learning environments and use student data to guide their instructional choices.

The focus on educator effectiveness is evident by the implementation of a teacher evaluation system and performance measures focused on instruction. Finally, the project seeks to prepare students for post secondary learning and work opportunities as evidenced by the fact that the project will be tracking where students go once they leave the Rocketship schools.

		Available	Score
Total		**210**	**188**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0129CA-3 for Rocketship Education - Lead: Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	**10**	**9**

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship has painted a clear vision of what it hopes to accomplish if it receives a Race to the Top District grant. Its goals include closing the achievement gap and demonstrating that the nation's highest need students can perform above grade level by the end of fifth grade preparing them for success in secondary school, college, and beyond. To do this,

Rocketship will focus on improving its personalized learning model, supporting excellent teachers and leaders, and enabling deeper parent engagement.

(A)

Rocketship's plan builds on the four core educational assurance areas.
 Adopting college and career ready standards: The applicant indicates that both CA and WI have adopted the CCSS. Rocketship further speaks to the rigor of its curriculum and the need to go beyond basic skills. It provides individualized practice time during which students are expected to practice basic skills and uses instructional time for advanced critical thinking and problem-solving. Rocketship uses formative assessments such MAP, CPAA, and MPG to assess student progress throughout the year. Throughout the grant, Rocketship will continue to use these assessments and will incorporate curriculum and resources aligned to the CCSS.

Data Systems: Rocketship has demonstrated a commitment to using data to inform instruction. It has data days during which teachers have the opportunity to analyze data and make adjustments to student's instruction to meet their needs. Rocketship also uses programs like Illuminate and Schoolzilla to gather and process data to inform instruction. As part of its grant plan, Rocketship has committed to implementing a Learning Management System that will allow easier access to data and will incorporate educational resources designed by Rocketship educators.

Effective Teachers and Principals: The applicant indicates that it already has a high number of effective teachers. To increase this number and increase the capacity of its effective teachers, the applicant offers extensive professional development and career pathway opportunities. A significant amount of time is devoted to PD both during the summer and during the school year. Rocketship indicates that its principals spend time a significant portion of their day working with teachers. In terms of career pathways, Rocketship allows opportunities for teachers to become lead teachers and mentors. Further opportunities exist for teachers to move into assistant principal and principal positions. Rocketship also plans to focus on its recruitment to ensure that it is selecting effective teachers to work in Rocketship schools. The applicant plans to develop a more robust teacher evaluation system which it believes will allow them to better evaluate teacher effectiveness.

Low Performing Schools: Rocketship does not have any schools identified as low-performing or persistently lowest achieving but its schools do serve students who might otherwise attend these schools and have shown higher student achievement with this population that schools with similar populations.

(b) The applicant's plan described in this selection criterion and throughout the application articulates clear goals for improving student achievement and it is likely that the data supports the conclusion that student achievement will improve. However, the applicant's plan does not offer a fully personalized vision. The applicant certainly has a plan to use data to inform instruction and to begin to provide flexibility and choice for students but the plan does not fully explain how students will begin to have ownership of the learning as described in (C)(1) (*i.e.,* students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.)

(c) Rocketship clearly explains the classroom experience for teachers and students and how this differs in Pre-K vs. K-3 vs. 4-5 grade. Each grade allows for individualized learning time though this builds as students progress to later grades. The experience varies for teachers as well. In the early grade, one teacher and one assistant are assigned to a class. In later grades, teachers begin to team teach and share students.

The applicant has created a clear vision that will build on its current work. Based on its response, the applicant scores in the high range.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) All existing Rocketship schools and students will participate in the proposal. However, the applicant does not provide a full explanation as to why it chose to include all schools.

The applicants overarching plan serves all students in all schools but some elements of the plan will be scaled up in selected grades, in different schools based on readiness. In year two of the grant, the applicant will implement a flexible model in grades four and five and look to expand to another grade in three of the nine participating schools. Grant staff will review best practices, and assess results from pilots in K-3 to determine how to best expand the flexible model to other grades. A rating tool will be developed to assess the readiness of participating schools to implement the model in a new grade. In year three, an additional flexible classroom will be implemented in three additional participating schools using the steps described above. In year 4, a flexible classroom will be added in the remaining schools.

