



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0933CO-1 for Adams 12 Five Star Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district effectively sets forth a generally strong vision that connects to the core educational assurance areas. The district essentially proposes to harness technological resources (e.g., through the use of data dashboards) to individualize instruction and build off of lessons that it has learned through pilot STEM program.</p> <p>This proposal with respect to technology is promising and cutting edge for a number of reasons. First, the district proposes to use personal technological devices to improve instruction through "seamless instruction." Such an effort -- whereby students can engage in learning "on the spot" -- is consistent with best practice principles that puts students at the center of their learning, with teachers as facilitators. It is the strongest point of the application. Second, the district's use of technology in the area of data management is well-placed. The district proposes to create data management systems accessible to all. While the jury is still out as to the effective implementation of such data management tools, the district is headed in the right direction.</p> <p>The district's vision connects to the core educational assurance areas. It has adopted the Common Core (by virtue of the State); its proposal builds off of existing efforts in the area of data (such as the district's Infinite Campus); the district is in the process of implementing evaluation systems that have been adopted by the state.</p> <p>The district's vision presents a focus on equity in the STEM areas, which is an important focus. The one drawback relates to the vision's lack of attention to <u>recruit</u> and <u>retain</u> highly qualified teacher.</p> <p>High</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's approach to implementation is strong for a number of reasons.</p> <p>(A)(2)(a)</p> <p>First, it appears to build off success in schools that have been receptive to change. The chosen schools -- all STEM schools - - have already undergone a transition to a STEM focus. Second, the district appears to have incorporated technological advice/consultation at important steps in the process. According to the application, a technology leader has demonstrated the benefits of the Learning Management System (LMS) to staff. Given the centrality of technology, buy-in from staff regarding technology is crucial. One would hope that, going forward, this effort continues. But the district appeals to recognize this. However, the application does not explain in sufficient detail how the participating schools were chosen through a process that employed the eligibility requirements. <u>See</u> FAQs C-1.</p> <p>A(2)(b) The district named the selected schools, as required. However, the application should clarify where its proposed expansion would be so as to satisfy the eligibility requirements. "Low performing schools" alone are not sufficient to satisfy the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>(A)(2)(c) The district has supplied this information.</p> <p>High</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

In this section of its application, specifics are lacking with respect to how the STEM model will be translated into larger reform and meaningful change for the LEA. The application does state that its STEM schools are models for others. This is commendable. The timeline and comprehensive of the scaling up (even assuming that the STEM schools provide appropriate models to replicate) is vague. For instance, the application claims it will "achieve personalize learning environments for as many students as possible." This is commendable but requires more detail.

Middle

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
---	----	---

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)(a)-(d)

This component of the application should be ranked in the low/middle range for the following reasons:

- The district asserts that the improvements in student performance will occur across the district based on its vision and implementation of the plan proposed in this grant. But the number of participating students in this project is relatively low compared to the total student population (3,099 of 41,957). This makes it difficult to attribute improvement and increase equity to the grant proposed here.

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	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application should receive a middle score for following reasons:

(B)(1)(a).

- The achievement gap data is only from three (3) years, not 4, as the regulations require. This appears to be a function of the fact that the STEM schools have been piloted for only three years. The data presented in these tables could align more closely with the definition of achievement gap as set forth in the regulations. More specifics are needed to make some of the conclusions set forth in the application. For instance, the application summarily states "Closed the reading gap between Hispanic boys and their counterparts." Without more, it is difficult to conclude the district has a "track record" of success.
- The high school graduation rates have, generally increased modestly.

(B)(1)(b).

- The district has demonstrated that it has achieved ambitious reforms with its example of expansion of its STEM model and incorporating a curriculum model (Teaching and Learning Cycle).

(B)(1)(c)

