



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0163NJ-1 for TEAM Academy Charter School

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal, TEAM Rutgers Ready, is an extension of a charter school program that targets high needs students in the under-served communities of Newark and Camden NJ with a rigorous program of study, provides supports and interventions, so that they successfully graduate from high school, and are college and career ready. The vision for the participants centers upon reform efforts that are ambitious and achievable, are comprehensive, and are centered on the four core educational assurance areas. The data provided demonstrates a profound need for students in Newark and Camden; they are highly challenged in that they are high poverty, have poor graduation and college attendance rates, as well as poor achievement based upon standardized and state assessments.</p> <p>The primary goal of the proposal is to prepare students through a comprehensive approach of supports, preparation, and character development for high school graduation and college readiness. The proposal builds upon a successful model in place since 2002 that has specifically focused upon a community of high minority, high needs, and low socio-economics status coupled with a history of low graduation rates and high achievement gaps. The data provided finds that students in the current TEAM schools in Newark are successfully achieving and closing the gap in all grade levels and content areas. Using the model in place in Newark, the proposal will expand to include schools with similar demographics in Camden, a geographical area in close proximity to Newark.</p> <p>The model builds upon the KIPP charter school movement that has shown success (e.g., high school graduation and college readiness) in preparing students similar to those in Newark for access to and success in higher education. The evidence provided supports the efficacy of the proposed model through a data tracking system that monitors student progress and success beyond high school graduation. This is strength to be noted in that a longitudinal approach to monitoring and evaluating student success extends through college enrollment, attendance, and graduation. The proposal articulates a plan that is focused upon a personalized approach to learning (e.g., use of technology, individualized plans, data driven focus, the use of mentors and tutors) and tailors the approach based upon student strengths and areas of need. The strategies that are outlined indicate a variety of approaches are used in meeting student needs such as blended learning, a tracking system for both educators and students to continuously monitor learning and achievement as a tool for college readiness, mastery approach to learning, and multiple ways to demonstrate mastery. The plan has the potential to meet the need of a large number of under-served and high needs students in areas with the greatest challenges to student success.</p> <p>The comprehensive K12 and beyond plan uses continuous feedback to educators and students to monitor progress, uses multiple strategies such as blended learning and technology to allow for a personalized learning plan, and develops and aligns the curriculum with Common Core for a rigorous course of study that extends and allows opportunities for choice and deeper learning. The project provides educators, including teachers and administrators, access to training and coaching such as how to utilize data to inform and guide instruction on a personalized level and embraces an evaluation system that keeps students achievement at the forefront.</p> <p>The proposed plan is a high quality plan with specific goals and outcomes that has considered multiple strategies to support high need students for college preparation and success. Goals are clearly articulated and specifically align with the core educational assurance of the RTTT-D criteria; extensive and highly detailed supporting information provides depth and specifics that makes evident the thoughtful development of this proposal. Evidence, data, and supporting materials are embedded throughout the proposal attesting and confirming the validity and efficacy of the strategies and plans. The plan has well-articulated goals, supporting objectives, aligned strategies, and distinct measures to gauge progress, as well as specific performance goals for students. Timelines are provided; levels of responsibility outlined, and targets set that will move students along a continuum of achievement.</p>		

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The process for selection of schools included a team of diverse stakeholders such as a grant writing team comprised of the Chief External Officer, a Development Team, Director of IT, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Academic Support, along with TEAM senior leaders, and current as well as aspiring administrators; this team represents the major areas that are key components of the grant activities such as blended learning and the integrated data management system, for example. Their insight and contribution to the implementation of areas that they will be directly involved with and accountable for is a strength for early planning efforts. The continuity of the team for development and implementation provides for a strong plan and more importantly, those that are accountable for a successful implementation have a role and input at all stages of the proposal development.</p> <p>The team utilized various data for consideration of the schools to be selected (e.g, teacher/principal interest, school readiness, and school capacity) and evaluated strengths as well as limitations for implementation. The six current schools in Newark using this model, as well as the addition of three more and over 1000 students in Camden will scale up the plan significantly over 4 years. The schools are listed in the narrative description along with supporting data on demographics. The number of students that will initially participate (2210), in poverty (88%), and minority (95%) attests to the impact of the plan with over 4400 students ultimately provided services which directly aligns to RTTT-D criteria and goals. Expansion efforts are significant in that students with the greatest needs are targeted and will benefit from the project.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
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<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides data that supports the efficacy of reform efforts currently underway in Newark such as improved graduation rates and college enrollment for students who attend TEAM schools (e.g. 88%). In areas of high poverty, high minority, and low levels of parental high school completion and college attendance, evidence such as this documents the positive impact of the program. Expansion to other similar schools has the support of the city leaders and school officials including the Newark and Camden superintendents.</p> <p>The proposal provides a theory of change that includes the larger community and recognizes that change must include all community stakeholders. The plan articulates direct (e.g., improved achievement, graduation, college going) and indirect (e.g., partnerships, collaborative training,) outcomes because of reform efforts. A strength of the proposal is the notion that change will extend far beyond the schools directly involved in the project and outcomes will have an impact upon the quality of life for students and ultimately, the community. Providing students who have with the fewest resources, a rigorous and quality education will improve their academic success as well as access to higher education. .</p> <p>The logic model provides an excellent visual and summary of inputs and outputs in a concise and focused manner. As well, a timeline for expansion and scale up demonstrate the potential impact as well as the overall delivery and implementation scope. Based upon the evidence and data provided on previous efforts in Newark, this plan to scale up to other schools in Newark and in Camden is both ambitious and achievable. It is clear that the plan for scale up includes the six schools in Camden and builds upon the previous efforts of the TEAM approach and model.</p> <p>The plan provides great detail, evidence of success, provides timelines for implementation for every phase, focuses on the preparation and training for highly effective educators using student achievement as one measure of success, and is centered on student achievement and student outcomes such as high school graduation, and college and career readiness. The applicant outlines how the various components form a cohesive plan in that all of the strategies are embedded rather than viewed as individual or separate activities and how the project will be refined as needed to meet the implementation goals.</p> <p>The Rutgers Ready concept has been implemented in six KIPP regions with success and plans to disseminate the information broadly through Project Share, Schools That Work, and other schools locally and nationally including other charter school efforts are articulated. The implementation will be monitored and evaluated in an ongoing manner; a chart is provided that outlines a timeline and work plan for the scale up efforts and implementation efforts including responsible parties, the deliverables, and who will monitor each phase. The chart provides an overview supported by the narrative that specifically articulates the major efforts associated with implementation. The implementation plan is high quality with a timeline, deliverables, responsible parties and includes RTTT-D investments that support each effort as well. Details and specifics are provided for each phase and activity such that the plan is comprehensive in scope, ambitious in design, and achievable based upon previous successes.</p>		
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(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Multiple assessments include internal assessments, state tests, and national normed tests to track student progress in content areas, reading, and high school proficiency. The data provided is summative and shows growth for all students including subgroup performance. Equity of resources, access, and success is evident for the participating students. All students receive supports, interventions, access to a rigorous course of study, and the ability to track their progress every step of their academic career. As well, access to highly effective educators who receive training and professional development will provide a strong foundation in content as well as a strong support base. The data is used to track progress towards student achievement as well as to inform progress towards achievement goals set for this grant.

The major outcomes are aligned to the grant proposal and specifically towards student readiness for college. Goals are set for each student, providing a personalized approach that informs where the student is currently and where the student will need to be with regards to college readiness. A unique aspect is that a student's level of achievement is directly aligned to the type of college that will best fit the student's ability and interest; thus, all students are directed towards and work towards obtaining the necessary skills and abilities for college. Achievement goals set for all student are ambitious and work towards closing the achievement gap in significant numbers. For example, the project has set a graduation target of 95% for participating students by 2018. Students are prepared for college through the academic preparation, more time in class, and support programs; thus, the number of students enrolling in college has targets set at 87% by 2018. Using numbers for the first graduating class with a college enrollment of 80%, the evidence that future success is obtainable is an excellent point to note. The supports in place to prepare students continue through college which is particularly important for first generation college going students.

College preparation is tailored to individual students through a differentiated college planning approach. The data provided establishes targets for performance outcomes for all students including minority, SES, and subgroups. The goals set for grade levels and in content areas close the achievement gaps, and the targets for graduation and college enrollment have goals that significantly improve the outcomes for high need students. The plan is ambitious and achievable.

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:

The applicant provides extensive evidence of improving student achievement and student outcomes using the current model implemented in TEAM schools. Data provided in charts and tables along with other evidence shows the success and achievement made for all students in the Newark schools that implemented this model; this is important to note since these students and schools were previously among the lowest performing in the state. The schools targeted for the next phase of implementation in Camden are the lowest performing currently; the proposed model (TEAM Rutgers) has demonstrated positive and significant results with similar populations and demographics and thus, it would be expected that similar results will occur for the new participating schools and students as well.

The outcomes for high minority and high-risk students are impressive across all grades and all contents. What is to be noted is that this approach has been implemented only since 2002 and the outcomes demonstrate sustained success with the targeted population. For example, data on 5th grade students who entered the TEAM school were academically behind 1 to 4 years; using the MAP assessment for math in grade 8 finds the gap closed for all students and significantly narrowed for ELA- this is a major milestone accomplishment and one of many that are provided that attest to the strength and veracity of the plan supported by evidence based outcomes. The applicant outlines a plan with strategies specifically focused upon closing achievement gaps, improving academic achievement, having students graduate, and who are college and career ready. Every objective, strategy, and assessment is focused upon these outcomes; this makes for a plan that is laser like with strategic emphasis and purpose, aligned to targeted performance outcomes for success.

The students that have benefited from this model of educational reform are those with the greatest need and with the fewest opportunities to quality education and access to high performing and highly effective educators. The complex interaction of variables such as SES, race, location, and support systems attest to the need for a variety of interventions.

The model uses a K12+ approach that builds skills and abilities to reduce the gaps and to track student progress over

time. The tracking system monitors and continuously evaluates progress and provides feedback to students, parents, and teachers as well as to offer individualized strategies to assist growth. Ample evidence is provided that demonstrates the multiple ways that information is communicated and shared with parents, community, students, and stakeholders including web based information, home visits, parent meetings, information on the web site as well as through weekly reports on student success.

