



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0504MO-1 for Board of Education of the City of St. Louis

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides helpful context outlining significant challenges the district has faced in recent years, culminating in loss of accreditation and then embarking on significant improvement efforts and ultimately, recent reinstatement of accreditation by the state Board of Education. The proposal notes the current Superintendent has brought stability and strong leadership to the district.</p> <p>The applicant's instruction and assessment vision is comprehensive and should appropriately address the state adopted Common Core standards. The proposal outlines a five step Common Core standards implementation plan to retool curriculum, develop study units, address learning progressions, focus assessment and provide professional development to help teachers develop life-long learners. Parents will receive guides to standards as well. The district further is implementing a literacy model as a framework for instructional activities to better prepare students for college and workplace preparation.</p> <p>The overall data system management plan is well thought through. Data systems will be used and built on to provide strong and relevant data for improving instruction. The existing data system currently provides student performance measure progress to guide instruction in the four core content areas and benchmark testing used to indicate success on end of course exams and to inform instruction. Additional tools and support will be provided by DESE (state education department) through the new state accountability system addressing the ESEA waiver. Digital learning resources have been identified which will allow teachers to monitor student learning in real time to direct instruction.</p> <p>The district presents a comprehensive effective teacher and principal building vision. The district will implement the state Educator Evaluation system focusing on improving effective practices of teachers, principals and superintendents. The new system intends to provide more accurate data for identifying ineffective educators, which will be used to monitor classroom access to effective teachers and principals. The vision does not address what will occur when ineffective educators are identified. The vision states that strong professional development will be designed to ensure every student has a highly-qualified teacher, but does not elaborate on how it envisions this to occur. The vision would be strengthened with information regarding district intent to recruit or distribute effective/highly-effective educators.</p> <p>The district will focus particular emphasis on serving the district's lowest achieving schools, identifying the continuation of prior successful work done through School Improvement Grants and strong instructional support. The proposal provides a sound example of focused support in the Title 1/Extended day learning program for low performing students in Communication Arts or Math.</p> <p>The project characteristics also envision personalized learning elements including personal devices, timely feedback, student managed data, interaction patterns to drive instructional planning. The vision builds upon the current 3rd and 4th grade iPad initiative to personalize student learning.</p> <p>Overall, the proposal outlines a clear and comprehensive approach to each of the four of the core assurance areas and articulates a clear and credible approach to the reform vision with the only minor exception being slight ambiguity in professional development goals.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly describes the school selection process to include all elementary schools and lists all 47 participating schools which explains the selection process.</p> <p>The district provided complete tables listing the total number of participating students from low-income families, number of</p>		

participating high need students and the number of participating educators.

The explanation of the magnitude of high need and low income students to be served is helpful to put the request in context. More information earlier in the narrative would have made the entire proposal easier to understand. The tables show only one participating school with less than 40% of students coming from low income families. The other 46 participating schools have more than 60% low income and most have over 85% low income.

The criteria was substantially met based on data provided, but would have been thorough with additional implementation details for expanding the program within all of the participating elementary schools.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
---	----	---

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A limited plan is presented for scale-up for the entire district. The applicant does not address scaling into high schools. Further detail indicating a specific timeline of scale-up activities with responsible parties associated with the activities would have improved the plan across the district. A high-quality plan is presented for phasing in across all elementary schools.

The district presents a basic plan to expand the elementary RTT-D project into the 6-8th grades as soon as possible and further identifies the funding need and solution for the middle school expansion. High school expansion is not addressed. The plan to implement the reform across the elementary schools is sound, and explained in sufficient detail across the narrative.

The district presents a logical well-developed theory of change based on the district's self study and the Public Education Leadership Project Coherence Framework as to how the plan will improve student learning outcomes. Expansion efforts are sound in the elementary, sufficient in grades 6-8, but lacking high school, resulting in the mid-range score.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the likelihood for improved student learning and performance and increased equity is very high for *elementary* grades targeted by the proposal. Explanation of how the achievement increase will occur for grades 6-high school is needed to show a high likelihood of reaching the goals presented in the tables. The completed tables for grades 3 through High School in Communication Arts and Math reflect ambitious but achievable goals if all grades are to be directly affected by the RTT-D project. The upper grade goals are likely achievable based on past success and district commitment to improvement shown throughout the narrative.