- The district uses the Infinite Campus as a means to make data available to parents, teachers and students. These data include test scores. The district also are afforded opportunities to sit on committees that use data to improve instruction. While certainly the data may be available, it is not entirely clear that this demonstrates a "clear track record of success" in using the data to improve instruction.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application stipulates that this information is available on the website which is an acceptable means to satisfy this requirement.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district appears to operate in a state context that provides sufficient conditions for autonomy. The application does state applicable statutes that, in theory, permit it to have such autonomy. However, these statutes are simply references to the legal framework that permit schools to exist in the state. They do not create successful conditions for autonomy, etc. The state of Colorado has also accepted Race to Top funds at the statewide level, as the application states, thereby creating some of the necessary conditions for school reform.</p> <p>high</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's score should be in the middle range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The district engaged in a process to involve stakeholders and did offer feedback. However, the extent to which the feedback was "meaningful" and "revised" is not adequately established. This connection could be clearer to gain a better understanding of the nature of the revisions that may have occurred as a result of stakeholder input. - The district did have support from prominent stakeholders, including the Secretary of Ed in the state, and several private foundations. - The response rate for educator feedback seems a bit low (<u>See</u> attachment 1). For instance in STEM Launch School only 26 of 78 educators provided feedback. Likewise, only 10/46 STEM Lab provided feedback. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The score for the application in this section should be in the low range because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It has identified needs and gaps and the reform measures that the district is proposing articulates with those needs. The way the application is organized in this subsection, it lacks quality in terms of its conclusion that there are several "troubling results" in the district. For instance, the application states that "student entering and exiting NGHS are not well prepared for academic and career success." It would be helpful if there was a cite to data to support the claim. - Moreover, the connection to the proposed solution is tenuous or unclear. The application states that the "scientific evidence" supports their assertions that their plan will be successful. It also states - without clarifying explanation - that a "number of interventions reviewed by What Works Clearinghouse indicating that interventions met high standards of scientific reliability." What interventions are we talking about? The statement is circular and its connection to the analysis of its needs is weak. 		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(C)(1)(a) The district proposes an approach to learning that has potential to engage learners in meaningful and effective ways. The instructional methods adopted by the district --Problem-Based Learning and Inquiry-based learning -- are effective means to achieve the goals set forth in this subsection. The district's use of technology provides in connecting students to access their own progress provides continual feedback to students, allowing them to engage in instruction in a very personal way. The district use of the ICAP template will also -- if effectively implemented -- allow the school and student to adjust their learning in authentic ways and aligned to goals.</p> <p>(C)(1)(b) The district appears to have a strategy to meet the personalized instructional goals of its students and engage students. Of particular note is its "trans-disciplinary" model. Because this model has a real work engagement it allows students to make important connections between their learning and actual problems/issues that occur in "the real world." The plan also includes opportunities for parent engagement and control in that they can access their student's learning management system. This helps close the loop between home and school in as close to "Real time" as possible. However, the details are lacking</p>		

with respect to parental training. The application asserts that they will be trained, to be fair. But this falls short of a plan to engage parents and educators and students through a strategy.

(C)(1)(c) The district appears poised to provide the required technological support for implementation of this ambitious technological program through the use of "Digital Literacy Advisors."

Middle/High

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

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)(a) The district's proposal with respect to engagement incorporates key features that build capacity in educators. In particular, the use of modeling and coaching are essential to this endeavor. The district is proposing to connect the collected data to loopback and inform instruction See (C)(2)(b) comments. The drawback to this plan regarding summer institutes from outside consultants is that they need to be coherently maintained. Effective PD must ultimately be sustainable and coherent. A concern going forward with respect to this plan is that the summer institutes might be "one shot" PDs. Moreover, PD in summer institutes can be problematic given that teachers may not be contractually obligated to attend.

(C)(2)(b) The district again incorporates the fundamentals of a high-quality plan with respect to using data to inform instruction (e.g., benchmarks, collaboration, and outcomes). What is important in this regard is that the district appears to be focusing attention on its analysis of the data, not simply the management/collection of it. This is crucial. The proposal is ambitious in terms of the use of technology to manage data. The proposal -- in this section -- is now making the important turn to focus on the "so what" issues -- in other words, the interpretation and loopback to instruction with data.

(C)(2)(c) The district has the framework and proposed tools to provide effective management and direction over the learning environment. Specifically, it has an evaluation system of teachers that is tied to student performance. The use of the Learning Management system is also on the forefront of the agenda's of the leadership structure (review of LMS is done by multiple leadership groups), which is certainly an effective model to implement the grant with fidelity at the school level.

Finally, the district benefits from the state's evaluation system. This system has linked student performance with evaluations. Moreover, it eased the burdens with respect to terminating poor performing teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1)(a) The application makes conclusion statements regarding the organization of the LEA office as it relates to providing support and structure to participating schools. However, the roles could be more clearly defined as they relate to governance and perhaps this project.

(b) Likewise, it is unclear to what degree school leadership teams have control over the elements that the application lists (Leg., budget, staffing). Presumably, some budgets are not discretionary and resolved at the district level, such as teacher salary.

(c) The district's use of a standards based grading system is well-regarded as an important component of moving toward student mastery of content. This is a very positive tie-in to the larger plan of personalized instruction.

(d) The district's proposal -- the use of LMS -- would help achieve this goal. At least in the component of the application, it is not cogently stated how the district currently attempts to give student multiple opportunities for content mastery.

(e) The district does have a policy that is included in the materials. The policy alone, however, does not sufficiently demonstrate that the practice of the district is to implement the policy.