This plan for expansion is well thought out and if implemented as described, should ensure that the next steps are implemented only when schools are ready.

The applicant meets the competition requirements based on the number of students being served. However, the number of students the applicant is serving (5,003) just barely qualifies it for the funding range of $10,000,000-$20,000,000. This funding band requires that the consortium or LEA serve between 5,001 and 10,000 students. The applicant is proposing to serve 5,003 students and is asking for $20,000,000. The applicant expects that enrollment will increase to over 5,600 over the course of the grant as schools serving only grades K-3 add grades 4 and 5. While the applicant technically meets the requirements, this is a bit concerning because the applicant is required to serve over 5,000 students in year 1 in order to qualify for this funding range. If the applicant's schools were to lose even 3 students, it would not qualify.

(b) The applicant has included the list of schools that are participating in the consortium as well as the requested data (*e.g.,* number of participating educators, number of low income students). All existing Rocketship schools will participate and all students will be included as participating students.

(c) The applicant has identified all 5,003 participating students as high need students. 85% of these students are from low-income families. Based on this information, it is clear that this consortium is serving a high number of students who are likely to benefit from the additional supports included in the applicant's proposal.

Based on the information provided in this section, the applicant scores in the high range.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

All of Rocketship's current schools will participate in the grant proposal. However, the applicant has plans to open new schools over the coming years and expects to serve over 16,000 students by SY 16-17. Rocketship will monitor the results of its implementation and then take lessons learned from implementation in its existing schools and use this to develop a plan for implementation in its new schools.

The applicant clearly describes its logic model and theory of action and change. Rocketship indicates that it is already seeing gains of 1.5 years of progress on average per year but then some of this is lost over the summer. A significant number of its students are still not proficient in ELA and Math. Rocketship believes that if it personalizes learning, creates a strong college-going culture, and provides opportunities to instructional supports that this will lead to improved student achievement.

The applicant includes the necessary elements of a high quality plan in responding to this selection criterion. It includes activities, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties.

Rocketship has clearly articulated how it will scale up its plan in existing schools over the life of the grant and how it will expand to new schools as they are added. The plan in thoughtful and allows for the applicant to use results from its initial implementation to plan for implementation in additional schools. The applicant also offers a sound logic model for how it will improve student achievement. Additionally, the applicant provided a high quality plan to scale up this work.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not properly responded to this selection criterion. Per the request for proposal and clarifying FAQ E-8, Selection criterion (A)(4) requires a consortium applicant to respond for each LEA in a consortium rather than using aggregate data. The applicant has only provided aggregate data for the measures related to performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. The applicant does provide postsecondary degree attainment targets by LEA, but this is an optional measure.

(a) Performance Measures on summative assessments

It is unclear why the applicant has chosen to use the MAP assessment for grades 3-5 rather than CA and WI's state summative assessments. The selection criterion asks the applicant to describe the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased *equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet*

achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup (as defined in this notice). In cases in which the State has not yet asked for or received approval for ESEA flexibility, the applicant is instructed to use its Title I Accountability Workbook.

Based on this information provided, it is unclear how the consortium's 3-5 targets compare to that of its home States (CA and WI).

As noted above, the applicant has failed to respond properly to this section of the selection criterion. Observations on the provided data are offered as feedback for the applicant, but because the applicant failed to provide proper data for this section (*e.g.,* used MAP not state assessments and did not disaggregate the data by LEA) no points can be awarded.

By school year 2016-2017, Rocketship expects that 90% of its students will be at or above proficient in reading and math for grades preK-5. For pre-K and kindergarten, these targets are ambitious and appear to be achievable as this represents a 15-20% increase over a four year period. However, in later grades, this target remains ambitious but it is not clear that 90% is an achievable goal. In first grade, this would represent a 34% increase in reading and 27% increase in math. In grade 3 reading, this would be an increase of 43%. In most cases, the expected increase is over 30%. These are certainly ambitious targets and it is clear that the applicant has a plan for student achievement, but it has not clearly shown that these dramatic increases can be achieved in this period of time. The expected gains are even more dramatic with certain subgroups, especially special education where expected gains are particularly dramatic, for example 77% in grade 2 reading.