The 3rd, 4th and 5th grade goals for summative assessments are both ambitious and achievable as augmented by the students receiving the iPad supported personalized education in year 1 of the project. The 6-8 and high school English and Algebra targets may be achievable based on limited evidence of interventions targeted to those grades. The project is reported to apply to all district elementary schools which leaves the question as to how the other schools will achieve similar percentage gains in proficiency without the same support.

Decreasing achievement gaps should be successful with the additional extended day/Title 1 support identified in addition to the grant support. The gaps are relatively small, except in 4th grade and White students who overall have a larger gap, but should be realistically closed as targeted. The gaps are basically non-existent for middle school and high school subgroups. Additional information as to how the White student subgroup's gap will be closed, considering their gap is larger but proficiency was generally higher than the other historically at-risk subgroups would enhance the likelihood of that gap closing. All subgroups, including White students are predicted to close the gap in all areas post-grant, which is a reasonable target based on past improvement success.

The district graduation rate goals appear realistic and achievable; though not very ambitious. However, the high school students are not targeted participants of the grant, which may be why only minimal increases are projected. Additional explanation of how the goals were determined would be helpful.

The overall college enrollment rate category goals are appropriately ambitious and achievable. The subgroup data provided does not calculate to produce the overall rate listed, which confuses the ability to confirm the likelihood of the improved college enrollment.

Strengths include a strong vision and track record for achieving the targeted goals for grades K-6 and into grades 6-8. Weaknesses include lack of explanation for how the 8 grade - high school scores will be improved and explanation of how goals were determined for graduation rate improvement would be helpful to best judge the chance of improvement based on identified targets.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides a clear track record of success over the last four years, with dramatic improvements across several reform areas particularly evident in the last two years' data provided. Sufficient helpful graphs and charts were provided to support the explanation of the improvements noted for all areas except showing improvement in the low-performing schools. The district's overall capacity for reform success is demonstrated in their intense efforts to re-gain accreditation by the state.</p> <p>Evidence of success in raising achievement is shown in the prior two years through End of Course assessment increases for both English II (approx 20%) and Algebra I (over 20%). Math increases are attributed in part to the implementation of a smaller learning communities program over the past three years. The district also provides evidence of minimizing the achievement gap by about the same rate of proficient/advanced increases between the district and state results for English II and Algebra I.</p> <p>The district graduation rate gap impressively decreased from 30% to 20% and the attendance rate gap decreased from 5.4% to 1.9% over the past four years. Of particular note is the increased access to AP courses, with a dramatic increase in the number of students taking these advanced courses increasing from 156 seven years ago to 1464 last year.</p> <p>The district provides compelling evidence demonstrating the graduation rate increase over 7% through a new initiative over the past two years, improved attendance rates, and significantly reduced the dropout rate among high-risk 9th and 10th grades by over 50% further indicating significant capacity and success for reform.</p> <p>College enrollment increases are not addressed, a limiting factor in the overall score.</p> <p>The proposal outlines success through reforms in 11 low-performing schools implementing School Improvement Grant Turnaround or Transformation models. The district notes the significant majority (at least 8 of the 11) of the participating schools showed improvements in communications arts and math for at least one grade level, increased attendance rates and reduced disciplinary incidents over the past two years. Specific data quantifying the stated increases would have been helpful to further demonstrate the success.</p> <p>The district notes several sources for parents, students and educators to access student performance data. Parents and student have access to student performance data through teacher conferences. Passive methods are also provided such as parent access to the SIS, but are left to the responsibility of the parents or students to access and interpret. More discussion as to how the data is used by teachers, students and parents to inform and improve education and participation would have best met the criteria.</p> <p>The overall clear track record of success in implmenting significant reform efforts, supported by compelling evidence overall, resulted in the strong score.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provides transparency in investments by posting the general operating budget and salary information on their website. These investment information resources list all salaries categorized as requested, and non-personnel expenditures at the school level, meeting the minimum level of information requested. The district also provides district-wide expenditure information through an annual financial report.</p> <p>The applicant does not address transparency in processes or practices which would have completed the response.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Successful conditions and autonomy under state law to implement the proposed reform is clearly stated in the narrative. The applicant references Missouri Revised Statute 162.1100.4 which affords wide governance authority to the district's SAB. Recent district achievements are used to indicate successful district conditions exist to implement the project. Additional information confirming there is not conflict with law or policy for granting mastery-based credit versus time on task credit or</p>		

impediments to increasing access to student data would have helped prove no barriers exist.