Middle

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district satisfies the elements here for the following reasons:

- (a) The grant proposes to give every participating student a technology device.
- (b) The grant does propose several school-based positions to support this effort. It also will employ consultants and online data. However, one important thing that is lacking is more connection to parents having appropriate support and training.
- (c) The application states that the LMS system will allow data to flow seamlessly. A more specific example would be helpful as to how this would actually work.
- (d) The district satisfies this subpart apparently all of the schools are inter-operable.

Middle

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To its credit, the district is keenly aware of the need of more oversight with respect to implementation of RTT grants and grants in general. It has proposed effective means to do this in hiring a specific person (Personalize Learning Environment Coordinator) to oversee the district's evaluation. The application states that the system it will use "will conduct sophisticated, longitudinal analysis of each grant funded initiative." It is unclear what "Each grant funded initiative is." Moreover, is it practical to conduct a sophisticated longitudinal analysis for each one, whatever they are?</p> <p>High</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's proposal of creating a Personalized Learning Advisory Committee is the main method by which the district proposes to reach this goal. The application appears to suggest that the main function of this is to encourage approval of the plan for stakeholders. A clearer picture of how this committee will improve the implementation, if needed, would be beneficial.</p> <p>Middle/High</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This subsection of the application is deficient in a number of regards. It is not entirely clear to me the district's rationale in choosing the various performance measures that it used. This is not to say that they are not meritorious. Certainly the NWEA has merit. However, as far as I can tell, subparts (a)-(c) have been inadequately explained. The rationale for selecting NWEA needs to be clarified, for instance. Moreover, the district appears to be calling upon its counselors to create a survey to measure college and career readiness. However, are there existing instruments that already do this that might already be tested, etc? That said, the use of survey responses to determine the engagement of parents in the students work is certainly one indicator of the effectiveness of the program and the district should be credited with moving this idea forward.</p> <p>Low</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This portion of the application does a fair, but not exceptional job in satisfying this criteria. It certainly is reasonable to use the Project Evaluator to discern the effectiveness of the program. The application restates the notion that a high school diploma has economic value, but that is irrelevant to the question being asked in this subpart. There is some risk, as well, in a plan that places so much oversight in the hands of one person -- in the sense that the person chosen must have many areas of expertise and skills that they can apply across several disciplines/concepts.</p>		

Middle

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The budget identifies all the funds that will support the project. The fund proposes to use is the RTTT grant exclusively. Where the district deems applicable, it notes one time expenditures. Descriptions of personnel and equipment are simple, but sufficient. High		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Because the plan relies exclusively on local general funds, the sustainability is called into some question. It may be true that the local funds would be devoted to this initiative once it succeeded, but this criteria of the application implies that some other financial source commit to the project. However, from the table produced in specific response to this question/application, that does not appear to be the case. Middle		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Not addressed.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Based on the comments contained in the review of the application, the Absolute Priority has been met. Some of the following support this assertion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The district has proposed adopting 1:1 technology device and put forward a plan to link this to student instruction. - The district has adopted CCSS which, by definition, are linked to college and career readiness. - There is support in the education research literature that using technology can personalize instruction and boost student outcomes. 		

Total	210	144
-------	-----	-----



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0933CO-3 for Adams 12 Five Star Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant describes a broad vision which expands upon an established program called STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) present in the LEA. Personalization of learning to be achieved by establishing a 1:1 technology to student ratio. To address each of the four core assurance areas the applicant details the following--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of Common Core Standards into Colorado Academic Standards • Adoption of next generation science standards • Assimilation of data from varying and numerous data systems into one Learning Management System to be used by teachers, parents, students, and administration • Adoption of the Educator Evaluation system which is inclusive of student growth, multiple measures of effectiveness, and a process for earning and maintaining tenure status • Implementation of the Teaching Learning Cycle to turn around low achieving schools • Expanding established STEM program to the high school level <p>While the implementation of the Teaching Learning Cycle and inclusion of an additional high school in the STEM project is established as the means for turning around the lowest achieving schools, it is not evident how these two processes will achieve this goal. The Teaching Learning Cycle is limited in its description and explanation with no concrete action plan. The additional high school is the result of students matriculating through the grades from STEM sites to the high school level.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant justified the selection of schools based upon an established program (STEM) and its desire to improve this program and expand to the high school level.</p> <p>The schools selected were based upon their participation in STEM and the subsequent feeder pattern into the high school which includes a total of 5 schools and 3,099 students.</p> <p>The initiative is supported by senior staff members at the central office level and local school level as evidenced through informational meetings.</p> <p>Participating schools are clearly identified by name.</p> <p>All students (3,099) in each of the individual schools will participate.</p> <p>Percentage of students from low socio-economic families (47.3%) clearly identified.</p> <p>Total of 253 educators will participate.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Reform is focused on a small segment of schools and only anticipated to evolve to 2-3 additional schools (or 1400) students</p>		

over the course of four years. Description is void of impact system wide and concentrated on a very narrow scope within a limited number of schools. While the applicant does establish the reform to be a model beyond the district, it does not offer a description of how the reform would change schools beyond those participating.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
---	----	---