The data provides evidence of the effectiveness of the model on multiple benchmarks; the narrative explains the process utilized, provides data, and charts a course for the future. The narrative is substantive, in-depth, and makes a comprehensive model of evidenced base reform. The approaches to sharing data and performance is excellent in that it demonstrates the scope and depth of the processes with multiple groups of stakeholders.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Information and examples of annual reports are provided that shares information in student and school performance, teacher characteristics, and a summary of revenues and non-personnel expenditures. This is shared with all stakeholder and is available on the TEAM website. Annual reports required by the state are also available to stakeholders and on the website. Examples and evidence are provided in the appendix to further support the level of transparency in budgets and expenditures. The budget information provides an overview of salaries and links to specific salaries are included in the narrative.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The proposal outlines the latitude, flexibility, and autonomy that exists for TEAM schools including the level permitted by the State of NJ for charter schools. The goal of charter schools as reported in the narrative clearly supports the goals of this project in that leaders have the authority to plan, develop, and implement the goals of this RTTT-D proposal to improve student learning and student outcomes through personalized approaches such as blended learning, mastery learning, and the use of technology to enhance and support students.
 Based upon the data for NJ public schools, it is evident that charter schools and specifically TEAM schools, provide the level and scope of reform efforts needed by the State to improve learning and learning outcomes and are given the autonomy to do so. The narrative provides details on TEAM charter school renewal including renewal several times to continue the charter as well as to expand their scope of services; this process requires approval by the NJ Department of Education. It is clear that TEAM schools have the support of the NJ DOE as well as the autonomy to implement the program of services outlined in the proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	15
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The description of stakeholder engagement in the process of developing the proposal includes TEAM leaders and administrators, external constituents, school leaders, teachers, parents. and student members of the student council. The emphasis upon a collaborative approach was evident in the one-on-one meetings held with stakeholders over a period of time, their active engagement in writing the grants, review of each section of the grant by stakeholders, and a consistent approach to seeking input and dialogue. The extensive letters of support from a wide range of participants includes over 30 letters from organizations, parents, business partners, family and community groups, which indicates both a commitment as well as endorsement of the process and program. The proposal met the 70% threshold of support from teachers with 81% of the teachers responding and supporting the RTTT-D proposal.

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 outlines an approach to learning that is an investment in a student's future. Teachers are selected based upon credentials as well as their willingness and skills in developing personal relationships with students, parents, and the

community. For example, teacher teams make home visits and provide their cell phone numbers to parents and students. Building and fostering relationships is one strategy that supports the personalized approach to learning and allows educators the ability to work with students and their parents in an individualized approach. The strategies such as home visits and easy access to teachers build trust and the type of relationship needed for high need students and families . Students will have the opportunity to take foreign languages and participate in extensive opportunities for field trips broadening their scope and views of the geographic world as well as learning about different cultural norms and expectations.

The instructional plan takes the academic plan to a personalized approach through a variety of strategies (e.g., blended learning, technology access) all focused upon one major outcome- graduation and college entry. This single focus grounds the approach holistically and comprehensively with ambitious goals sets for student success and achievement. Monitoring of student progress towards college readiness is ongoing with frequent assessments and a customized plan for each student. Students set goals for themselves with regard to learning and their progress towards college readiness. Goals that are set by the individual, under their own control, and are a challenge are more likely to be obtained, and encourage persistent behaviors towards learning and other more rigerous goals. This is a vital aspect of changing learning paradigms in that it fosters personal responsibility for individual learning. The proposal outlines the personalized approaches and strategies across grade bands and includes special education. The strategies include a wide variety of resources and practices that support personalized learning using data to drive the instructional plans for each student such as technology, e-readers, apps as well as access to mentors and other supports. Teacher teams meet regularly to review data and share with students and parents just in time planning to keep a student moving forward with their academic plans and progress.

An excellent tool utilized by this project is the Rutgers Ready system; this system monitors and assesses students preparation and readiness along several dimensions (e.g., academic, character, talents, college access). This program assesses students individually on their progress and readiness for college with a personalized plan and feedback. It provides an in-depth analysis of where gaps exist, strategies for students to consider, progress made and where emphasis needs to occur-- this is an excellent and holistic tool that provides data from multiple assessments and along several cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions. Examples and data provide evidence of the multiple strategies and tools that TEAM utilizes to prepare students, monitor progress, and communicate with students and parents in an ongoing (e.g. weekly) manner.

This high quality plan includes strategies to address high need and low performing students (supported by evidence and data) with an academically challenging program (evidence of curriculum revision that foster a personalized approach to learning is one example) with specific outcomes and performance measures that are all directed towards graduation and college-and career-ready standards. The proposal has specific goals aligned with supporting instructional tools and strategies with specific assessments linked to student achievement as well as targets for ongoing evaluation. Data assessment is ongoing with educator teams trained in the use of data to direct specific efforts towards a personalized approach to teaching, re-teaching, and interventions. Educators have ongoing professional development in the use of technology to foster critical thinking and deeper learning as well as to build teacher efficacy and content expertise. The focus upon graduation and college and career readiness permeates the proposal and is the connecting thread in all of the efforts. The instructional plan includes embedded assessment such as NJ state assessments and ACT for example. This is a strength in that the assessments are not separate and used as individually but rather part of the comprehensive approach. There is a documented history of success and articulated plans provide an in-depth approach to the fidelity to implementation.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project has a clear focus and emphasis upon student learning outcomes and equally as important an acknowledgement of the role educators have in that success. The plan has an extensive professional development emphasis that includes ongoing training and development for teachers and administrators. The blended approach to learning for students requires teachers to have the most current skills and expertise in implementing a personalized approach including instructional strategies, use of data, monitoring and evaluating of student progress, and collaborating with others. Although there is a strong professional development plan for teachers and administrators, it was not overtly clear as to the evaluation system for administrators. The plan to develop and implement an evaluation system that is focused upon highly effective educators may take longer than anticipated. Since most of the goals for student achievement are centered on the effective teachers it would be useful to see greater details as to what is currently in place and how the evaluation will be revised, piloted, implement and evaluated as part of the efforts towards student achievement. It was not clear as to how the feedback process would be implemented through evaluations so that adjustments and changes can be made to instruction, assessment and intervention efforts for students.

The professional development plan that is outlined has the hallmarks of a high quality plan in that it is ongoing, in-depth,

has opportunities for implementation and practice, and time for follow-up and reflection. The activities as outlined are differentiated and personalized based upon teacher strengths and needs. Professional development that acknowledges that educators are in various stages of development, much like their students, provides opportunities for the novice educator through the expert level. The applicant understands this process and strategies were developed accordingly. For example, the instructional coaching and data analysis days provide a collaborative feedback process mechanism to improve the quality of teaching and of learning. The plan has an organizational team of instructional and technical support to fully engage and support teachers in the blended learning platform that is the cornerstone of this proposal. The scenarios provided a snapshot of the process and the level of teamwork that goes into classroom support- this is an excellent strategy to bring the proposal into a real time example.

The emphasis upon the use of data to inform instruction and build a personalized plan is clearly explained with supporting examples. The data plan for students uses multiple assessments that are reviewed by educators during planning and data days. Having a collaborative approach to the design of learning for students that best fits their current academic skill set through multiple demonstrations of mastery is a hallmark of personalized learning. Instruction is directly aligned to standards and has assessments both formative and summative to gage progress. Blended learning strategies such as the use of software and other technology rich supports are strategies that teachers use to reinforce the skills that are weak and build upon individual skills and talents; this requires teachers who are knowledgeable and competent in instruction and data analysis. Tools such as use of the ILMS platform and the Rutgers Ready interface to support teachers in the design of personalized learning for students. Examples and evidence are provided throughout the proposal of authentic data to demonstrate how teachers will use and apply data to inform instruction.

Ongoing development is specifically focused upon content area such as mathematics, science or foreign language for example. The focus to provide students with effective and highly effective teachers and administrators is demonstrated through a professional plan. Goals are set that by the end of the grant period at least 90% of the students will be served by effective teachers and 84% served by effective principals; and 48% of the students will be served by highly effective teachers and 70% by highly effective principles. Strategies to recruit teachers for hard to staff positions include working with Teach for American and having a Teaching Fellow Program; efforts have been successful overall however the applicant did note that finding quality ELA teachers has been difficult. Efforts will continue and include going to local universities and job fairs to find the most qualified educators.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	14

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The organizational structure described has several extensions with specific charges and areas of responsibly provided. The applicant describes each unit and their role as well as how the various units form one cohesive organization. A central office includes leadership whose focus is upon the management and operation processes with a primary purpose of supporting schools. New personnel to be added include professional development specialists who collaborate with schools to implement the strategies proposed in this grant. The proposal outlines the roles and responsibilities of central office as well as building administrators. While collaboration occurs in many areas such as budget and financial oversight, it is clear that building administrators have the autonomy to implement and guide the process of teaching and learning in their building. The approach is a team approach with all those involved however it is evident that the goal is to support and provide services that focus upon student learning.

The grant outlines how new positions will support and reinforce the implementation of the plan. For example, Team Rutgers Ready will add 4 positions to support this initiative. There does appear to be a layer of administrative positions and staffing to be added to implement this initiative that is substantial; how each of these new units fit into the current organizational plan is somewhat unclear.

Schools and school administrators have the autonomy and flexibility to develop and implement programs and strategies that fit with their needs and population. For example, school calendars are under the domain of each building and school budgets are as well. The description makes clear that school leaders have the ability to run their respective school with a great deal of autonomy and flexibility.

The plan describes multiple ways for students to demonstrate mastery through an individualized and personalized learning plan; however, it was not made clearly evident how this actually occurs specifically with regard to earning credit or to move

forward to the next level of academic content. The plan provides many examples of strategies that offer a personalized approach such as use of blended learning. The use of formative and summative assessments are excellent strategies for ongoing tracking of student progress. Additional details as to how this is implemented and evaluate with respect to mastery learning and credit obtainment would be useful in the narrative. Resources are available to all students and includes students with disabilities. The approach for all students is consistent in that the focus is upon learning and college readiness; this includes students with disabilities and ELL students. There are currently no students in TEAM that are ELL however; there are ample resources and strategies ready and available if needed.

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

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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides a chart that lists resources and tools available to teachers, parents, and students both in school and out of school. The school is the hub of the activities and resources; for example, access to technology is provided after school and through a computer lab. There was not a detailed description of the resources to be in place that support students once they leave school such as through a local library or church. Extending the supports into the community was a missed opportunity as well as seeking ways to involve the community for a systemic approach to change. While supports are in place with academic and technical aspects there was not a thoughtful explanation of how online or peer tutoring is facilitated. The emphasis was on the technical side of implementing the technology aspects and other supports were noticeably lacking in this discussion.

Parents and students have access to progress and will be able to utilize a system with ease to track and monitor student progress. It was not overtly clear how this would actually occur for parents. While teachers will be able to track and print off applicable data and information it was not evident if this is an open data format. There was no mention of electronic tutors or recommendations for other academic supports.

The data system will be expanded and track students on key indicators including academic as well other attributes; this is an in-house system and it was not clear how parents could utilize or access the majority of data. The integrated system is not fully operational within all departments and it was not clear how this would impact the plan since a great emphasis is placed upon the use and access of data.

Training for other stakeholders such as the Saturday school for parents did not have a strong justification or rationale provided. It was not made clear as to the purpose or history of prior success with initiatives such as this. Other strategies more foundational to the project and realistic for the targeted population were not clearly articulated. The utility and effectiveness of the proposed strategies was not clear in terms of what they were to accomplish or the purpose.