The state department of education letter of support does not indicate any conflicts and does confirm general project alignment with state goals.

The applicant provides statutory evidence of sufficient autonomy and conditions to implement their intended project, but is somewhat unclear regarding mastery-based advancement and data access, resulting in the slightly reduced score.

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

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district shows meaningful engagement in the development of the proposal through multiple methods including stakeholder surveys of elementary students and teachers, parent interviews and teacher union leadership involvement. The survey and interview questions are all highly relevant for securing high-quality feedback and engagement in the project development and implementation.

Student responses related the lack of Internet access at home, support for iPads to improve learning in school, and provided ideas for how the iPads could be used to support valuable group and individual projects and skill practice. Exceptionally meeting the criteria for engagement and feedback solicitation, Title I Family and Community Specialists interviewed approximately 300 parents to gage their involvement ability, training needs, and ways to use iPads to encourage learning. Parent response was highly favorable regarding project involvement, expressed need for parent iPad training, and provided learning use ideas for the iPads. Parents also expressed an interest in knowing more about what their children are learning in school and what is expected of them.

Teachers were interviewed to determine training and support needs to increase personalized instruction and use of iPads within their classroom, iPad use ideas and parent engagement suggestions. Teachers provided multiple suggestions for iPad use to personalize education such as differentiating and customizing uses, access to the Internet, and remediation work.

Principal feedback was also gathered to determine training and support needs, iPads for personalizing education ideas, and parent engagement ideas.

The applicant provided extensive evidence of support from myriad district partners further documenting backing and capacity for the project.

The applicant indicates they used the feedback gathered to direct how the application was developed. The applicant also provides a table showing questions and feedback from the state department of education and where the comments were addressed in the narrative.

The district planned and developed the project in collaboration with the President of the teacher's union and noted such participation as proof of support and engagement by the collective bargaining unit.

The district presents comprehensive stakeholder evidence of participation and feedback gathering in the development and support of the proposal, fully meeting each of the requested criteria.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district has demonstrated evidence of past work analyzing the students they serve and the significant gaps and needs they have. The analysis draws attention to the incredibly high poverty rate of their district as a whole and the resulting educational hurdles faced. Understanding how to equalize access for low-income children to make the school experience relevant and rigorous for all students drives the district reform vision.

The district examined its current status in implementing personalized learning environments noting significantly increased learning options for students and the success of several of the programs offered. Several programs described are particularly relevant for meeting the four core assurance areas and personalizing education such as the Individual Academic Plan which collects and uses the data necessary to plan personalized instruction, the High School Graduation Initiative supporting individual students, and the current district funded iPad initiative for 3rd and 4th graders.

Communication arts and math needs and gaps have been identified through an extensive summative assessment score analysis as priority concepts for students to learn.

The applicant presents its logic behind the reform, clearly stating how the iPads are merely the vehicle to accomplish reform along with teacher, principal, parent and community development. These proposed interventions will in turn significantly expand access to learning tools which meet each child's needs and interest, growing creative life-long learners, and changing

the role and relationship of the teacher to support each child's learning path.

The past analysis is thorough. The goals, some of which note parties responsible and deliverables required, are explained throughout the narrative resulting in fair credibility. The high score reflects the thoroughness of the past analysis which logically drives the future work.

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 provides a detailed, thorough, and credible high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. Significant thought contributed to student learning and the plan to meet each of the criteria and project goals.

The district provides a realistic vision of the plan and what the iPad initiative will look like in action, based on a similar initiative active in Chicago schools. Several non-negotiable instructional requirements are in place, which strengthen the learning plan. The non-negotiable instructional requirements should ensure every student receives high quality learning support through a standards based portfolio, extensive focus on literacy in digital activities and full-class project-based learning activity. These requirements will help ensure students have a clear learning path, data to measure progress, literacy support and exposure to critical academic content and processes to develop critical college and career-ready skills such as teamwork, individual study, and goal setting.