The reviewer fails to understand why the yearly targets for Sy 16-17 and 17-18 are the same. The applicant expected a gain in every other year but has not provided an explanation for why the gains will be static at this point.

(b)

The applicant has failed to respond correctly to this section of the selection criterion. The applicant was expected to compare each of its LEAs subgroups to the LEA or State's highest achieving subgroup (see definition of achievement gap notice). However, the comparison group varies. For example, for grade 3 reading, one comparison group is white students and another comparison group is students with no reported disabilities. Additionally, the applicant did not disaggregate this data for each district/school as required.

The achievement gap reduction targets for subgroups are ambitious but in some cases, it is difficult to understand how this will be achieved by SY 17-18. For example, the expected change in grade two reading is from a gap of 18% between Hispanic/Latino and State white students to Hispanic/Latino students in Rocketship leading State White students by 10%. This is a 28% swing in six years which is ambitious but it is unclear if the district can achieve this. Similar swings are expected throughout all grades and populations. The reviewer has a high quality plan to increase student achievement and has a history of improving achievement, but it has not sufficiently explained how the gap reduction will be this significant.

(c)

The applicant only serves students through grade 5. However, it has set a goal of 90% graduation rate for its students once they reach 12th grade (beginning in SY 2020-2021).

(d)

Again, the applicant only serves students through grade 5 but is has set a goal of 90% college enrollment. The applicant plans to track its students over time in order to obtain this data.

The applicant has set ambitious targets for performance on summative assessments and for achievement gap reduction. However, the applicant failed to provide the correct information in both of these cases so the score is only in the medium range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:
Rocketship has made improvements in student learning outcomes over the past four years as demonstrated by evidence provided in the application.

Rocketship schools serve a high number of low-income and high-need students including a significant ELL population.

Note: no information is available for the school in Wisconsin as the school only recently opened.

Rocketship has provided evidence that it is scoring higher on CA'sLow Income and ELL Academic Performance Index (API) when compared to nearby districts and the CA state average. The applicant has also seen improvements for Integrated Special Education (ISE) students. These students demonstrated an increase from 35% basic or above in ELA in SY 11-12 to 55% basic or above in SY 12-13. Increases were also seen in math.

The applicant argues that it is closing the achievement gap for racial subgroups because its average API for Hispanic students was higher (817) than the states API of 785. However, because the applicant has not adequately explained how API is calculated, it is difficult to understand how this is demonstrating a closing of the achievement gap because a comparison group is not provided nor is information from previous years.

Rocketship has provided information demonstrating that it is performing well when compared to higher-income districts. 86% of CA's high-income district students scored proficient or advanced in SY 12-13 compared to 77% of Rocketship's students.

The applicant demonstrates that its students have shown a 9% increase in math as demonstrated by MAP scores between 09-10 and 12-13. This is a significant increase but no explanation is provided as to why MAP scores were used rather than the CST since this was the measure previously used by the applicant to demonstrate its success. Additionally, the applicant did not provide this historical data for ELA.

Rocketship has provided evidence that its students grew on the MAP test in reading and math by 1.6 grade levels in SY 12-13.

Because Rocketship serves only elementary students, it does not have a record of graduation and college enrollment rates and it does not yet have any former students who have reached college going age. However, Rocketship does have plans to track this data for its former students.

In most cases, the applicant only provided data for one year, most often SY 12-13. The selection criterion asks for evidence over the past four years as it would have been helpful to see this data as a comparison point.

(b) Rocketship does not have any low performing schools. However, it serves students that might otherwise have to attend these schools and its data shows that it is outperforming many other schools in surrounding areas as well as schools across the State.

(c) Rocketship has students set goals for MAP assessments and provides a comparison of actual results throughout the year so that students know how they are progressing toward their goal.

Rocketship celebrates individual and class achievements at the end of every week.

Teachers are given a data day once a quarter during which time they analyze student performance and develop plans for further growth. The district also uses a variety of software programs to provide further data transparency and ease of use.