The applicant did not provide a convincing timeline of activities since many may take longer to develop and implement. Taking a year to develop and implement some of the proposed ideas and any potential delay may impact the overall success. It would have been useful to see a more proactive approach to things such as the integrated data system and evaluation system- both key aspects- addressed as priorities in the proposal and how any delays would be addressed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal outlines a process to implement a program focused upon student outcomes using a blended and personalized approach to success. The strategies to continuously monitor and evaluate specific sub-goals directed towards the major outcome includes ongoing and consistent evaluation. These strategies include regular meetings (weekly, monthly, annual) of leadership teams that have internal and external stakeholders and a process to efficiently collect and monitor data. The process includes strategies for formative as well as summative assessments for students (Rutgers Ready and ILMS), teacher evaluation processes on instruction and student progress, as well as indicators of satisfaction, school culture, and school climate for parents. The plan outlines a process that is ongoing, systematic, with feedback and timely opportunities to make changes and adjustments.

The role of the Senior Leadership Council and Grant Manager in overseeing the grant outline a depth level of involvement and oversight. Regular meetings to discuss and update progress as well as onsite visits to the school provides vertical as well as horizontal flow of information and collaboration- this is an excellent process as described. Evaluation of progress towards targets and performance measures demonstrates continuous monitoring of the implementation process and

evaluation of outcomes.

Information will be widely shared and disseminated through the TEAM website, faculty and staff meetings, student assemblies, parent/teacher meetings, and report card nights. All of the data collected for the surveys and as part of this proposal will be shared as well as student, teacher, and principal assessments. The process outlined is ongoing and transparent in communication and sharing of data. Progress towards goals of this proposal will be shared and used to inform all stakeholders of the RTTT-D investments and status.

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

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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project describes multiple strategies for communication both internally and externally and with a variety of stakeholders. Parents are engaged in school events including a mandatory Saturday school and receive regular and consistent communication and updates; however, there was no evidence provided on how this will be linked to continuous improvement.

Information is shared via a variety of methods (e.g., email website, leadership meetings, network of KIPP schools,) and includes up to date performance against goals. There was a lack of depth and evidence provided as to a schedule, samples, or examples. How parents are directly involved is somewhat elusive in that their active engagement is not overtly evident. The strategies are descriptive and general.

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

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5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides a narrative description for grade bands including benchmarks, target performance goals, specific assessments including national and state. Ambitious goals are set for each criteria over the grant period; for example, by 2018 the goal is to have 90% of the students taught by a highly qualified and effective teacher. Understanding that teacher quality is the first step in changing student outcomes this is a notable and ambitious goal. Based upon the plans outlines for improving teacher quality through the professional development outlines earlier, this is ambitious but doable.

Performance measure for student achievement parallels that of the teaching force for TEAM. Performance goals spiral up over time with concerted efforts to narrow and close the achievement gaps. All of the subgoals set are geared towards college enrollment and attendance; this singular focus is evident throughout the plan and supported by the target measures and outcomes. Specific indicators will be assessed through a variety of means; for example, social-emotional indicators will use a Healthy School Survey and include parent input and feedback; this is an excellent opportunity to involve and engage parents. Plans to continually assess progress towards meeting the goals and targets includes annual data review to determine any performance gaps as well as the efficacy of the instruments and measures that are utilized. There is both an annual and longitudinal review of data and measures to assess that implementation of the project is on track and in need of any revisions or adjustments.

The Rutgers Ready data points delve deeper into factors that are needed for college success beyond academic preparation- these include indicators such as character, reasonability, self-direction, career readiness, and participation in activities that foster a well-rounded student. For high school student, FAFSA completion and ACT scores will provide other measures of college readiness.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Key aspects of the proposal that direct the focus of the plan are the focus of the evaluation efforts. For example, overarching projects such as Rutgers Ready and the ILMS system are deeply rooted in all aspects of the proposal. While there are specific sub-goals within each project, the overall measure of continuous improvement considers the holistic aspects of the individual and major project events. A chart outlines the major projects that direct the project, the investments as a component of the RTTT-D, timeframe, specific metrics to assess effectiveness and responsible units. The presentation of a plan from a holistic position is a strength in that sub-strategies for each major project have been presented, addressed, and evaluation techniques discussed throughout the proposal. A proposal of this scope and magnitude has to approach the evaluation from a holistic and comprehensive perspective. The plan for continuous

improvement includes a timeline of monitoring progress with a focus upon data, schedule of meetings, how assessments and data will be used to assess progress. Each component project of the proposal has been described in detail with supporting information and evidence such as charts, visual representations of authentic measures, and each component has a clear link to the goal and objectives of the project. The supporting data and evidence provides a comprehensive picture of the totality and impact of the project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget outlines expenditures by the supporting projects that will be implemented. For example, the project associated with the data management system has information on each component with associated costs, expenditures, and general description of purpose with direct linkages made to student support systems and achievement. Each major project area is detailed in this manner thus the applicant provides a clear plan for each of the major projects and areas of emphasis.</p> <p>All funds that support the proposal are included as well as funds gained through external sources such as grants and foundations. The budget makes clear what are one-time expenditures such as the data system and professional development training, and those expenditures supported by the state or LEA such as personnel. The long-term efforts focus upon changing the culture and efficacy beliefs of students and require the kinds of intensive efforts towards change outlined in the proposal. Grant activities build the capacity of parents, students, community, and the educational agency to facilitate systemic change efforts that address generational poverty, lack of education and resources. The plan to develop and train teachers to be highly effective requires a dedicated and intensive approach to change as outlined.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget narrative provides a historical review of the implementation of charter schools and especially TEAM. The TEAM expansion examines the requested budget in terms of internal resources and funding such a capital campaign, state funding, and other pledges of support as well as how RTTT-D funds will be used to expand the program to the next level of scale. The applicant outlines overt plans for sustainability including funding sources, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties. The applicant includes projections of a lower per pupil cost and plans to seek support though alumni, corporations, business and community partners and fund raising efforts. These efforts align with the post grant plans for sustainability.</p> <p>This scaling up efforts note the need to build the infrastructure as it relates to programs such Rutgers Read and the ILMS system these are key facets of the proposal as well as support the long term efforts to track, monitor, and use data to develop a personalized approach to learning. The budget narrative outlines what expenditures are one time investments versus ongoing and what costs will be absorbed over time by the TEAM schools. While personnel costs are a large component of the budget, the need for the personnel is justified in that specific subprojects within the grant are supported; for example, and technical expertise is needed for the building of the data management system. There are plans to evaluate the ROI over time as well as to evaluate the overall effectiveness as it relates to student outcomes. The purchase of technology equipment to support the blended learning approach is within reason as are other budget requests. Projected funding analysis is that TEAM can serve the districts at 80% of the current costs and lower the per pupil expenditures will delivering a high quality set of programs and services.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The project outlines strategies to personalize learning for high need students so that student outcomes such as graduation and college and career readiness are achieved. The plan has described key strategies that build partnerships to support students and their parents to assist in development that goes beyond academics such social and emotional supports. As</p>		

well, opportunities such as extended time for learning, before and after school programs, summer enrichment, and assisting students for post secondary success, are some of the supports offered to students. Programs include partnerships with civic, business, other educational organizations such as high ed, and address academic as well as social and emotional development. The list of partners is expansive and includes a diverse offerings that align to varied student needs as well as to student interest.

The applicant outlines 5 population desired results that will result from the various partnerships. Students, parents, community, alumni, business partners are some of the examples where impact will occur as results of the various partnerships. The plan is rich in detail and specific in that there is a focus with desired outcomes provided to address all areas of development such as academic, social, engagement etc.

This focus upon the total student is comprehensive in that all aspects of development are considered and are components of the plan to improve student outcomes such as graduation and college and career readiness. For example, the plan includes intensive support out of the regular academic day to build knowledge and content skills (e.g., after and before school tutoring and enrichment, extended day, summer school programs) as well physical activities such as sports as well as enrichment opportunities for learning (e.g., Film Club, Culinary Arts). These activities are supported by community partners (e.g., New Jersey Performing Arts Center). Offering these programs will support the student in multiple ways and provide a diverse and enriched set of opportunities for learning; as well, the timing is conducive to the needs of the working parent community. Charts and data provide evidentiary support for the many partnerships that will support this initiative.

The project has the plan to scale up to include other similar schools and community over time. For this phase, implementation of the many subprojects that will drive this plan will be developed and refined for effectiveness and efficiency. The plan addresses how schools will meet the needs of their students and support parents through multiple strategies.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The project description, goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes are clearly articulated and focused upon supporting and preparing high needs and high poverty students for graduation and beyond. The plan outlines a personalized approach that addressed individual academic strengths and weaknesses with multiple learning strategies and carefully monitoring progress. The use of data and how to effectively use data to inform and guide instructional change is evident with the development of a comprehensive collection and tracking system. Meeting the needs and providing learning experiences that are relevant, foster deeper learning and critical thinking as well as personalized is made evident in the blended learning approach that spans the PreK-12 environment. The goals specifically target student learning with high performance standards and goals for all students including ELL or those with special needs. Teacher and administrators will receive training on strategies aligned to the proposal- for example, the use of data or the use of technology. Targets for improved performance are set and maximize growth.

Total	210	201
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0163NJ-2 for TEAM Academy Charter School

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(1)</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision because it will help the applicant reach project goals. The applicant will operate in a data rich, evidence-based visionary environment of education reform. There is extensive data and documented evidence and research that explain the vision for this project. It builds on the four core educational assurance areas, each of which is discussed in detail. The applicant is well positioned to build success, utilizing personalized learning strategies throughout the project. Student outcomes will be accelerated because of investments in blended learning, an enhanced data system and a rigorous college readiness plan for each student.</p> <p>The applicant presented 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 academic interests. Currently this will be achieved because there is a history of academic achievement in the past, by the applicant. An example is that students in the target schools have closed the achievement gap progressing from several years behind grade level when they entered an applicant's school. They scored proficient or higher on the State test in reading at 91% and 67% scored proficient or higher in math. Currently there is an experienced team of in-house, full time data analysts and programmers. Students will benefit from this experience. That team will not need to be trained, thus they will build on that knowledge and aptly apply this expertise in the project, right away. Student learning will be deepened by their devising plans with educators for short term and long term goals. Students will experience a blended learning environment, expanded after school programming and unique summer school experiences. All of these education reforms will be adapted to meet the Common Core standards and Next Generation science standards, which will prepare students for increased academic attainment.</p> <p>The applicant described a vibrant, exciting classroom that will motivate and inspire students to learn. One specific sixth grade math classroom has a math bar which is impressive. This math bar will allow students to choose math content and strategies they want to explore and learn at their own pace. The classroom is a place where teaching strategies and a reward system hold great promise. Incentives are offered via elaborate celebrations of student success. Achievement lists are posted around the classroom and badges are awarded for academic growth and achievement. These celebrations of academic progress will act as incentives for students to excel. Teachers will receive professional development and individualized coaching in the use of blended learning. Internal staff will receive stipends to accelerate the development of assessments at the high school level. These incentives will likely help the applicant attain the project goals.</p> <p>The applicant has a track record of turning around low performing schools. This was documented by data, maps and in the proposal narrative. The applicant has the necessary components to conduct a high quality project. The reform vision is described explicitly and convincingly.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(2)</p> <p>The applicant 's approach to implementing the reform proposal will support a high quality project. Students will be well prepared to enter any postsecondary institution of higher education with rigorous standards. This does not seem to be a statement without merit because the applicant has a documented track record of raising academic achievement before and with similar populations. The approach is likely to be successful because of the strong support for the project. The applicant adequately described the process used to select the six participating schools. The selection process meets the eligibility standards of the competition. The applicant described the selection process using a persuasive narrative and data tables. The approach used in the selection of schools and students is reasonable and sound. Because of the demonstrated need and low levels of academic performance among the selected schools, they all meet the eligibility requirements for the project. There will be 2,210 students by the end of the grant period, who will participate in this project and 88.5 % of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. There will be 258 educators participating. There will be an acceptable teacher to student educator ratio. A list of the schools was provided and relevant data given to establish eligibility requirements. The school selection process</p>		

was clear for Newark's participating schools. But the selection process was not as detailed for the Camden schools that will be phased in to the project. Therefore it is unclear to know the extent to which the participating schools in Camden will receive the same level of services and results as those participating schools in Newark. For both Camden and Newark schools the applicant provided the required information on student enrollment and socioeconomic data. Newark also provided a table with individual school profiles, student subgroup information and academic achievement data. For Camden more specific information is needed about the schools, students, academic achievement and families. Without this information, it is difficult to fully assess this section.