Each required element and how the district proposes to meet the element is clearly defined in tables and within the narrative as summarized below. The table presents clear evidence of thoughtful integration of the criteria in support of each student's personalized learning.

The proposal outlines strategies for students and parents to understand what they learn is key to success through the each student's electronic portfolio, Individual Academic Plans (IAPs), and Parent University training.

Students will identify and pursue learning goals linked to common core standards and the elementary curriculum through their electronic portfolios and IAPs. They will receive real-time feedback from teachers which will help them understand progress measurement and new learning tasks based on current understanding. Table 5 provides clear evidence of strategies and guidelines supporting student access to and management of their academic skills progress.

Access to deep learning experiences in areas of interest will be provided in Phase II of the implementation plan allotting time for students to engage at least once per week and later once per day in interest-driven activities. Partner digital lessons will support many student interests.

Each student will be required to develop and maintain a personalized sequence of content and skill to graduate college and career ready managed through their iPad which will also house work products. Students, their parents and their teacher will have access to the portfolio

A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and environments will be provided through project-based learning within the classroom and with other schools, states and countries and through the partner developed digital lessons which require a global or multi-cultural focus.

The district has secured local organization partnerships to provide innovative high quality aligned digital content. Numerous local organizations have committed to providing digital content aligned to the Common Core standards and with imbedded cultural aspects in addition to content in Fine Arts, Physical Education, Science and more.

Real time feedback will be provided to students by teachers in Phase III by using current student data to redirect instruction to better meet skills, learning styles and interests.

The district will use its Response to Intervention approach to differentiate instruction to accommodate and provide and quality strategies for high-need students to graduate. Low performing students in communication arts and math will attend the afterschool extended learning programs for additional learning support.

The district has worked diligently to secure many partners who will help develop and provide high-quality, Common Core standards-aligned, assessable learning opportunities that are locally relevant for the students, but also focus on global or multi-cultural understandings. This innovative and highly relevant resource bank is impressive.

Training mechanisms for students and teachers to use tools and resources to track and manage learning will be provided by trained project coaches in addition to identified free applications to improve skills.

The applicant further provides comprehensive narrative and tabled information delineating project tasks, timelines, responsibilities and milestones. The listed project tasks, timelines, responsibilities and milestones are highly detailed, well planned, extensive and very well thought out and proposed. The applicant provides an excellent plan and response to implement personalized student learning.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal carefully lays out a high-quality plan for improving teaching and leading. Each required element and how the district proposes to meet the element is defined in tables and within the narrative as summarized below. The table presents clear evidence of thoughtful integration of the criteria to improve teaching and learning through personalized education environments with only minor detriments.

Professional development for teaching and leading to improve instruction and increase capacity will be provided by district leaders and education professionals including highly-trained personalization coaches, University partners, and Apple education specialists. Training will support effective implementation of personalized learning environments and frequent coaching by highly-trained personalization coaches for all teachers.

The district will provide ongoing support through 30 hours of paid professional development time each year for teachers to work in teams and PLCs along with summer institutes and supported graduate work. Initial training will support the teachers' new role as learning facilitator to guide personalized learning environments. The coaches are expected to provide at least 24 hours of direct coaching for each three-week period. Collaborative paid professional development time to work in PLCs will allow grade-level team support for colleagues along with feedback for and sharing of teacher created lessons.

The proposal explains that all professional development will support aligning curriculum to the Common Core standards. Professional development will focus on providing teacher training to identify learning styles and matching learning styles to standards-based instruction to adapt content and instruction for common and individual tasks responsive to learning approaches. This training will also support processes to match student needs with specific resources and approaches and provide understanding for project based and individual work. The emphasis on project-based learning is well designed to improve students' ability to apply knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Training is intended to prepare teachers to frequently measure progress toward meeting standards and use data to inform student work. Digital applications identified to support this task include Socrative and Nearpod. The training will specifically teach how to develop and use electronic student portfolios to assess progress, to self-manage student learning, and using digital tools to monitor student progress and provide real time feedback.

Teachers will receive professional development on the new Missouri Educator Evaluation System to improve practice and effectiveness using feedback from teacher and principal evaluation systems. The data from the teacher and principal evaluations will be used to identify individual training needs. Additional information elaborating on the types of data provided through the evaluation systems and how that information would be used to improve instruction would strengthen the response.