The applicant has provided information demonstrating evidence of success in the past in advancing student learning and achievement. Much of the data focused on FY 12-13 rather than the past four years of data and the applicant did not explain why it chose to use different assessments and only selected subjects when demonstrating success in certain areas. It is clear that the applicant is making success but some unanswered questions leave the picture slightly unclear. The applicant scores at the low end of the high range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has indicated that its schools were included in the USED Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) survey in 2011-12 and will participate in the survey in SY 13-14. By submitting this data, Rocketship says that it has made public school financial including the data points listed for this selection criterion. The applicant indicates that it will link to the CRDC website once the data is live and provides a screenshot of the website (though the data has yet to be posted).

The applicant also discusses its transparency around other information by posting meeting times on its website and publishing meeting minutes.

It engages parents and strives for transparency by inviting them to school events and providing language translation when needed.

It is making the requested financial information available but only when it is published by USED. It's financial transparency

is not extending beyond that which is required by law or being collected and published by USED.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship asserts that is has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement its RTT-D plan in part because all of its schools are charter schools. It states that in both CA and WI, charter schools are provided additional flexibility and that the states and communities are very supportive of charter schools. Rocketship speaks to its flexibility to implement a longer school day and school year than surrounding districts. It provides examples of different initiatives it is undertaking related to the four core assurance areas though it doesn't always specifically address the authority it has to undertake this measures. Only minimal examples are given but it does appear that the applicant has the authority and autonomy to implement its plan. This is further supported by the fact the the applicant is largely expanding on existing work it already has the authority to undertake.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship clearly demonstrates that it received support from over 70% of its teachers. In fact, over 90% of its teachers indicated support for the proposal. Rocketship provided educators with ample opportunity to learn about the grant proposal including staff emails, focus groups, school leadership meetings, and office hours. Educators indicated that there was a need for integrating a Learning Management System (LMS), and as a result of the feedback received during these sessions, the LMS was included in the application.

Parents and students were also given the opportunity to provide feedback. Information was provided to parents and they were asked to provide feedback either online or with a hard copy response. Fourth and fifth grade students were told about the proposal during class and were engaged in an activity during which they provided feedback.

Other stakeholders were also engaged in the process. Multiple stakeholders were sent information on the proposal and many submitted letters of support. These letters came from parent organizations, early learning programs, business community, civic and community organizations, civil rights groups, and institutions of higher education.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i) and (ii) Students understand what they are learning is key to their success and identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career ready standards

The applicant uses test data throughout the year to analyze student progress. Students and teachers meet to set and/or revisit goals to help ensure that all students are on track on make progress throughout the year. Student review and discuss individual progress after each interim assessment period. Students also set weekly goals for their individual learning practices. The applicant is also using a data wall to help students track progress. Rocketship is clearly on the path to supporting students in understanding the value of their learning and identifying and pursuing their own goals. The applicant stated that students ownership of their learning is a key goal, but it is unclear at this point, how much student ownership there is of this process. Students are working with teachers but the applicant has not explained if this is a student-driven or teacher-driven process. As a result, it is unclear if the students are identifying these goals because they have been instructed to do so or because they are owning their learning.

(a)(iii-iv) Students are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest and have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning

Rocketship has extended its school day schedule to allow for 100 more minutes of learning time than other local schools. The applicant has described the various tools used in the instruction of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Some of the descriptions support the idea of deep learning experiences but it is not clear how these opportunities are personalized or allowing for exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. For example, the applicant is diagnosing students reading level and grouping accordingly. Therefore, Rocketship appears to be differentiating instruction but has not described how the experience is personalized. In writing, students are given the opportunity to write about different topics but in terms of additional personalization, no evidence is offered. The extended analysis project for 5th grade students does seem to be personalized and allows for deep learning and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. Students are allowed to choose and develop their own research project and explore as needed to develop their final product.

(v)Rocketship indicates that it is committed to helping students master both academic skills and non-cognitive skills. Its core values include respect, responsibility, persistence, and empathy. The schools are implementing PBIS. Rocketship also conducts home visits to create a relationship between the family and the school.

As part of its plans to expand upon its existing work, Rocketship plans to further develop its out-of-school time learning approach. This includes creating a flipped environment so that topics are introduced out of class and class time can be spent focused on higher-order thinking skills. The district also plans to provide an opportunity outside of class to explore topics of personal interests or engage in project-based learning. Students in grades 3-5 will be provided with a device like a Chromebook to support learning during and after class. The applicant also speaks to other technical supports that will be provided. The applicant believes that the devices will allow students to feel ownership of learning. This plan for lays the groundwork for the expansion of its existing work but it is not a robust plan. It seems to rely heavily on the device to facilitate personalized learning without explaining in great detail the types of activities that will be undertaken by students with these devises.