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

10

9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(3)

The applicant presented a high quality plan describing how the proposal will be scaled up for some schools and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide schools. Additional details about the schools in Camden would be helpful. The change will directly and indirectly reach 44,000 students in one city and 13,000 students in another city, where the project will be scaled up or expanded. The applicant is likely to be successful because the plan is laser focused on improving student academic achievement, closing the academic gap and providing rich and diverse support services. The theory flows from that mission. Student subgroups will benefit from this project because they are included in the project and will receive the needed support services to ensure their success. There is a partnership, through Project SHARE, which provides technical support and staff development to other schools in the district. Also there is a partnership with George Washington Carver Elementary School that provides joint staff development and retreats for principals. Both are examples of ways in which reform by the applicant will contribute to district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

In the past, the reforms that the applicant has made in increasing State test scores, designing deeper staff development, which the applicant has willingly shared with other schools in the school district and increasing the college going rate of students in the city are documented. The applicant has already translated meaningful reform to support district wide change beyond the participating schools. This application will ramp up that effort. More students will be served. More staff will be trained. Additional students will be prepared to enter college and prepared for successful college matriculation. Prior experience, rich data, frequent feedback and additional resources will ensure that the applicant attain the ambitious and attainable project goals.

The criteria for this part of the proposal require evidence of "meaningful reform to support district wide change beyond the participating schools.". It is unclear how the scaling up of the planned six schools which will be phased in during the course of the project, located in another city, will support district-wide change in Camden.

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)

In general it is not clear if the applicant included data for both Camden and Newark in the performance measures as required in the selection criterion.

The applicant stated that only 12% of adults in the entire city of Newark have college degrees. Therefore there is a compelling reason to increase the college going rate for students in the city. This will improve because of the rich resources provided by the project to students and their families. The ripple effect on students, siblings, friends and families cannot be underestimated. The multiple assessments of statewide tests for grades 3-8 is projected to increase academic achievement to 85.7% by 2018 and to 87% in special education. All are solid assessments and are aligned to Common Core standards. Comparative data linked to the State test score was presented and showed growth. A table is presented that described how the achievement gap will be decreased from 22.95% to 6 % in English Language Arts and by 13.25% to 1% in math and 12% to 0% in science. These are ambitious and achievable goals. During the project students will maintain a high graduation rate which will be 95% at the end of the grant

The applicant will have a 95% high school graduation rate by 2018. College enrollment will have 87% of students enrolling in college. This is likely to be attained because of the personalized learning plan, in depth teaching, alumni support and longer school hours. Examining data on postsecondary degree attainment, show that in the 2011 graduating class 50% of the students are on track to graduate from college. The goal is to have 60% of students graduate from college by 2018. This goal is achievable and ambitious because of the more rigorous curriculum and the KIPP Through College Program. This KIPP Through College Program is designed to provide extensive mentoring and a myriad of support services to students as they prepare to enter, attend and complete college.

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:

(B)(1)

The applicant has an impressive record of successful education reform because it has demonstrated a clear record of closing the academic achievement gap. The target schools have a strong record of students out performing peers across the State in 2013. For instance, third graders in the target schools tested at 81% proficiency in language arts and literacy and 85% proficiency in math. These rates are far above public school rates and above State rates. Retention rates are high and the attrition rate in 2012 was low because only 7.6% of students left the schools. Half of those moved away. This is phenomenal because it shows how successful the applicant has been in raising the academic achievement of students in low performing schools. The applicant exists in a city where academic achievement is very low in the public schools. The target schools are viewed by many as a necessary alternative to low performing public schools in the city. This is reflected in the waitlist of students wanting to be accepted into the target schools. There is a waitlist of 8,500 students out of 44,000 public school students. The target schools participating in the project have earned the reputation of high performing. Even the Mayor (at the time) wrote complementary statements about the applicant's capability to improve academic achievement among the lowest performing schools. Charts are used to document the demographics and low performance of neighborhood schools.

The applicant prides itself in being data driven. Currently the project regularly reports data on attendance, behavior and academic progress. The project makes student performance available to educators, parents and students in ways that readily inform and improve project services, instruction and participation. These data and more is widely disseminated to the students, teachers and other school based educators. Parents are informed directly through public school board meetings and other ongoing contact with parents. Examples of the kind of data, frequency of data disseminated and overall use of data was documented through extensive evidence, including a matrix and an Annual Report.

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

(B)(2)

The applicant exercises a high level of transparency. As a local education agency, chartered by the State, numerous reports are required. Those reports include personnel and financial information. The applicant participates in the Local Education Agency Finance Survey (F33 Survey), results of which include information on the district, staffing and financial matters. A screen shot is included in the proposal. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff; actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only and non personnel expenditures are available and shared. The applicant follows a highly transparent path of openness by including the personnel and finance information through other sources, such as the IRS 990 Reports and Civil Rights Data Collection. Also, all salaries are a matter of public record to be in compliance with the State sunshine laws. The

applicant goes further in the transparency policy by stating that if any stakeholder cannot, for any reason, obtain personnel and financial data, the central office will provide the information. The applicant already practices transparency and will continue to do so throughout this grant. This information is also available at public board meetings.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(3)

The applicant has provided evidence of ideal conditions to implement the project. The project will be operating in an environment of autonomy because the applicant has a State charter, which is accompanied with an LEA (local education agency) status. Specific areas of autonomy were outlined and included a data system, teaching and learning, hiring and professional development. Because these areas are fundamental to implementing a personalized learning plan and related education reform, the applicant will successfully attain project goals. The applicant is free to implement the personalized learning reform. The Law has been in effect since 1996 and the charter has been renewed every five years since. This is evidence that the applicant has sufficient autonomy to implement a personalized learning environment.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	15
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4)

The applicant reached out and involved a significant number of key stakeholders because there were pre proposal discussions, with numerous stakeholders. Many groups, educators and individuals were deeply engaged in contributing to the project. Some helped write the proposal, especially middle school teachers. The applicant made adjustments to the proposal based on recommendations from stakeholders. These participating stakeholders were very involved in developing the proposal. There were weekly check in contact with various stakeholders during the preparation of the proposal. This kept the stakeholders focused, engaged and informed. A one page information sheet was developed and widely disseminated to keep parents and others informed about the progress of the proposal. Dates and meeting locations were presented that showed the extent that contact was maintained while the project was being developed. The applicant amassed 35 signatures and sixty letters, which were collected and documented to show the success of the outreach effort. Because of this extensive outreach to stakeholders, the applicant gained strong support from stakeholders.

The applicant is not a part of collective bargaining, but received support from over 80% of the teachers. This exceeds the 70% required. A vast number of key stakeholders wrote letters of support and appreciation for the project. The letters were included in the proposal and represented broad support for the project.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)

The applicant will provide rich teaching and learning experiences. Each student will receive an hour long home visit because it will allow school personnel to gain valuable insight into the needs of each and every student. It is stated that 88% of students are high needs. By conducting the home visit each student will have personal attention before entering the school. Even though most students are high needs, the applicant recognizes that each student is unique and the education plan should take into consideration individual student needs. This is the first step toward creating a personalized learning plan for each of the students. The applicant has instituted a rigorous process to not only recruit highly effective teachers but other school personnel, as well. Students will develop their

own personalized learning plans because the teachers will be trained to deliver instruction that is standards based and vertically aligned. This will occur in an environment of personalized learning, blended learning, goal oriented and a college-going culture. The personalized learning plans will empower students to engage in deep learning and master critical content. This kind of environment will advance the project toward reaching the individual and project goals. The multi year targets for students and constant feedback will support deep learning. Reports on academic progress will be made through the formative evaluation process. The project use of blended learning classrooms will enhance the learning environment by allowing students to set goals, practice team work, perseverance, communication and problem solving. The innovative ILMS data collection, analysis and reporting system, along with in-person teaching will give students options to choose their own content and pace to fit their individual learning styles.

The applicant will identify individual talents and interests that will lead the students to refining their personalized individual learning plan. There will be one on one counseling, parent conferences, student access to teacher cell telephone numbers and other means to reinforce deep learning because this will place the students on track to meeting college and career readiness.

The applicant will have extensive access to field trips in the country and abroad. These experiences have and will continue to expose students to diverse cultures and perspectives that will motivate them. They will visit college campuses, which will inspire them to become excited about college. Expanded opportunities will be provided to students, which will broaden the students' horizons.

The applicant has a number of high quality strategies and methods for high needs students in place and will support students in reaching the individualized goals. The textbooks, in person instruction and ipods are some examples that will enrich student learning. The mastering of a foreign language such as French and Spanish is representative of courses that will help students to be college and career ready. Other changes and accommodations that will be implemented to accommodate the high needs students will be extending the school day by at least 43% and the Saturday enrichment sessions once a month will do the same. Both of these are current examples of school reform, with a proven record.

Students will benefit from the high quality learning tools because they will have access to such technology as kindles, e-readers, e-books, laptops, and color printers. The applicant will have a number of accelerated reading stations that will allow students to read at their own pace. Continuous data and feedback will be conducted for the purpose of review and corrective action, if needed. The collected data will assist in measuring student progress toward college and career readiness.

Students will be able to understand how to use the tools and resources because of the training teachers will receive and the skills of the entire technology team.

The applicant has put in place extensive mechanisms 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. There will be numerous and sufficient opportunities for students and families to be trained. For example teachers will train students on the proper use of electronic devices and technology teams will provide support. The school based management teams will monitor the training process, which will ensure proper and timely implementation of the project. In addition the applicant presents adequate training sessions for families, students, stakeholders and others through the Parent Academy and other sessions.

The applicant presented a high quality plan, including all components outlined in the grant application. The key goals are to get all students to be career ready and college-going, which was described with necessary specificity. The timeline was adequate and evidenced through the student personalized learning plans. In addition the deliverables were evident through the mastery of rigorous courses, such as foreign languages, math and science. Key personnel were included such as highly effective teachers, principals, central office administrators and management teams, who has clear tasks to support student learning.