RTT-D funds will be combined with district resources to provide access to resources, tools and data including teacher iPad with accessories, student iPads, purchased and free applications, and a cart for storing and syncing iPads.

The response is sufficient but would be enhanced with additional information explaining the elementary curriculum and how the teachers will have access to or develop non Common Core subject standards to prepare students for college and careers. For example, what guides science, social studies or arts curriculum and are they rigorous and supportive of college and career ready skills?

Project principals will receive training, tools and data to structure effective learning environment including professional development focused on teacher and classroom assessment for continuous improvement and they will attend the summer institutes with their teachers. Principals will continue to use the existing district "learning walk" designed to understand what is working and what is not to better support teachers' needs.

District technology staff will augment the above-noted professional development to provide training, systems and infrastructure support for the iPad personalized education initiative.

The district will use high-quality professional development to increase the effectiveness of teachers and principals. The district will also use the new education evaluation system from DESE to assess and develop effective practice of educators. As noted

above, expansion on the evaluation system would have helped to understand how the new education evaluation system will help assess educator's needs to increase access to highly effective education staff.

The proposal refers to the tabled information delineating project tasks, timelines, responsibilities and milestones to complete the plan for improving teaching and leading. The listed project tasks, timelines, responsibilities and milestones are highly detailed, well planned, extensive and very well thought out and proposed. The applicant provides considerable evidence of a credible plan and response to improve teaching and leading with the only deficits being minimal explanation of non-Common Core subjects and limited details regarding the teacher and principal evaluation system.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides ample evidence of policies and central office structure in place to support project implementation. The diagram and description of the central office structure appears to be well-designed to provide better support to the schools to implement the reform plan. In general, the applicant's ability to succeed is demonstrated in provided examples of major past improvements which lend credibility to the success of future efforts.</p> <p>The district office realignment into Cluster Support Teams appears to be a sound model for the central office to better support the unique needs of individual schools and particularly for the lowest performing schools. The design and staffing of the Cluster Support Teams provides appropriate expertise to guide schools needing intervention while allowing school leadership teams (principal's advisories) with sufficient flexibility and autonomy for schedules, staffing, and budgets which do not need extra assistance.</p> <p>The applicant explains that the MAP assessment measures mastery and references the MAP-A assessment can be customized for students who have specific special needs when flexibility is required.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the narrative the applicant briefly explains that students will be allowed to progress within the regular course of instruction through their IAP and learning portfolios. Expanded plan detail to clarify how each student will have the opportunity to show mastery at multiple times in multiple ways to advance on their learning path or earn credit within their regular classroom would have improved the response. The applicant provides confusing information regarding the opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery at multiple times in multiple ways. Students have access to the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program, the ACE program and AP courses which assumedly assess mastery. However, how mastery is demonstrated multiple times in multiple ways beyond those participating in the MoVIP courses, or AP courses is not completely clear.</p> <p>The district provides significant services to meet the special needs of students with disabilities and English learners including the Gateway Michael school which serves students with physical disabilities. A novel approach to staffing includes ensuring experience as an ELL teacher for at least one of the personalization coaches. The proposal has explained that the district serves many immigrant families and the system is experienced in serving the unique needs of students new to the country. They intend to use digital interpretation software and other applications addressing language needs. Autistic students have received support with devices including iPads and will continue to receive such adaptable resources and practices.</p> <p>Although the district administrative role is sound, the details are lacking to have judged the response as constituting a high-quality plan over a satisfactory plan, resulting in the mid-range score.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides evidence of policies and basic infrastructure to support project implementation, and a timeline is provided addressing technical training and support. Plan details which would have completed the response include support goals and parties responsible.

The district is in a unique position where the majority of students and their families do not have Internet access at home, the most common mode for accessing digital school content and resources. Parents face an access challenge to review student performance data from home due to lack of Internet access as well. Despite this, the District has developed innovative access points for parents and students to access learning resources and data outside of school. The partnerships with the Public Library and district family and community specialists appear to fill a rather unique role in reaching out to and serving families outside of school. The Parent Universities education sessions are a forward thinking solution to provide sufficient training to

many families who most likely lack of access to or understanding of the technology their children use everyday in school.

The proposal presents a comprehensive initial training and technical support plan for all stakeholders. Ongoing training is thorough and relevant for educators.