(b)

(i) and (ii) As discussed above, the applicant uses student data to develop a plan to meet the needs of students. Classes and groups within classes are grouped based on the needs of students. Different styles of instruction are used to meet the needs of different learners. It is not clear how much the applicant is personalizing the students learning plan vs. differentiating instruction but it is certainly on the path to personalization.

 Rocketship provides a number of different instructional approaches and environments for its students. In K-3rd grade, students participate in a targeted extended block schedule with 200 minutes of English, language arts ,and social studies; a 100 minute block of math and science, and 100 minutes in the learning lab. This instructional time includes individualized learning time block with features adaptive computer-based learning, independent reading time, and small group activities. This time also includes a flex instructional block during which students receive targeted small-group instruction in areas where additional focus is needed.

In grades 4-5, students learn in a grade level cohort. Student activities range from tutoring to independent work to online learning to seminar-style instruction, all in flexibly grouped classrooms. The model is adapted to meet student needs.

Overall, the applicant is providing a personalized environment and varied instructional strategies to meet the needs of students. As mentioned above, it is not entirely clear the extent to which the learning plans for students are personalized vs. differentiated but the applicant is clearly striving to create personalized learning plans.

(iii) The applicant is using a variety of online programs to meet the needs of students. For math, this includes programs such as ST Math, DreamBox, and i-Ready for Math. For reading, Accelerated Readers and Lexia Reading Core5 are used. Most of these programs are adaptive and thus designed to meet the level at which the student is achieving.

(iv) The district uses feedback from frequent formative assessments such as MAP as well as results from its online learning programs and other instructional methods to revise the strategies being used to serve students. Quarterly data days are held during which teachers analyze student progress and make instructional adjustments as needed. Throughout this process, students are provided with feedback and adjust goals accordingly.

(v): The vast majority of Rocketship's students are high-need students and the tools in place will serve many of them. However, it is unclear whether or not the online programs mentioned above are accessible to ELL students or students with disabilities. Students demonstrating a need for intervention services are provided with an Individualized Learning Plan.

If it is awarded a grant, the applicant will continue to build upon its existing work through a number of initiatives. This includes expanding its flexible classroom model, supporting ongoing innovations in pre-K through 3rd grade, implementing a learning management system, and creating content for the LMS.

(c) The training descriptions appear to focus on the use of the hardware. However, it does not appear that any of this

training is related to the use of instructional resources available via these electronic devices.

The applicant provides the elements of a high quality plan but some elements such as the timeline are too broad. For example, the timeline for developing content for the LMS spans the life of the grant. It does not explain if any of this content will be available before the end of the grant.

Overall, the applicant has provided a quality plan for addressing this selection criterion. Rocketship is clearly on the path to personalizing learning and has resources in place to support students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a)

Rocketship provides ample time for professional development during the summer, early release days, and additional support provided by principals. The training includes a variety of topics including the use of data, creating rigorous independent work, unit planning, launching literature circles, and facilitating small group instruction. To further support the implementation of personalized learning, the applicant is refining its recruitment process to develop deeper understanding of its model before making hires. This includes an opportunity for teachers to "try-out" teaching in the flexible classroom before the position is offered or taken. Rocketship is also developing increased support for teachers within flexible model classrooms through coaching. Professional development is provided throughout the year on the use of data which is important given the district's focus on the use of data. The applicant has a number of development opportunities in place but the explanation of each is quite broad. They support personalized learning, but it is unclear the extent to which they meet the different elements of this section of the selection criterion because the explanation is so broad.

(b)

Rocketship indicates that it uses data throughout the year to inform instruction. It notes that quarterly benchmark assessments are used to create groupings of students with similar needs within a classroom which allows the teacher to maximize the instructional impact of materials provided to each group. Groups of educators meet following each assessment cycle and assess student progress and needs. A plan is developed for students and then put into action. However, this grouping appears to be differentiation, and it is not explained how it is personalized to meet the unique need of the student. The use of this data is helpful in measuring student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements.