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

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)

The applicant will support the implementation of personalized learning for students in the target schools. The stipends which will be given to Campus Captains at each campus is a good incentive. The two Captains in the target schools will be important additions to the project because they will blend learning data and serve as "evangelists" for the project. This compensation will serve as an added incentive to ensure that there is added support toward developing personalized learning plans and implementing other education reforms in the proposal. Students will benefit from the rigorous training and staff development which teachers will under go because that training will be designed to ensure that students attain their personalized learning plans. Teachers will be continuously trained in new teaching strategies and methods. With all of the supports operating in tandem it is likely that the impact will be tangible and visible. The applicant will adapt content and student opportunities such as blended learning classrooms, backed up by the data platform to further enhance teaching and learning. Students will be prepared to enter and matriculate in competitive colleges and universities because of the rich project supports and highly effective teachers, who will help them reach their individual goals. The rigorous evaluation process for teachers and students will produce highly effective teachers, including teachers who are in the pipeline to become principals. Consequently students will have more access to effective teachers and indirectly to principals who have come through the pipeline. The many visits to different college campuses will orient and motivate students to envision their entering and completing college.

Teachers will have access to high quality learning resources and state-of-the-art technology, such as the ILMS system cell phones designated for students to contact them at any time. Every teacher will also have a tablet that will help them hone their skills and improve their knowledge of aligned content and be more effective in accelerating student progress. These resources are appropriate for facilitating on-going support for continuous student learning.

The applicant's plan for collecting feedback from teachers is comprehensive and will lead to the identification of any problems that might need attention, including issues with technology resources meeting student needs. For example the technology teams are school based and will bring strong support to teachers. In addition the Champions will gather feedback as they serve as a liaison between the teachers and the administration.

The teacher evaluation is one assessment tool that will determine effective and highly effective teachers because it is rigorous. The instrument and process has been tested and proven to be not only an evaluation tool but a coaching guide as well. The instrument and process will be tied to performance measures related to the project. This is a current trend in education reform. More information is needed about the process for principal evaluation. It was not addressed with the same level of specificity as the teacher evaluation. The applicant provides little or no evidence that the principal receive sufficient training and coaching to continuously improve school progress. toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

The new and improved interoperable data system will be invaluable for collecting and compiling data that are the results of measuring all levels of data related to student assessments. This will clearly provide data which are analyzed, shared and used to continuously support students and staff in reaching their goals. The formative evaluation is an effective strategy for implementing the project with real time feedback that will be used for corrective action, if needed.

The applicant will recruit teachers to serve in hard to staff schools and subjects. They will work very hard with Teach for America to identify effective and highly effective teachers. The plan to recruit teachers is robust and will likely identify teachers, who will become effective or highly effective teachers. The plan also focuses on developing effective and highly effective teachers within schools through coaching conferences, meetings and the annual summit.

The applicant has a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching in order to provide all students with support to graduate and be college and career ready. The work plan is clear and appropriate, which includes activities, deliverables, a timeline and responsible persons.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1)

The central office supports all of the schools in the project network because the duties of central office staff mandate close connection and linkages with the schools. Central office personnel are expected to be out in the schools to provide expertise and support. Each central office staff member has goals around supporting staff to ensure 90% staff satisfaction. The program will be strengthened because of the new positions that will be added to enhance the data process, such as the new technology positions.

The charter from the State provides a great deal of autonomy to the applicant. School leadership teams have sufficient flexibility and autonomy because the teams will have the power to lead, which include control over school budgets and personnel, school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models.

Students will have numerous opportunities to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery because the students will be assessed at the initial home visits and within the three groups in the classroom, weekly. This will allow students to advance academically and be rewarded for attaining or exceeding goals. Academic achievement will be celebrated in many ways. The application would be strengthened by the applicant providing examples of multiple comparable ways students will be able to earn credit for academic achievement. More information is needed about how students will earn credit for mastering academic, course or class content.

The applicant will expand services to focus more on special needs students, since 13% of students have special needs. The addition of a group of professionals, learning specialists, social workers and paraprofessionals will boost the academic achievement of students through carefully guiding the students through the process of tailoring the personalized learning plans for each and every student with an IEP. Because of this concentrated focus on special needs students and the promise it has for success, other subgroups will have the same opportunity to access these services.

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

10

8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2)

Students, parents and educators have appropriate levels of access to high quality cutting edge technology. Direct training will be ongoing. These opportunities will level the playing field by providing unlimited access and training on the proper and effective use of technology. Parents will be trained at back-to-school nights, teacher conferences, math nights and the Parent University. The Parent University will likely be effective because it is a multi session training program for families where they will be trained in all facets of the project including strategies to support their students. It is required that parents attend. The proposal would be strengthened by describing more expansive training sessions for students and other appropriate stakeholders.

Current dashboards and trackers are built to extract information from a large database into an Excel document merged into Microsoft. This is a strong foundation on which the applicant will expand data systems that will support and further the possibilities of allowing parents and students to export their information. The expansion will install an interoperable data system that will produce data rapidly and frequently so that students will reach their individual personalized learning goals. The applicant presented a table that displayed this plan. It is comprehensive and includes activities, deliverables and responsible persons. This new level of a data system will support the project in attaining project goals.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(1)

The applicant presented a comprehensive plan that includes project activities, deliverables, responsible persons and a timeline. The applicant presented clear goals for continuous improvement to strengthen operations and gather feedback from a variety of stakeholders. The applicant presented a convincing rationale for the continuous improvement of the project ways that they will identify promising practices and weaknesses at strategic times.

The applicant presented a high quality plan because it will use a rigorous continuous improvement process for implementing an effective project. The rationale for choosing measurements is clear and appropriate. Many resources and support will be assessed and the results will be used to improve project activities. Students will benefit from the research which will be conducted by the Healthy School Survey and the KIPP Foundation. Data will be collected and feedback will be given to students, staff and to other key stakeholders. Senior leadership from the Central Office will meet and provide feedback on a weekly basis. Students will benefit from the frequent data collection because that information will be used by teachers to assess to what extent students are progressing toward attaining their personalized learning goals. The Executive Committee will meet monthly and provide feedback. The grant manager will assume the overall responsibility of bringing all of the information and data together. The grant manager will be a fulltime employee in the project. This will ensure that someone is constantly identifying promising practices and project weaknesses and will be ready to intervene, if needed. The project manager will provide frontline monitoring and will work closely with other educators, central office personnel and many other project staff to collaborate in ensuring that the project attains the ambitious goals. Constant feedback, monitoring and measuring project progress will help the project remain on track to successfully complete the project on time and within budget. The posting of project information on the web site will keep the public informed, thus ensuring transparency about project progress. The applicant will likely identify additional resources to strengthen the project because there will be a full time grant manager. The grant manager will have appropriate duties and responsibilities, such as identifying promising practices and weaknesses. The grant manager will report annual and quarterly goals and the extent to which project performance goals are being met. The grant manager will facilitate the formative evaluation process.

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

(E)(2)

The applicant presented a comprehensive plan for ongoing communication and engagement. There is evidence that there has been and will be ongoing contact and meaningful engagement with a vast network of internal and external stakeholders, such as through meetings, parent and other conferences, the use of the web site and summit. The applicant stated that the project activities will happen in real time, which will help the project stay on time. The benefit of having project activities happen in real time will engage project staff and stakeholders in implementing the plan. By doing so, the applicant constantly shares project information, informs parents and families, builds support for target schools and develops and maintains relationships with partners. These are all elements of a high quality plan, including project activities, deliverables, a time line and responsible persons.. Another dimension to the ongoing communications with external stakeholders, is the connection to KIPP's sharing networks, subject area conferences and meetings and the annual summit. All of these contacts will provide valuable opportunities to exchange information on best practices in the field and acquire deep insights into the ever changing education reform movement.

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

(E)(3)

The applicant presented a high quality plan that has ambitious and achievable goals. The applicant will reach these goals by:

-hiring effective and highly effective teachers and principals. For instance by 2018, 48% of students will have access to highly effective teachers and 70% will have access to highly effective principals. These are only the highly effective teachers and principals. Even more students will have access to effective teachers and principals.

-using groundbreaking tools for tracking real time data on student performance.

- implementing rigorous performance measures for K-3rd graders, with benchmarks and frequent review so

that appropriate action can be taken, if needed.

- providing students with the opportunity for earning points regarding academic achievement, talents and interests, college knowledge and character building.

-having social-emotional indicators for 4-12th graders.

-ensuring that 75% of students complete a resume and service hours in career interest areas. Even those who do not have resumes and service hours, the applicant will assist the students to complete the resumes and service hours.

-providing support for students who have gaps in their personalized learning plan.

The applicant used research for selecting performance measures. The rationale for selecting the measures are reasonable and appropriate. The selected measures will provide rigorous, timely and formative information tailored to the project. Students will attain academic achievement through setting benchmarks for high academic achievement by following their personalized learning plans. Students in 4-12th grade will benefit from the social-emotional indicators because social and emotional growth are critical to that age group.

All of the monitoring tools and support that the project has put in place will ensure that the project activities and performance measures will be constantly reviewed in a timely manner. Highly trained staff and rich resources will support the project in attaining the ambitious goals. The applicant has met the standard of the required performance measures.

Students will advance toward reaching their goals because they will complete a resume and service hours in career interest areas for inclusion in their personalized plan. For those who have gaps, support will be provided. Mentors, alumni and partners will provide valuable assistance to students and to the project in this regard.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(4)

The applicant presented a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of project investments. The bold evaluation strategies that the applicant will use to identify any project issues or shortcomings, will be effective because the plan has the necessary elements to ensure success. The description of the evaluation process is clear and convincing. The project will be enhanced by the technology and rich resources that will support the evaluation process and the overall project. The applicant will consistently and frequently evaluate RTTD funded activities. The professional development and the personalized student learning plans will receive close tracking and evaluation. The applicant presented a comprehensive table that includes metrics of effectiveness, time frames and responsible parties. This is a guide toward successful evaluation of the project investments. Some examples of the metrics in the table include:

100% staff trained

90% satisfaction of training

90% parent satisfaction

Capturing these kinds of data will help the applicant stay on track and attain the project's ambitious goals.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(1)

The budget is comprehensive because it identifies all funds that will support the project. The budget and budget narrative adequately explain and justify project expenditures. The cost of project personnel and technology, which are big ticket items, are reasonable. A quality project needs a budget that will ensure that the project is adequately funded. This budget does just that. The project presented a reasonable, well thought out budget. The budget will have a combination of endowment and public funding. RTTD grant funds are included. This budget is reflective and sufficient to cover the high quality project activities. The breakdown of funds that will be used for one time investments will be set aside from ongoing operational costs in order to ensure sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(2)

The applicant presented a detailed work plan for project sustainability. The applicant has It is a high quality plan that contains a time frame, deliverables and responsible parties. A breakdown of categories of giving is listed and includes the source of funding from individuals, foundations corporations and the federal government. This kind of strategic planning has proven to be successful in the past for the applicant and will probably be equally successful in this project. The plan is modeled after a traditional business plan. The business plan model has proven to be a blueprint for success, if followed. There is every evidence that the applicant will follow the plan. The project has already raised \$27 million dollars in cash and pledges in a comprehensive campaign that will support sustainability for at least 7 years. This exceeds the 3 year period.