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Goals defined by applicant are ambitious and achievable. For example, Reading Proficiency (% scoring proficient and advanced), is projected to increase to 86% (increase of 18 percentage points) overall one year beyond the grant. For each of the subgroups identified, the percentage increase ranges from 18% (Asian) to as high as 28% (Economically Disadvantaged). Growth for reading also establishes ambitious goals with median growth goals over five years rising 13% overall with the subgroup of Hispanics projected to gain the most (26%). Projections are consistent in the area of math for proficiency and growth.

To close achievement gaps, the LEA established goals in reading and math to narrow the achievement gaps among the subgroups to under 20% difference in all subgroups with the exception of students with disabilities. It is noted that the subgroup white has the smallest gap to close (4.2%) when compared with the highest performing subgroup--Asian.

The graduation rate goal for all subgroups is 80% or higher one year post grant for all sub groups with the exception of Hispanic (78%), Economically Disadvantaged (78%), and students with disabilities (61%).

College enrollment rates are not defined.

Each of the subgroups' goals in each of the specified areas are evidenced with feasible and reasonable growth over the course of the grant and one year post grant.

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	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant demonstrates a record of improvement for student achievement for high school students.

- Results on Colorado State ACT has been consistent and significant.
- Graduation rates have increased 3.6 % from 2009-10 to 2010-2011 with the subgroup of Native American seeing an improvement of 28.1%

Applicant presents examples of closing the achievement gap which are narrow in their focus.

- Closed reading gap between Hispanic males and their counterparts however there is not any data to substantiate this
- 88% of 3rd graders scored proficient or advanced on reading, of which 33% were on an IEP, LAP plan or ELL

Applicant presents limited examples of interventions in low achieving schools.

- Closed one low performing school and reopened the school under a new reform initiative
- Refit curriculum and instruction at low achieving high school

Applicant publishes achievement data for use by students, parents, and educators.

- Use of data system, Infinite Campus, for parent and teacher access to test scores and real time student grades
- Established opportunities for parents to participate on accountability committees

The applicant addresses each of the performance indicators, however, data for each indicator is limited. Data indicates positive upward movement toward success but the rate of progress is limited.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant publishes all four categories of school-level expenditures on its website which is open for public access. Overall expenditures for each of the four categories are specified but not identified by school.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant justified participation and implementation of proposal through the citation of three sections of the Colorado state constitution: Article IX, Section 15; Article IX, Section 16; and Statute 22-32-109(1)(t). Applicant identified state's participation in the Race to the Top reform agenda as an additional requirement to support and implement personalized learning environments at the LEA level. Goals of the proposal fall within all legal authority and autonomy of the LEA.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant documented efforts to reach out for stake holder support:

- Teachers, coaches and principals in current STEM school participated in providing information for grant
- Teacher Association leadership reviewed proposal but there is not documentation of their support or feedback
- Staff at STEM schools reviewed proposal and indicated support or non-support for proposal. Less than one third of staff in each of the three school sites responded. Of the responses given, nearly 100% found proposal to be favorable.
- Seven letters of support from community, institutions of higher education, and businesses provided

Applicant does not mention how families or students were involved in proposal's development. Applicant does not describe how feedback impacted the proposal.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant does not describe a clear model for assessing its current status. While research and stats from NAEP are provided, there is no information specific to the applicant. Although there are identified areas of needs, there is no evidence of a plan for analysis. Applicant has identified the needs of the district but does not include how these needs will be analyzed and tied to the goals of the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant identifies multiple approaches to develop and support personalized learning environments for students.

- Use of Problem Based Learning to incorporate multiple disciplines and collaboration through the use of technology; provides exposure to many disciplines to aid in focusing a goal and/or identifying goals
- Use of the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) to identify a map toward college and career readiness standards
- Active student participation in cross-curricular project based learning activities
- Participation of students in entrepreneurial problem based learning activities with partner companies and/or outside of the traditional school setting (library, museums, Facebook)
- Identification of monitoring system to track progress to goals but not progress toward on-time graduation
- Use of real world scenarios and environments for learning activities through business partnerships
- Use of learning management system to assimilate data from a variety of sources
- Use of personal technology to provide students access to learning management system and a variety of instructional offerings
- Creation of a data dashboard available to teachers, parents, and students to inform progress toward goals, scores, and warnings of areas of concern (credit accrual, attendance, behavior)
- Assignment of an adult to monitor progress toward college and career standards; however, how this adult informs

student of recommendations is not identified

- Identified accommodations are specified only for students with special needs and use assistive technology
- Use of Digital Literacy Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), student leaders, and Project Coordinators to provide training on use of learning management system.