Rocketship is using a platform called Illuminate to provide educators with access to assessment items and supports to score assessments and capture data. Schoolzilla is also in use as a data warehouse and reporting system.

The applicant plans to develop a knowledge management and sharing system in order to share training materials.

(c)

The applicant indicates that data from Schoolzilla and Illuminate are used to measure student progress and determine teacher impact on student results. Principals and assistant principals conduct formal evaluations of each of the teachers that they supervise twice yearly. The district also has plans to develop a more robust teacher evaluation system that will be used to inform instruction. Additionally, as discussed above and below, the applicant offers ample opportunities for professional development and growth.

(d)

The applicant provides a significant amount of professional development during the summer, early release days, and additional support provided by principals. Rocketship also places a strong focus on recruitment and onboarding as an important strategy for ensuring that its students are served by effective teachers. Its evaluation includes a number of metrics including student achievement and parental engagement.

To ensure that it is retaining as many effective educators as possible, the applicant is offering career pathways. Teachers are given the opportunity to take on new and different responsibilities from grade level head to assistant principal to principal.

The applicant has included elements of a high quality plan. However, as with (c)(1), the timelines included in the plan are very broad and do not provide the reviewer with a clear picture of the timeline for implementation.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Each of Rocketship's nine participating schools is its own LEA but all are supported by Rocketship Education which acts as a central office. The applicant has clearly explained how this central office and its key leaders will provide support to the participating schools. Key roles and responsibilities are outlined for the Chief Program Officer, Director of Talent Management, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Director of Instructional Technology, School Principals, and the Senior Director of Strategy and Scalability. Support roles for other key leaders are also described. The central office is structured to allow schools to spend their time structured on instructional activities. While it still has room for growth, it is clear that Rocketship's goal is to personalize learning and it has structured itself in such a way to support these strategies.

(b) School administrators are given control over personnel decisions as well as personnel roles and responsibilities. School administrators also have control over some portion of their budget. However, it does not appear that significant flexibility is provided in regards to school schedules and calendars. The reviewer acknowledges that Rocketship is a small organization thus allowing for flexibility. However, it is not clear that the schools have the full flexibility that they need to meet the needs of their school if those needs were to differ from those of other Rocketship schools.

(c) The applicant has described how it differentiates instruction, but it is not entirely clear how student are given the opportunity to progress *and earn credit* based on mastery rather than seat time. The narrative highlights flexible grouping and regrouping but does not explain what happens if students have mastered the skills beyond those of everyone else in the class or even those skills and standards required to be taught in a certain grade. The information described is an excellent start but it seems that there is room for growth before the applicant is truly embracing a mastery based system.

(d) Rocketship describes that it uses multiple standardized assessment throughout the year to assess student progress. The narrative briefly mentions other informal assessments but does not provide additional detail. As a result, the applicant is not fully responsive to the selection criterion which asks for the applicants plan to provide an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple times and in multiple ways. Little information is provided on how students can demonstrate mastery outside of standardized assessments and whether they have ownership over the assessments or whether they are teacher driven.

(e) The applicant has described how it provides adaptable and fully accessible learning resources and instructional practices through adaptive software and other resources. Rocketship uses Response to Intervention (RTI) to identify struggling students. It uses an integrated service delivery approach rather than exclusively using segregated programs for students with disabilities. It explains that many of the online programs it uses can be used with these students though little detail is provided.. Rocketship also has a high ELL population. It states that the adaptive software is tailored to these students' learning level.

The applicant has failed to provide a high quality plan to improve in any of the areas addressed in this selection criterion. In some areas there are solid practices in place but there is always room for improvement. In other areas, more improvement is needed but no plan is provided. Some of these areas are addressed in C1 and C2 but even with the inclusion of that narrative, the applicant is not fully responsive to this selection criterion.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Rocketship has clearly explained how educators have access to content and tools both in and out of class as they are given laptops and can login to many of the resources outside of the school setting. For parents and students with internet access, some of the data systems and resources are online. The applicant plans to extend computer lab hours.

(b) educators receive a great deal of technical support through professional development. Students receive support in the usage of OLPs but little is described beyond this. Parents receive information on understanding school data but little is said about efforts to support parents in accessing other resources such as online educational resources for students. In (C)(2), Rocketship says that it will hire a contractor to develop compatability diagnostic tools that families can use to assess whether their internet connection and devises are compatible with certain online learning programs.