The applicant presented a high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of their investments through their constant engagement with a vast number of stakeholders. Their plan to use data to inform future investments is sound. For example they will utilize Healthy Schools Survey data to support the sustainability of the project and make future decisions.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described a coherent and sustainable partnership plan because it includes a rich network of significant partners. The letters of support document the kinds of partnerships that will provide valuable support to the project. Partnerships have grown 3% per year. These connections will continue and others will be added during the project and beyond. Specific examples are given. One example is the postsecondary support. These partnerships provide extensive services to students in the project that include mentoring, counseling assistance in providing college and career information and related services to help students attain their goals. Partners, such as Goldman Sachs, work with current students and 300 former students who attended 8th grade in the target schools but transferred to private schools or entered the workforce. The partners conduct surveys, individualized counseling, college prep experiences, assistance with identifying colleges, placing students in jobs, completing college applications and completing financial aid forms. The applicant conducts the surveys to ascertain further needs of the students and their families. The partner collaborates with the project staff to support the project in attaining project goals. This collaboration will improve the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant. The applicant indicates they will further develop leadership teams practices around parent, such as the Parent TEAM Board and KIPP alumni. The applicant also details a strategic plan to build the capacity of the Leadership Team and strengthen alliances with parents, partners and alumni. All of these activities supplement the support that staff provide and make for a strong set of supports in the participating schools, that will lead to students attaining their academic goals. Students will benefit from all of these services and support because it will assist students in attaining their goals of completing high school, entering college and ultimately completing college well prepared and college ready. The partnerships will help the applicant reach its overall goals. even though all goals for the partnerships were not included.

The applicant identified 10 population level desired results for students in the LEA that align with and support the

applicant's broader proposal. Outcomes for educational results and family and community results are rigorous. The applicant has a thorough plan to track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children in the LEA and at the student level for all participating students. For example the applicant will track reading readiness in 3rd grade and career and college going rates upon graduation from high school. They have an extensive and ambitious plan to scale up the model. The plan is written in great detail and will expand education reform in the LEA.

The applicant 's plan is has ambitious and achievable performance measures that aim to have 30% of students accepted into Rutgers University or a comparable school by 2015. In addition they aim to have 95% of students enrolled in a 4 year colleges and 5 new TEAM centered college partnerships by 2015. Based on baseline data these are ambitious and achievable goals.The performance measures are adequately described through a strong narrative statement and rich data.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has met the Absolute Priority 1 because there is a comprehensive plan with the necessary elements for implementing a successful project. The core areas of assurances are appropriately addressed. The hiring, training and support of effective and highly effective teachers and administrators along, with a robust data system and cutting edge technology, will combine to create an ideal environment for developing individualized learning plans that prepare students to graduate from high school, enter college and persist to complete college and enter a career. The achievement gap will be decreased across student groups.The graduation rate will increase because of the support and available pathways to learn and reach academic goals. Tables, charts and data document a past history of success in education reform. The project vision benefits from past experience and lends credibility to this project because past successes will probably serve as a prelude to further success in the future and during this project.</p>		

Total	210	197
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0163NJ-3 for TEAM Academy Charter School

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant presents a clear and comprehensive reform vision that is firmly grounded in the four core assurance areas and clearly focuses on improving student achievement and providing extensive opportunities to deepen learning and reflect student interests. The applicant's program - TEAM Rutgers Ready - is based on a complete K-12 program that builds</p>		

college and career readiness throughout the grade levels. Of particular note, is its recognition of moving students from whatever their start point might be, either current achievement levels or at what grade level a student enrolls, to graduate from high school ready for college.

(a) The applicant articulates its alignment with the common core standards and the PARCC assessments through an extensive curriculum analysis as well as a supporting interim formative assessment system. The data system the applicant is currently using along with the improvements proposed in the RTT-D plan provide teachers, students, and parents the type of actionable data that allows for targeted instructional approaches. Hiring and supporting effective teachers and principals is integral to the implementation of TEAM Rutgers Ready as the applicant documents a systematic process to ensure that students are taught and supported by a team of effective educators. Since the applicant is a network of charter schools within a very low-performing district, its approach to turning around low-performing schools is unique in that it focuses on student success rather than turning around low-performing schools.

(b) The applicant's approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity is based on well-developed individualized learning pathways aligned with standards. This clear and credible approach uses the most effective blended learning models to engage students in common and individual tasks. The applicant's approach is both innovative in its combination of assessment and instructional models as well as its comprehensive improvement strategy which focuses on cognitive and non-cognitive results.

(c) The applicant presents three case studies that demonstrate the experiences students and teachers at different grade levels have as they participate in personalized learning environments. Each of the studies presents the individualized approach the applicant will use to move students toward the college ready goal and the resources that will be available to teachers and students. The applicant provides a sample of the type of data available to a teacher to help guide his/her students that demonstrates the soundness of the decision-making within the personalized learning environment.

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

The applicant intends to expand its current network of charter schools within its home district of Newark and into the neighboring Camden school district which will double the number of schools and almost double the number of educators and students served. This is an impressive expansion over the four years of the RTT-D project which the applicant justifies in terms of both need and interest within both of the districts it intends to serve. The applicant documents a thorough review of possible school locations as well as community interest in its approach.

The list of schools includes the six currently operating schools in Newark. The TEAM network has expanded over time to cover all grade levels K-12 with a current school population of over 2000 students. The 3 new schools in Newark will add an additional 1,000 students by the end of the grant period. The proposed schools in Camden will serve another 1,000 students by the end of the grant period. These two expansions will lead to a total of over 4,000 students in the TEAM Rutgers Ready RTT-D project. The applicant proposes a mix of grade levels with a focus on elementary and middle schools which is a appropriate expansion model in these communities and follows the documented success of the first TEAM schools.

The current TEAM schools are thoroughly described in the application as well as the projections in terms of students and educators at the six new schools. Given the District demographics, the students in the new schools meet the requirements in terms of income and need. The applicant's projections are reasonable and reflect the communities they intend to serve. The applicant's projections are that 92% of its students will be from low-income families which matches the demographics of both Newark and Camden.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates a high quality plan to scale-up the project within the RTT-D project as well as share its products and approaches with other charter schools in the national KIPP network and with public schools in the home districts of Newark and Camden. The applicant's plan is appropriately focused on the elements of its approach that can be replicated at new sites, for example the data platform and approaches to personalized learning. The plan includes specific activities, investments, and timeframes that will continue over the life of the RTT-D project, specific deliverables for students, schools, parents, and classrooms, and responsible parties. The only area of the plan that does not provide extensive documentation is the processes it intends to use to expand into the six new schools including securing space, additional teachers, and student recruitment.

The applicant has established ambitious goals for the expansion of the project with documented numbers of potential students and teachers to be served as well as specific strategies to share its programs nationwide. Its description of

dissemination activities currently underway to provide direct technical assistance, best practices, and in one case direct operational support to local schools is an indication of how it intends to scale-up the project and positively impact the communities it serves.

The applicant documents its logic model by grounding it in the current status of students in the service area and provides a reasonable progression from the starting point to the long-term outcomes for the project and its students. The long-term impact of the project, i.e. demonstrating that low-performing schools can become high-achieving, is a critical guiding goal for this RTT-D project.

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

The applicant's well-articulated vision has resulted in improved student learning and is reflected in the ambitious yet achievable annual goals it has set for this project. The target goals meet the ESEA targets overall and for student subgroups. The applicant uses both the state level assessments as well as its own interim assessment to measure student growth which provides both end of the year benchmarks but also pre, during, and post measurements to guide student success throughout the academic year. These multiple measures provide additional guidance to students, educators, and parents to better meet annual goals. Specific goals are:

1. Given the applicant's overarching college readiness goal, the performance on summative assessments is set across all the grade levels to guide student progress. The goals on the state level assessment are consistent with state level goals and slightly higher in some instances for the subgroups represented in the TEAM schools. It should be noted that the applicant has not set goals for each of the schools but rather for all the schools which is a positive reflection on the expectations it holds for all students.
2. The same process has been used to set goals for decreasing achievement gaps with different goals for economically disadvantaged and black students than for special education students (13% of the school population). Again, the targets meet or slightly exceed the state targets with the gap all but disappearing by the end of the RTT-D project.
3. Graduation rates are set at the 95% level which is exceedingly high but reflects the applicant's success with its first group of high school students. This far exceeds the current rate in the Newark School District.
4. College enrollment is the major over-arching goal for this project which has set a performance goal of 87% of its students enrolling in college by 2018. As the applicant notes, this far exceeds the current rate in the Newark District.

Postsecondary degree attainment is based on the supports to be provided to students after high school graduation. The applicant articulates a series of focused support activities it will undertake based on its parent organization's experience in helping students stay in college. The applicant has set an ambitious goal of 60% of its students completing college by the end of the project period.

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:

The applicant presents a clear and compelling record of success at every grade level it works in from the start of the first school in 2002 and continuing through the addition of grades and expansion of schools. The data presented in the application provides specific convincing data on improving student outcomes, closing achievement gaps, and increasing equity when compared to the home district (Newark).

(a) The applicant provides data comparing its performance with the state as a whole which indicates improvement, albeit not as consistent, over time and across math, reading, science and high school proficiency. The ability to meet, or surpass, whole state performance demonstrates the applicant's record of success. Achievement gaps are also closing at a steady rate that increases the longer a student is in the TEAM school environment. The achievement gap data provided in the application provides direct evidence of the gap closing. At the high school level, the applicant presents graduation data for the three graduating classes it has had which indicate at least 90% of its students graduate compared with Newark's rate of 61% to 68%. The additional indicator of high level results is the college enrollment rate of 80% to 90% with an equally high persistence rate.

(b) The significant reforms are focused on student success rather than on schools because of the inherent organization of charter schools. By comparing the results of the TEAM schools with matched traditional and charter schools within the district, the TEAM schools are achieving ambitious and significant reforms.

(c) The applicant provides examples of the extensive reports it makes available to students, educators, and parents. The reports present student progress, achievement, and activity data in a clear, understandable fashion that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. The range and frequency of reports demonstrate the applicant's commitment to not only data-based improvement strategies but also involving parents in every aspect of their children's education.

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

The applicant presents evidence of the reports it currently makes available that include school-level expenditures of state, local, and federal expenditures. The reports include the required expenditure information on salaries for instructional staff, teachers, and non-personnel expenditures. The applicant also provides annual reports to all stakeholders, including parents. The reports are available on the web and are also emailed to all parents. To increase transparency, the applicant also makes provisions to provide the web based reports available in hard copy to any stakeholder having trouble accessing the reports. This high level of transparency is documented throughout the application with direct evidence of financial statements, budget documents, and reports to state authorities.