While an assessment of training and use is identified, a plan to track the use of the tools and management of learning over time is not addressed.

Applicant does not provide a clear description of strategies for high-need students.

Applicant does not explain how suggested strategies will be accommodated for high-need students

Overall the applicant supported a plan to provide personalized learning through the use and incorporation of technology on a one to one (device to student) ratio. However, there is not strong, defensible evidence to support how this will enable students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college and career readiness standards.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
---	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant clearly describes practices to involve all educators in training and professional development as well as the availability of the resources to achieve the goals of the proposal.

- Educators engaged in modeling, team teaching and forward feedback.
- Use of summer institutes to train educators on personalized learning environments and blended learning.
- Use of data dashboard to aggregate student data and progress toward college and career ready standards.
-
- Principals currently involved in principal evaluation system; teacher evaluation system to be implemented in 2014-2015.
- Training for evaluation system in place.
- Monthly meetings to review learning Management System established.
- Use of outside consultant to provide additional PD on personalized learning, coaching, modeling, and use of data.

Applicant does not address several of the sub-criteria related to data use and feedback

- No identified piece to inform educators of how data will be used to accelerate or improve student progress nor practice of educators.
- No identification of use of teacher/principal evaluations for feedback to inform effectiveness, recommendations, and/or interventions.
- Does not establish plan to identify learning approaches in response to individual needs and interests.
- Inadequate description of high quality learning resources and tools for creating and sharing new resources. No clear of instructional content or assessments is provided.

Applicant identifies methods to provide highly effective educators to students.

- Ineffective teachers can lose their tenure thereby being non-renewed.
- Ineffective principals can be terminated at any time.

It is undocumented how hard to staff schools/subjects will be addressed.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant--

Has policies in place to insure instruction for ELL students (Policy Code 5275)

Has policies in place to insure parent and community involvement (Policy Code 1000)

Provides a chain of command in place to address support for teachers through use of Chief Academic Officer, District STEM coordinator, School STEM Coordinator, and Digital Literacy TOSA. Organizational structure described is singularly focused on the implementation of technology.

Established a distributive leadership model where by each school has autonomy over budget, staffing, and scheduling; each teacher has autonomy over instructional delivery format and classroom scheduling.

Is transitioning to a Standards-based grading system and plans to incorporate this into the Learning Management System; however, insufficient explanation is given regarding the number of times and multiple ways students will be able to demonstrate mastery towards the standards

Identifies procurement of technology services to assist with implementation of technology with special needs students; however, no adaptation of instructional practices is explained.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
--	----	---

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant--

Proposes to establish a 1:1 student/device environment to allow all students access to the Learning Management System; unclear how student use of devices provides parents access to information. Vague establishment of availability of information in low socio-economic/high need families lacking infrastructure to use technology devices.

Identifies existing staff position and two proposed positions (if RTT-D is funded) to provide professional development, instructional coaching, technical support, and interventions; explanation is limited in description of delivery formats

Plans to institute the Learning Management System to aggregate student data from existing databases and integrate data from additional outside resources as well export data to outside resources

Currently operates an interoperable system district-wide and plans to integrate the Learning Management System within this operation

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant--

Will continue to monitor yearly school improvement plans for inclusion of progress toward implementation of grant

Establish a Personalized Learning Environment (PLE) Project Coordinator to lead an Advisory Team which will meet monthly to assess progress toward implementation and construct reports of progress to share with constituents

Quarterly reports inclusive of data toward progress or improvement needed will be provided to staff

Overall, the plan addresses continuous improvement but is limited in its explanation of transparency and how opportunities for correction or adjustment will be addressed and implemented.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant--

Plans to publish information on implementation and progress of grant on a yearly basis on district website.

Utilizes the advisory committee to create monthly updates on district website.