(c) The applicant says that it will provide access to data in an open data format but does not describe how this will be done. It does not appear that any funding is provided to support this. The applicant has not provided an adequate response to this section of the selection criterion.

(d) Rocketship indicates that it uses Schoolzilla as a data warehouse for a variety of assessment and academic data. The narrative states that it helps to link data systems across the organization but no additional explanation is provided.

The applicant has not provided all of the elements of a high quality plan for this criterion. In (C) it speaks to the integration of technology, tools, and resources, but it is not clear in the application if the applicant has provided a plan for providing access to data in an open data format or any additional detail related to the interoperability of its data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**12**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will use assessment results and results from other grant-established performance measures to measure its progress. In addition, an oversight team is in place and an advisory team will be established. A website will be developed for public transparency. Some elements of a high quality plan are in place but this response lacks clear timelines and activities required as part of a high quality plan. These are alluded to but more detail would have been helpful in understanding the applicant's plan for continuous improvement.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Communication with educators will take place through existing meetings such as grade-level meetings, principal cohort meetings, leadership team meetings, advisory team meetings, and others.

Students will be informed through focus groups and during the Rocketship Launch period. Communication with parents will occur during Back to School night, monthly parent meetings, and in-home visits. Information will also be shared on the website and through annual reports.

The applicant plans to use existing communication streams but has not shown that these are adequate distribution streams. For example, it has not demonstrated how widely attended parent events are. Additionally, it does not appear that there is a plan to improve upon existing communication streams in an effort to communicate about the grant.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**4**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set extremely ambitious goals related to the number of highly effective teachers and principals in the targets related to literacy. Rocketship's goal is 85% of students in all subgroups will have a highly effective teacher by SY 16-17. It is unclear why this will be unchanged in SY 17-18. The applicant already has a high number of highly effective teachers (baseline for all students of 65% highly effective teachers in SY 2012-2013) and therefore 85% does seem achievable over the course of the grant. However, increasing from a baseline of 37% highly effective principals in SY 2012-2013 to 85% in SY 2016-17 does not seem achievable. The applicant has not provided a rationale for this significant increase. Similar targets are set for mathematics so similar concerns exist.

The baseline results for effective teachers indicate that 100% of teachers are classified as effective. This does not seem reasonable and no explanation is provided to justify these results.

For the remaining performance measures, the applicant has established ambitious and achievable results. The

performance increase in generally 5% -10% a year depending on the measure which is ambitious but achievable if the applicant's plan is implemented with fidelity. Occasionally increases are expected between SY 12-13 and Sy 13-14 that do not seem reasonable or achievable as the increase is extremely high. However, this only occurs in limited situations.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will retain the services of an external evaluator to track the progress of students and grant activities. They will investigate how students perform once they leave Rocketship. The applicant is particularly interested in student success in middle school. The evaluation will examine how Rocketship students are doing compared to their peers who didn't attend Rocketship and whether there are commonalities among Rocketship students who are more successful in middle school and Rocketship students who are struggling. This will be used to determine if leading indicators can be used to catch students before they leave Rocketship. The RTT-D evaluation will examine grant implementation and effectiveness. The evaluation will include an analysis of assessment data as well as qualitative data. The evaluation will involve student data, student surveys, and family interviews.

The applicant has provided a chart clearly detailing timelines, deliverables, activities, and responsible parties.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposed budget is concerning.The majority of the budget, almost $12million of the requested $20 million will be used to fund salaries and benefits for staff. The applicant states that this is at the core of their work and will expand upon it rather than being supplemental so many of the national staff members will be working to support this initiative. While it is understandable and expected that these staff members will be supporting this initiative, it is not clear why over half of the budget needs to be devoted to salaries. Additionally, some of the proposed budget items do not have proper cost justification.