The applicant demonstrates a very high-level of transparency in its processes, practices, and investments that it makes public on a regular basis.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As a charter school in New Jersey, the applicant is granted autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulations to implement the personalized learning environments proposed in the application. It should be noted that the rules and regulations in New Jersey are comprehensive and provide potential charter schools with autonomy but also include oversight by the state. The applicant presents extensive evidence, including its charter renewals, to demonstrate not only its autonomy but also its success in meeting state regulations and conditions for continuation. Of particular note is the documentation from Standard and Poor's on the fiscal health of the non-profit organization which provides facilities to charter schools.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	15
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant documents the extensive meaningful involvement of families, students, teachers, and principals that were engaged in the development of the application including examples of revisions based on that involvement. The applicant used an iterative process with regular review and comment opportunities for staff, administrators, governing organizations, and parents. The applicant provides dates for those meetings as part of its documentation. Of particular note is the presentation made to the student council at the current participating high school indicating the applicant's understanding of the need to seek student input. The applicant received signatures from 81% of its teachers in support of the application. Documentation of that support is provided which indicates approval signatures from each of the participating schools.

Letters of support from approximately 25 local organizations are included in the application as evidence of the both the support of and interest in the expansion of the TEAM charter school network. The letters range from parent organizations with multiple signatures to the mayors of Newark and Camden as well as various community groups. The range of community partners documented in the application is an important indicator of the broad support the charter school network enjoys.

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 presents an exemplary high quality plan to personalize the learning environment and improve teaching and

learning over the four year project period. The plan articulates the goals of the project, provides appropriate strategies and activities in support of the project as well as specific deliverables such as professional development to support students and improve feedback processes. Timelines and responsible parties are also included. The applicant's focus on preparing all students to be college ready when they graduate from high school drives the personalized learning environment from kindergarten through high school. The progression of personalized learning practices, both current and proposed, included in the application demonstrate the quality of the applicant's plan.

(a) The applicant has developed a set of college and career ready performance metrics to guide individual student's understanding of the relationship between what he/she is learning and how it relates to accomplishing his/her goals. The applicant demonstrates the strength of these metrics through its alignment with the progression of the curriculum and a robust feedback system. The applicant intends to expand its process to provide every student with specific learning suggestions in order for students and teachers to structure their learning in a highly effective personalized manner. The applicant's proposal to personalize the learning environment is based on daily progress reports.

The further personalization for students will be accomplished through an on-going mentoring and counseling process. The applicant proposes to involve parents and students in the identification of academic interests and use high level blended learning, e.g. Khan Academy, as the vehicle for students to be involved in deep learning experiences. In addition to the exemplary content models, the applicant will continue to use field trips, college visits, and museums to extend both learning opportunities and increase exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivates and further deepen the learning experience. The annual field trips are impressive with trips to the Southwest for sixth graders in conjunction with a science class. The applicant also uses its foreign language requirement to extend understanding of other cultures.

In addition to mastering robust academic content, the applicant provides a "character growth chart" to ensure that students and parents are aware of and progress toward mastering non-cognitive skills such as team work, perseverance, and self-control among other important traits. The applicant demonstrates how non-cognitive skills are built over time and structured at age-appropriate levels.

(b) The applicant describes a set of high quality instructional approaches that drive the personalized curriculum. The applicant has identified, through an extensive alignment and mapping process, curriculum that supports meeting college and career ready standards and provides personalized opportunities for each student. For example, the use of Accelerated Reading and Accelerated Math to support not only the identification of specific learning needs but also provide high quality instructional content to meet those needs. The plan to integrate the personalization process, i.e. on-going feedback, with highly personalized learning processes demonstrates the applicant's capacity to meet individual learning goals and ensure that a student graduates on time and is college and career ready.

A hallmark of this application is its use of effective digital learning tools throughout the grade spans that have been developed to align with college- and career-ready standards. The applicant's use of the mapping of its interim assessments with eventual performance on the ACT demonstrates its commitment to ensuring student success. The feedback potential of the mapped assessment provides each student with a clear picture of his/her current status and what it will take to meet individual goals. The frequency of updated progress reports tied to the mastery of standards is both feasible and innovative based on the integration of instructional approaches and progress reporting. The applicant provides evidence within the application to show how this data is used to improve individualized student performance through personalized learning recommendations. The applicant also articulates age appropriate strategies for the use of these personalized learning recommendations.

The applicant provides a convincing discussion of its current and proposed accommodations and strategies for high need students, specifically students with disabilities. The TEAM network does have a high-proportion of special education students and has a Director of Special Education for its current schools. This position will continue with the RTT-D project as will case managers and additional resources for these students. The applicant articulates its belief in all students and provides extensive examples of how it makes this belief a reality.

(c) The RTT-D project will expand the current extensive supports to teachers, students, and families to ensure that technology and resources are accessible and its use is understood at all levels. The applicant provides for an in-house technology team for teachers as well as training for parents via the Community Relations Team. The comprehensive level of support will mitigate any problems tracking and managing the learning process that might be associated with the influx of new technology.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an overarching framework for the skills and techniques teachers need to have to support student progress and provides a high quality comprehensive plan to provide teachers with skills in: instruction, data collection, synthesis, and communication to ensure that all students are provided the support they need to graduate college and

career ready. Breaking the components of the personalized learning plan into manageable components, the applicant demonstrates its understanding of how to implement an approach that enables all students to pursue a rigorous course of study and accelerate their learning aligned to college and career standards. The applicant thoroughly documents its understanding of what teacher capacities need to be built to support students throughout their K-12 experience and into college and beyond. The cohesive plan presented in the application covers the four years of the project, provides appropriate steps to achieving its goals, indicates reasonable timelines, and responsible parties.

(a) Using specific examples of classroom practice, the applicant demonstrates how a teacher will provide instruction using adapted personalized learning environments, on-going feedback, and small and large group instruction to meet the academic needs, interests, and approaches of students. The applicant also shows how the teacher is supported throughout this process by all members of the RTT-D project from the director, technology team, and instruction team to build his/her individual and group capacities to adapt content and instruction in response to student needs, interests, and approaches. The applicant documents how the measurement of student progress is a seamless part of the instructional approach providing diagnostic information throughout the lesson which is key to maximizing personalized learning. The applicant's approach is unique in that it proposes to implement the necessary support for personalization with appropriate instructional approaches in a meaningful fashion.

The monitoring and feedback system to track student progress proposed by the applicant details the frequency of its progress monitoring as well as how the data is used to not only accelerate student performance but also improve educator practice. The applicant's detailed plan on the implementation of its revised interim assessments to better align with new summative assessments indicates its effective data use and its commitment to using valid and reliable data to improve student performance and teacher practice.

The applicant intends to change its current teacher and principal evaluation process to include more emphasis on the proposed Rutgers Ready RTT-D project and blended learning strategies which are the heart of the personalized learning approach. The applicant provides a schemata of the proposed evaluation system and the implementation timeline which indicates the relationship between the framework and effective teaching practices. The weekly observation and feedback process for teachers provides a level of real-time recommendations, supports, and interventions to improve teacher practice. The plan provides for an equally rigorous evaluation and feedback system for principals which will be developed as part of the RTT-D project. The principal evaluation system will provided feedback in such areas as leadership strategies and data use for school level improvement. The applicant's plan to use a formal system of Campus Captains to provide peer-to-peer support reflects its experience in improving teacher practice in data-based instructional improvement strategies to provide additional supports to teachers.

(b) The applicant describes the tools, data, and resources available to all educators as well as how educators use these resources to accelerate student progress. The applicant provides evidence of the alignment of the curriculum's scope and sequence with college and career ready standards and how the daily and weekly assessments are used to identify the best learning approaches that reflect students interests and needs. The RTT-D project will develop dashboards to further help teachers identify and respond to the specific learning needs of students. The ability to group and regroup students for more effective learning will provide teachers with the reliable data they need to appropriately differentiate instruction. The applicant provides a screen shot of a current student report which will be modified by the RTT-D project to provide more specific progress data for teachers to use to match student needs with learning resources.

(c) The applicant provides extensive evidence describing how the project leadership teams will have all the necessary structural and human supports necessary to support teaching and leading. The applicant describes how it constantly monitors teacher performance, both formally and informally on a weekly basis. It also includes the survey instruments it uses to monitor the collective culture at the school level from multiple viewpoints, i.e. teachers, students, and families. The approach to on-going training is proactive and offered at multiple times before and during the school year using both formal professional development and informal coaching. It should be noted that training is also to be offered to parents so that they become familiar with the technology and reports they will be receiving.

(d) The applicant articulates its plan to increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers and principals with a substantial increase in highly effective teachers and principals by the end of the grant period. The strategies it intends to use include a teacher mentoring program and a focused recruitment program. The applicant acknowledges the potential issue of not finding teachers of the caliber necessary to add 6 new schools and proposes more aggressive plans to recruit and retain effective teachers and principals. The evidence presented in the application documenting their last hiring cycle with 1600 applicants, 612 interviews for 72 positions indicates that their goals will be met.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	14
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant presents a high quality plan to essentially double the size of its charter school "district" within its home site, Newark, and add new schools in a neighboring district, Camden. The applicant's plan includes appropriate goals for supporting all schools, establishing policies to provide necessary resources as well as activities, timelines, and deliverables to implement each aspect of not only the expansion but also implementing the Rutgers Ready instructional program. The plan is based on its experience in expanding the number of schools in Newark and provides for a reasonable progressive timeline over the 4 years of the grant period.</p> <p>The TEAM organization clearly articulates its plan to establish a robust central office and use it to support the individual schools so that their focus remains on teaching and learning. The RTT-D project will add additional support positions to provide consistent services across the network, including technology, fiscal and human resources. These centralized functions are key to managing the eventual number of schools proposed by this project. The applicant has also set a goal of 90% satisfaction rate with central office support which will be an important factor in ensuring a well-functioning governance structure.</p> <p>Each school within the network has the flexibility and autonomy to set its own calendar, make personnel decisions, establish levels of responsibilities, and set budget priorities in conjunction with the central budget guidelines. This level of autonomy will provide each school leader the ability to respond to the unique needs within his/her school.</p> <p>Given the applicant's approach to personalized learning, the student's ability to progress based on demonstrated mastery at multiple points is built into the curriculum. The instructional methods are grounded in individualized diagnostic measures with grouping and regrouping strategies that allow for continued advancement. In addition to the daily mastery process, the applicant uses formative and summative assessments aligned with standards to constantly monitor student growth thus allowing multiple ways to demonstrate mastery. The applicant, however, is less clear on the multiple methods it has, or will, have in place to earn credit. The applicant describes a less formal reward system of student parties, recognition, and school-wide celebrations focused on recognizing earned credit but does not articulate a formal system.</p> <p>The applicant provides a complete description of the program and methods it has instituted to serve the 13% of its students who are classified as special education. While the applicant does not provide specific information on the types and range of disabilities of its special education students, the services are based on established IEP processes and use personalized learning processes. As part of the RTT-D project, the applicant intends to add additional resources to its special education program to more effectively personalize the learning environment. For example, additional tablets and other technologies will be added to the special education resource room. As for English language learners, the TEAM schools currently have no students with language needs. While no points were deducted, it is unclear in the application if they will recruit students with language needs and how they might be provided with specific services during the expansion to additional schools and communities.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>As part of its well-developed implementation plan, the applicant will provide extensive access to resources for teachers, students, and parents as well as the technical support necessary to fully use these resources. The applicant intends to add technical staff to the central office and assign them to individual schools with an established standard for responsiveness. The applicant's plan focuses mostly on teachers with strategies to add more human resources utilizing "Campus Captains" at the school level as the plan progresses over time. This peer-to-peer support will further support teachers who are the critical link in supporting students and parents.</p> <p>The plan for access and support for students and parents focuses on additional technology resources and training. The applicant proposes to add more computers and tablets with a goal of a one-to-one ratio at the high school level which should further personalize the anticipated advanced curriculum to meet the college-and career-ready standards. Specific technical support for students is discussed in terms of access to teachers outside of school, access to computer labs after school, and extended day and year programs. Access and support for parents focuses on the provision of more in-depth and regular reporting on student progress through dashboards, emails, and weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports. The support for parents includes training to access and use the personalized reports as well as multiple parent conferences, literacy and math nights, and a parent university. All of the above activities demonstrate the applicant's level of commitment to providing appropriate resources to all stakeholders and audiences.</p> <p>The RTT-D project includes improvements in the information systems to include additional non-cognitive measures as well</p>		

as an email system for students to receive regular information on additional learning opportunities based on their current progress.