While plan does address communication of progress with stakeholders, stakeholders outside of the advisory committee are not included in the dialog. Communication seems to be only the dissemination of information from an internal committee to the broader external stakeholders.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Because the state has adopted new benchmarks for teacher and principal effectiveness whereby indicators have not yet been set, the applicant did not address performance measure a or b for all students. Information not provided.</p> <p>Applicant established reasonable targets to measure student growth in reading and math for all grade bands through the use of MAP assessments.</p> <p>Applicant identified reporting of parent/adult interested in student's school work as additional performance measure for grade band K-3 and 4-8. However, no measurable targets identified.</p> <p>Data and targets for performance measures (other than those of academic growth) is ambiguous and lacking. There is no evidence to support rationale for selection of criteria, how the measured will provide information regarding implementation, or how it will be reviewed over time to gauge implementation.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant identifies hiring of a single position (Project Evaluator) to monitor implementation. Project Evaluator will work with Advisory Council to ensure implementation however explanation does not include plan of how implementation/progress will be assessed. It is undocumented how the applicant plans to evaluate RTTT-D other than through simple and singular review of data from MAP. Insufficient explanation of how applicant will evaluate use time, staff or resources.</p>		

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>All funds identified by applicant are within the scope of the proposal and sufficiently described and assessed.</p> <p>Budget is reasonable and appropriate for the implementation of the proposal.</p> <p>All funds requested are described in detail and figures are consistent throughout the budget tables.</p> <p>One time investments are clearly identified.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For positions added through the use of grant monies, the applicant has identified local LEA funding sources to continue their employment beyond the grant. With use of the grant to upgrade and add technology, the applicant plans to become more technologically dependent and eliminate need of paper resources which adds to financial savings and will carry over beyond the grant. While the applicant does identify the far reaching benefits of the implementation of technology in a 1:1 scenario, there is not a comprehensive, high quality plan for sustainability describe.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This criteria is absent from the grant.and unable to review.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Applicant describes a comprehensive plan to develop personalized learning environments building upon an established program (STEM) through the integration of technology. Applicant specifies that a 1:1 student:device ratio will facilitate and expedite the learning of students by allowing real time data to students and learning which can be customized to the student through a digital platform. Success seen in the established STEM program supports this conclusion. The integration of data into one learning management system accessible by educators, students, and parents will monitor and establish progress toward mastery of college and career standards. The incorporation of technology and the digital platform in a 1:1 scenario supports the proposal of providing quality learning environments and effective educators to all students which was previously unavailable to all students. The incorporation of learning at sites other than the brick-and-mortar school (digital and partnerships with community and businesses) is reasonable evidence that students will tailor their own learning through digital platforms. The applicant did not provide a thorough description of how this will accelerate students or significantly close achievement gaps among subgroups. While the criteria were addressed in isolation, a specific plan was not addressed.

Total	210	129
-------	-----	-----



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0933CO-4 for Adams 12 Five Star Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Adams 12 Five Star Schools presented an enthusiastic and coherent reform vision building on the four Race to the Top assurance areas. The district is proposing to create personalized learning environments for students enrolled STEM schools.

The applicant details technology- supported learning pathways for children in the early grades that continue through high school, graduation, and beyond. The district notes that with the incorporation of technology, students can learn 24/7 in a manner that is highly engaging and meaningful. Adams 12 Five Star Schools clearly demonstrates that it has integrated the Common Core Standards in math and literacy into the Colorado Academic Standards. If funded by the RTT-D grant, the district would implement a Learning Management System (LMS) to track student learning on core standards. The LMS will also build on the district's technology infrastructure to put data into the hands of students, teachers and parents to monitor student progress as well as allow students to maintain electronic portfolios. Colorado's new educator evaluation systems will provide robust formative and summative data on teacher performance. The district intends to support PLEs in several STEM schools that have struggled in the past. While the district is proposing a bold new reform in these schools, it is not clear if or how the district will leverage its lessons learned from this project to support all students in realizing the benefits of the personalized learning described in the application.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
---	----	---

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district is targeting 2 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and high school for the RTT-D reform effort. The schools were selected based on their high need status and openness to reform. The STEM Launch schools have significantly higher rates of students from low-income families than the STEM Lab schools. The STEM Launch schools and the high school had been identified as low performing and are being redesigned. It is not clear if there were additional high-needs schools that could have benefited more from reform than the STEM Lab Schools. The schools will serve 3,099 students or approximately 7 percent of the district's enrollment. The applicant provided the list of schools with the required demographic data.