Examples of concerns with the budget are as follows:

1. Project 1: The line item for equipment includes many items that should not be included in equipment such as renovations to classrooms.
2. Project 1: The applicant has proposed to equip existing and new flexible classrooms with new furniture and equipment but provides no information on what this furniture and equipment will be or a cost justification for these items.
3. Project 1: No cost justification is provided for the estimated cost of the learning management system. There is no way to determine if this funding is sufficient.
4. Project 3: No cost justification is provided for developing pathways for Individualized Learning Specialists or for developing teacher and principal evaluation systems.
5. Project 3: The funding for "enhanced career pathways" is much too broad. $5,000 is budgeted for educators to participate in "deep meaningful training" but little information is provided as to what this actually entails.
6. Project 4: It is unclear why RTT-D funds are being used to fund assistant principal and principal salaries. While these principals will be supporting work funded by the grant, they would be in place with or without the work proposed under the RTT-D grant.

Additional concerns include the fact that there is very little direct support for schools. The majority of the funds are used to support salaries of individuals in the central office. Only minimal funding is provided from other sources and this is particularly troubling given the amount of grant funds budgeted for salaries. The applicant committed to providing funding in an open data format but has not described how this will be funded.

The majority of the remaining items in the budget have sufficient cost justification and will fund the variety of needs outlined in the application. However, given the challenges described above, the applicant is scored in the middle range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant contends that external funds such as those from Race to the Top will not be needed after enrollment grows in existing schools and new schools because funding from increased enrollment will be able to sustain positions at the central office. However, it must be assumed that additional staff will be needed to fund these additional schools and students so the contention that they will be self sustaining is not well justified.

The applicant does make a compelling argument that it will monitor and evaluate progress against performance measures throughout the life of the grant to ensure that it is learning from what is done and using this to plan for implementation in new schools. As the end of the grant approaches, the Oversight Committee will decide which grant funded initiatives should continue and which should be ended.

The plan for examining the initiatives that will or will not continue is sound. However, there are concerns about the applicant's plan for funding sustainability. Therefore the applicant scores in the middle range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

As part of its proposal for the competitive preference priority, Rocketship indicates that it will deepen its partnership with People Acting in Community Together (PACT) to develop authentic leadership among San Jose parents and to crease a toolkit and resources that can be used to launch similar parent engagement strategies and/or partnerships in other communities in which Rocketship operates. Rocketship also speaks to its existing partnerships that include after-school programs, early learning programs, and social service providers. Rocketship also plans to conduct a needs assessment to identify socio-emotional needs of students and families that prevent families from engaging in their student's education and develop partnerships to address those needs. However, this is not sufficiently responsive to this selection criterion. Because the applicant cannot provide a clear vision for what it will be doing because the needs analysis has not been conducted and the providers are not selected, the reviewer cannot offer an evaluation of the plan. As a result of not having a plan, it is unclear how this new work will impact the performance measures. If the applicant does not know what its needs are because the needs assessment has not been conducted, then it is difficult to establish goals to meet those needs.

The applicant has set quality performance targets, but it is difficult to determine if the plan will support this improvement without knowing what partnerships will be formed.

Though this plan includes some elements of a high quality plan, they are not sufficiently detailed. For example, the timeline provided for bringing on new partners spans the life of the grant and therefore tells the reviewer very little about the applicant's plan. Additionally, the activities are very broad and do not provide sufficient detail to allow the reviewer to understand how these partnerships built.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Rocketship has provided a great deal of information outlining its existing approach to personalized learning. It has set a clear vision for building upon its exisitng framework and believes that it will continue to increase student achivement in the process. The applicant has demonstrated an ability to increase student achievement at a higher rate than comparable schools. The applicant has laid out a clear plan for differentiating learning for students and providing a flexible classroom environment that provides opportunities for students to learn in different ways. It is clear based on this plan that the applicant will be differentiating instruction but the applicant has not clearly outlined how it will be personlizing learning. Rocketship has plans to provided extensive professional development to teachers. Additionally, the applicant clearly explains how it uses data to inform instruction.

The applicant's level of stakeholder engagement in the development of this application is notable and it has a plan to continue communicating with stakeholders. The reviewer does have concerns about the budget given that a significant portion of the funding would be used to support existing national-level staff.

Throughout its application, Rocketship does provide a comprehensive plan. The applicant still has room for improvement especially as it relates to personalization vs. differentiation and providing an opportunity for students to own their learning. The applicant's proposal provides for the expansion and refinement of current practices and will likely lead to increased personalization for its students.

Total		210	162