As part of the data improvement process, the applicant will provide information that is "shareable" both within the schools and with parents and students. The applicant intends to have its extensive data warehouse available in one simple format that can be exported into an open format by the beginning of Year 2. The applicant plans to ensure that all its systems are interoperable and will increase the quality and quantity of available data by end of the project period.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Given the focus on data-based instructional processes, the applicant presents a high-quality plan to implement a continuous improvement process to consistently measure progress toward meeting its goals. The plan included in the application clearly identifies the strategies and key management activities it will monitor over the four years of the project. The plan also identifies a regular and systematic reporting process for all key stakeholders to measure implementation progress. The plan, however, does not indicate any post-grant activities.</p> <p>The applicant intends to hire a full-time grant manager who will be responsible for tracking the identified key indicators and reporting on a weekly and quarterly basis to senior management. Since this project involves two key activities, the Rutgers Ready instructional program and the expansion into new schools, the continuous improvement process appeared to focus on Rutgers Ready without including key expansion milestones. It is unclear in the continuous improvement plan, how the applicant intends to monitor the expansion process beyond the expansion of the instructional program.</p> <p>The continuous improvement process is focused on the supports necessary to implement Rutgers Ready including professional development, technology enhancements, and alignment activities related to the Common Core. The applicant provides appropriate metrics for measuring the implementation of the RTT-D project and provides opportunities for quarterly and annual mid-course corrections.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement includes extensive public reporting and engagement. The applicant proposes to produce regular email updates, hold quarterly leadership meetings, hold frequent team meetings, and provide quarterly and annual reports. These reports will form the basis of the ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. The content of these reports will include areas of interest to and tailored for specific stakeholders including performance against goals, student progress, achievement data, and student character indicators.</p> <p>The applicant's plan for on-going engagement with parents and community stakeholders over the life of the grant is varied and geared to the interests of the various audiences. These proactive engagement strategies include mandatory Saturday Schools and Parent Literacy nights. The community stakeholders are engaged through the Board structure which reflects their policy level interests.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes a set of ambitious and achievable performance measures that are clearly anchored in the instructional program it intends to implement and the appropriate benchmarks to measure its implementation. The applicant provides a sound rationale for each performance measure it proposes and a measurement tool that informs the project goals. The applicant's performance measures will provide both academic information as well as social and satisfaction data. The applicant intends to regularly review the measures to evaluate their predictive value over time especially the college readiness measures which form the basis for Rutgers Ready.</p> <p>While the majority of the measures indicate ambitious yet achievable goals over time, the measure on completing a Career Development Plan sits at 75% over the life of the grant. It is unclear why this one measure based on a rather simple</p>		

process does not have a 100% goal over the life of the project.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTT-D project across the three major areas of student achievement, teacher retention and satisfaction, and parent and student satisfaction using the KIPP Foundation's research and evaluation team. The rigor of that plan as described in the application and the letter from the KIPP Foundation provides few details on how the evaluation will provide a range of evaluative information, comparative data, and appropriate correlations.

Given the variety of instructional approaches the applicant intends to implement, as well as the potential changing student body, the current evaluation plan provides much worthwhile data but not a complete picture of the effectiveness of funded activities. For example, the applicant intends to allow teachers to use the most effective blended learning models but does not provide a rigorous process to measure that effectiveness over time and at a level of rigor that would allow for meaningful instructional choices.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget clearly identifies all the funds that will support the project over the four years of this project. Those funds include foundation and corporate support as well as state and district funds. RTT-D funds represent approximately 70% of the project's budget. The funding from all sources will increase slightly over the life of the grant as the project becomes operational; however, the applicant states that at the end of the funding period and based on enrollment projections, TEAM Rutgers Ready should be self-supporting.

The requested budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the project. The budget from RTT-D will support the salaries of critical personnel, classroom supplies, and technology consulting to implement the project. The applicant provides a solid rationale for using the funds for 12 additional staff to support the project as up-front expenditures that will, if still necessary, be assumed at the TEAM level. The applicant's description of the one-time investments as well as those areas that are shared expenses between TEAM and RTT-D clearly indicate the important decisions that were made during the planning process to help ensure the sustainability of the project. For example, the statistical contractors are one-time investments while the curriculum and instruction specialists will continue. The applicant also states that the additional supports it provides to high-need students will continue past the grant funding.

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

10

10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a high quality plan to continue the goals of the project based on its long-term business plan. Because this is a charter school organization, planning for sustainability is especially critical. The applicant's plan is based on comparing its capital and scale-up needs with what it can reasonably expect to receive from public sources to serve its enrolled student population. The applicant contends that it will be self-supporting on public funds in 2017 based on its experience with its elementary and middle schools which are already self-supporting. The applicant's funding analysis includes its assumptions that it will continue to operate at a cost that represents 80% of what its serving Districts pay per pupil.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to enhance and expand its current work to provide additional student, family and community supports in the areas of extended day and school year, post-secondary support, and strategic guidance for organizational growth. Each of the programs is based on identified needs within the current TEAM schools that will continue into the expansion schools. The applicant provides a specific plan for the expansion of these projects over the life of the grant.

The summer school program will be expanded to include learning labs which will be open beyond the mandatory summer school. This program is based on an analysis of the learning gains lost by many students over the summer break and will also include recreation activities to attract more students which will fill a critical learning and recreation gap for many participating students. The extended day program will also augment student learning time as well as provide parents additional access to the school. Teachers will have more planning time during the extended day. The post-secondary support program will provide students in grades 5-12 with a deeper understanding of what college means in terms of preparation, e.g. meeting learning goals and also attending college. Given the student population of the participating schools, this college experience may not be available to all students. It will also provide support to TEAM graduates in college. The applicant presents a convincing need for this type of additional support.

The applicant identifies a remarkable list of approximately 17 partners for these two projects ranging from Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth to the New York Jets football team. Each of the partners fills a specific niche within the projects from recreational support to deep academic experiences. The applicant describes how it will continue to work with these organizations and add more over the life of the grant.

The population level desired results for the partnerships are aligned with the performance indicators for the project as a whole thus providing a seamless focus on student growth and progression. For example, the partnership programs will support student academic gains in reading and math. The post secondary partners will support FAFSA completion and college persistence. The integration of the partners with the academic goals of the project will be mutually supportive for the schools and the students.

While the applicant articulates a clear description of the benefits to its own students of not only being students at a TEAM school but also being able to participate in the extended day program, it does not provide a strategy for scaling these projects up beyond its participating students. It is unclear if this is a function of its charter status in the community or lack of resources to go beyond its walls.

The applicant presents a compelling justification for and a plan to integrate cognitive and non-cognitive services within these partnerships. The applicant provides for addressing the needs of the "whole child" through access to the arts, diverse cultures, and fitness programs. The list of partnership organizations reflects the wide-ranging needs and interests of participating students.

Building staff capacity at the site level will be driven by both the availability of additional time with students or with educators to engage in deeper learning activities. Given that time is an on-going issue within all schools, the summer programs and extended day may help alleviate that problem. For example at the secondary level, additional student experiences will provide guidance to understand the college experience. In addition to time, these partnerships provide their own talent, e.g. executives and data analysts, to help the TEAM staff better understand how to build the school network, strategic planning opportunities, and improved data techniques. Beyond building organizational capacities, the applicant articulates how the partnerships will provide additional tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of participating students. For example, one partnership has improved the college support program by providing improved college pathways for high school students.

The applicant provides examples of how the partnerships have improved decision-making processes both to improve the support system and to engage parents and families in this process. The various Boards that support TEAM provide a business oriented focus which supports the improvement and expansion of the charter network while another partnership has provided critical insight into the college process for parents and families.

The performance measures for the partnership projects reflect the academic measures of the project and add specific ambitious yet achievable focused measures in the following areas:

- Increasing percentages of TEAM students in need of exceptional social emotional support will demonstrate positive youth development assets.
- Families in economic distress will be referred to community support organizations.
- College applications and the supporting documents, i.e. FAFSA will increase annually.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates an exhaustive and explicit plan to improve student achievement based on the core educational assurance areas using personalized learning approaches. The applicant articulates its plan across all grade levels, subject areas, and learning opportunities. Through its clear focus on making all students college ready starting in Kindergarten, the applicant proposes strategies geared to each student that are continuously monitored using the best data systems, guided by effective teachers and principals and provides students from low-performing schools an opportunity to succeed.

The applicant also provides a plan to personalize learning that uses both personalized learning instructional approaches but is also supported by a data system that provides students, parents, and teachers with specific actionable information. The applicant's approach provides teachers and other stakeholders with a range of real-time instructionally based progress data necessary to personalize learning systems. Without access to daily and weekly progress reports, personalization cannot be achieved.

All the instructional approaches are based on meeting college- and career-ready standards for students who rarely have the opportunity to achieve at the levels demonstrated by the TEAM network of schools. By anchoring the work of the schools in the clear goal of Rutgers Ready, students, parents, teachers and stakeholders are able to focus their efforts on the end point of graduating from high school prepared for college and careers.

The data systems proposed by the applicant do not sit on the side of the work as a personalization tool but are deeply embedded in the the strategies and supports provided to each student. The personalization and individualization which results from this approach has shown its effectiveness in producing results for students especially by decreasing achievement gaps for current students. The proposed enhanced approach of the RTT-D project should lead to significantly improved learning environments.

Effective teachers and principals are an integral part of the applicant's approach. The planned supports as well as recruitment, training, and mentoring will create a cadre of effective teachers and principals in the new schools as well as continually support the implementation of Rutgers Ready in the on-going schools.

Finally, as a charter school organization, the applicant does not turn-around low-performing schools but offers students, parents, and teachers an opportunity to learn and teach in an effective environment. The current waiting list in Newark of 9,000 students for a place in the TEAM network is one indicator of the need for this RTT-D project.

Total	210	201
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