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

10

2

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

While the district clearly believes that it will achieve success with its STEM model, it does not provide adequate detail on how it would scale the reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided data on student assessments (both proficiency and growth), decreasing achievement gaps, and graduation rates. Data on college enrollment could not be located. The district has set very ambitious achievement goals; the proficiency rates may not be achievable within the 5-year timeline especially for some students who are part of subgroups. For example, Hispanic student will need to increase from 37.8 percent proficiency in math in 2011-12 to 65 percent by 2016-17. Major gaps will continue to exist between the highest and lowest performing students in 2016-17. Given that the RTT-D supported reforms will only reach 7 percent of the district's students, it is not clear if they will drive the improvement in LEA wide student outcomes. Also, the performance data suggest that EL students and students with disabilities perform at significantly lower rates than their peers, yet the application does not meaningfully address comprehensive interventions and supports for these students.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided limited data on the LEA's track record of past success on improving student outcomes. Districtwide trend data on student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and college enrollment could not be located. The district has demonstrated some success on improving the the ACT scores in all subjects since 2006. Graduation rates also improved slightly between 2009-10 and 2010-11 (the only years for which data were available), although only two-thirds of the districts students graduate from high school.</p> <p>Students attending the STEM Lab schools out performed students both district- and statewide. Trend data were not provided to show if high performing students have historically attended the school, or if the STEM reform drove increases in achievement.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided the data described in the notice and provided a link with a district web address that suggests that this requirement has been met in full.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided sufficient evidence that it has the autonomy to implement its reforms in the participating schools. Given the information provided, it appears that the state places a significant amount of control in the hands of the district for instructional and curriculum decisions.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided evidence that it consulted with educators in each of the participating schools and included faculty survey results. Although the district received a fairly low response rate on the survey, those that did respond had a favorable opinion of the proposed reforms. The district also received letters of support from key stakeholders that are provided in the application.</p> <p>There is concern about the role of the Teacher's Association and teachers in general in supporting the application. The applicant notes that the association leadership reviewed the proposal, but it cannot be determined if they provided feedback or if the district made revisions based on association comments. It is not clear from the application if the district collectively bargains with labor. If so, a letter of support from the association would have strengthened the application. If not, there is no evidence that 70 percent of the teachers in the participating schools supported the proposal (most teachers did not complete the survey). The president of the Teacher's Association did sign the application suggesting at least modest support of the proposal.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In reviewing achievement data the district identified major gaps in mathematics proficiency which lead it to focus on a STEM reform model. In order to fully realize its vision, the district clearly identified a lack of technology that would enable students to personalize their learning as a major resource need. The district provided a detailed and cohesive plan on to help it reach its goal of 1:1 student to device ratio and the professional supports educators would need to facilitate personalized learning. There is concern that the district did not provide a thorough analysis of its human capital resources and needs to realize its goals. The district provided a reasonable implementation timeline with clearly defined activities, roles, and expectations.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Adams 12 articulated a comprehensive vision of what learning would look like for students in a technology-rich personalized learning environment. The STEM sites will incorporate a problem-based learning model that will provide students with experiential instruction. Students will determine their own learning paths with the support from teachers and other adults. The model includes opportunities for student collaboration and multiple avenues for ongoing feedback. Technology becomes critical in that would give students access to 24/7 learning. The district would encourage students to seek learning opportunities beyond those found in a traditional classroom. The learning model also emphasizes trans-disciplinary students across academic subjects. Together, these features likely will allow students to personalize their learning and lead to success in college- and career-readiness.</p> <p>The district's plan does not sufficiently address specific strategies or instructional adaptations for EL students or students with disabilities. As earlier data suggest, EL students and students with disabilities perform at significantly lower rates than their peers. It is not clear how the district intends to ensure that ALL of its students are college- and career-ready.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a cohesive plan for supporting teachers in transitioning to PLEs. Much of the training is targeted helping teachers use the LMS and other technologies. It is less clear on how the district intends to support teachers in changing their practice to facilitate cooperative and collaborative learning across disciplines although the proposed coaching and modeling strategies could be powerful school-embedded professional development both on technology and pedagogical delivery. The district plans to use grant funds to ensure that teachers will know how to analyze student data to inform individualized instruction and learning. Data from Colorado's new educator evaluation system also will feed into formative and summative progress monitoring of professional practice. In addition to identifying a teachers's strengths and weaknesses, the district will use the evaluation results for high-stakes personnel decision including tenure determinations which will ensure that all</p>		

students have access to effective teachers.

While the district's plan includes information on how principals will be evaluated under the new system, it does not sufficiently discuss their roles as transformative leaders as these schools transition from traditional to personalized learning environments. The plan also does not address any specific challenges the participating schools may face in recruiting and retaining effective and highly effective educators in hard to staff schools and subjects including STEM areas. As with its narrative on learning, the section on teaching and leading does not provide a meaningful discussion on supports to educators to help high-need students succeed, including students with disabilities and EL students.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Given that the district intends to implement its RTT-D reform in only 5 schools, it is not planning to reorganize its central offices. A district-level STEM/Science Coordinator will oversee the implementation of the STEM model. The district notes that schools have the structured and supported autonomy required to implement the STEM model including control over budget, professional development, schedule and staffing.</p> <p>The district is moving toward Standards Based Grading (SBG) which will help monitor student progress against the Common Core Standards. This will allow students to accrue credit based on mastery, not seat time. It is not clear when the district will fully adopt SBG.</p> <p>The applicant does not adequately discuss how it will adapt learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and accessible to all students other than noting it will seek a vendor to assess with adaptive technology.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>If awarded, the district would use its RTT-D funds to make a significant investment in personalized technology. The district appears to be committed to providing support to all key stakeholders through several channels to ensure they know how to use technology and analyze student learning data. The application, however, does not provide adequate detail on its outreach to all stakeholder groups.</p> <p>The district will acquire a technology platform that will allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format.</p> <p>The districts data systems are interoperable and include human resources, budget, student, and instructional information. The LMS platform will be integrated into the district's existing systems.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Adams 12 provided a clear plan for continuous improvement that included not only student outcome measures, but project-specific indicators that would allow project managers to determine if they are on track with RTT-D implementation on an ongoing basis. The plan includes appropriate measures which will be included managed in the LMS and has good feedback mechanisms including its "just-in-time" feedback to teachers, principals, and administrators.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the district is clearly committed to seeking feedback from stakeholders, its plan for ongoing communications and engagement lacks clarity. As written, the plan is stronger on information dissemination than securing meaningful stakeholder feedback. The plan could have been strengthened with more specific detail on the proposed avenues of communication and engagement the district would use including regular stakeholder meetings and surveys.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district has identified performance measures as required by the RTT-D notice. However, with the exception of limited achievement data, the district did not set performance targets for the participating schools. Therefore, it could not be determined if the districts goals are ambitious, yet achievable.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district will hire an internal evaluator to examine the effectiveness of its RTT-D investments. The district's initial plan includes multiple measures of program effectiveness including process and student outcome measures. The district has made a strong connection to graduating students in the STEM field to the impact on the local economy. For example, the district notes that if it increased the graduation rate from 65 to 88 percent the additional wages graduates would earn would infuse approximately \$1 million annually into the local economy.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Adams 12 is requesting approximately \$9.9 million in RTT-D funds primarily to make a one-time investment in an LMS and technology devices such as laptops and tablets. There is some concern as to whether the proposed budget includes sufficient funds to support the training that will be required not only to allow teachers to use technology, but to effectively personalize instruction. The cost for program oversight appears to be high given that the grant is only supporting 5 schools. The greatest concern over the budget is its lack of sustainability. The district is offering no matching funds to support the RTT-D reform. While it would use the funds to make a one-time investment in technology, the district does not appear to be committed to maintaining this investment after the grant ends. Technology quickly becomes obsolete and requires continuous investments to stay current. Other than the LMS which could be used by all schools in the district, the applicant does not appear to have long-term, concrete plans to scale-up the STEM initiative beyond the 5 participating schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The greatest concern over the budget is its lack of sustainability. The district is offering no matching funds to support the RTT-D reform. While it would use the funds to make a one-time investment in technology, the district does not appear to be committed to maintaining this investment after the grant ends. Technology quickly becomes obsolete and requires continuous investments to stay current. Other than the LMS which could be used by all schools in the district, the applicant does not appear to have long-term plans to scale-up the STEM initiative beyond the 5 participating schools.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Adams 12 Five Star Schools presented an enthusiastic and coherent reform vision building on the four Race to the Top assurance areas. The district is proposing to create personalized learning environments for students enrolled STEM schools.

The applicant details technology- supported learning pathways for children in the early grades that continue through high school, graduation, and beyond. The district notes that with the incorporation of technology, students can learn 24/7 in a manner that is highly engaging and meaningful. Adams 12 Five Star Schools clearly demonstrates that it has integrated the Common Core Standards in math and literacy into the Colorado Academic Standards. If funded by the RTT-D grant, the district would implement a Learning Management System (LMS) to track student learning on core standards. The LMS will also build on the district's technology infrastructure to put data into the hands of students, teachers and parents to monitor student progress as well as allow students to maintain electronic portfolios. Colorado's new educator evaluation systems will provide robust formative and summative data on teacher performance. The district intends to support PLEs in three STEM schools that have struggled in the past as low performing schools.

While the district is proposing a bold new reform in five schools, it is not clear if or how the district will leverage its lessons learned from this project to support all students in realizing the benefits of the personalized learning described in the application. The plan falls short in several areas including how teachers will be effectively supported in facilitating PLEs, the role of principals, and if the district has set ambitious yet achievable performance measures. The district does not appear to be making investments with local, state, or other federal funds to support this reform or to scale it beyond the five participating schools. It is not clear if this reform, which will reach about 7 percent of the district's students, will drive improved achievement districtwide. Furthermore, the district's plan is largely silent on targeted interventions for EL students and students with disabilities and these are the students who appear to be struggling the most in the district.

Total	210	124
-------	-----	-----