Although the proposal notes parent access to the Student Information System, it does not reference parent access to student portfolio data or other system data that may be relevant.

The district notes concern for data movement and interoperability and that it is at the forefront of their reform effort, but they do clearly describe how the data systems or applications contemplated through this project will interact with each other.

The responses to the selection criteria in this section were substantially met, though not thoroughly addressed in all areas as noted above.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides an overall sound strategy for timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals at multiple levels: student, classroom, and project as a whole. The plan to monitor and measure implementation is thorough. How the district intends to externally share the evaluation information is unclear.

The information will be collected and reviewed quarterly to make adjustments in a timely manner. Annual data will be reviewed by a larger audience to revise or provide additional support as needed. The improvement process outlined is rigorous, timely and thorough.

The applicant provides copies of the degree of implementation measure tools which will also be used to evaluate and determine opportunities for corrections and improvements during and after grant at the student, classroom, and project-wide levels. The student degree of implementation measurement tool will be administered more frequently to more quickly identify necessary changes for teachers to refocus instructional planning. Data will also be reviewed by coaches to provide additional training and by the leadership team to make corrections in strategy as needed. These tools should be very effective to support the continuous improvement process. They will collect highly relevant information to gauge consistency with the implementation plan, document examples of customized learning strategies from teachers, verify students are populating their learning portfolio and monitor the fidelity of the non-negotiable iPad implementation items such as using literacy-based resources.

The applicant provides lists strategies for how it will publicly share information such as investments in PD, technology and staff, noting information will be included in annual reports to various stakeholders and available on the district website. The applicant provides minimal indication of how it will monitor or measure (beyond the implementation measure) the quality of or return on investments funded by RTT-D such as people, equipment and resources. This evaluation information, if provided, would tie the evaluation goals clearly to the quality of investments to drive improvements in where and how future investments are made.

Although generally responsive to the criteria with a sufficient plan, lacking detail resulted in the reduced score.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists strategies and opportunities for communication with internal and external stakeholders. However, many of the strategies are reporting out rather than two-way communication, particularly with outside partners and parents. The project leadership team will have significant ongoing communication in their weekly meetings, as will the Cluster Support Teams in their quarterly meetings.

Of concern is that project partners opportunities to provide engaged feedback appear limited. The evaluation plan in section (E)(4) describes evaluative questions which will be provided to partners to gather feedback and evaluatory data but no timeline or frequency of contact is noted. Also concerning is that parent and student feedback and engagement opportunities were obscure in the narrative. Section (E)(4) describes survey and interview evaluative questions to be directed at parents and

students. More information as to how and when this communication and engagement will occur would have improved this response. Limited engagement opportunities are explained to include internal administration and annual meetings of project partners. The sparse opportunities to collect ongoing communication and seek engagement with students and external stakeholders weakens this response.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides 14 performance measures and presents a clear rationale/purpose for selecting the measures as well as noting the source of the data. Explanation for how the measures will provide information tailored to the plan and theory of action is also provided throughout the narrative. The implementation surveys at the project, school, and student level will be the most comprehensive measures and are custom measures selected by the district to measure progress toward implementation in alignment with project goals.

The applicant described how the implementation checklist measures will be reviewed for project improvements. The other performance measure review processes are not explained in detail.

The applicant includes a performance measure targeting increases in students assigned a "highly qualified teacher", which is the current designation provided through the legacy evaluation system. Principals are not designated through the legacy system. The targets are reasonable based on current very high percentages of students with highly qualified teachers of record with annual targets of 100% across the board by the end of the grant. These targets will need to be adjusted when the new evaluation system is used with new categorical measures of effectiveness for teachers, principals and superintendents.

First and second grade Terra Nova, attendance, and discipline incidents performance measures are stated, but no baseline or annual target data is provided which is not fully responsive. The physical fitness baseline will also be determined later, but reasonable annual targets are proposed.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district presents a well-rounded and logical plan for collecting and analyzing data for the major components and goals of project. Evaluation of district-funded activities will have dual functions: process evaluation to determine if the quality of the activity can be improved, and outcome evaluation will be used to determine the project impact on students, teachers and the district. The applicant will gather qualitative assessments of key program aspects through surveys and interviews of stakeholders to increase productivity and resources.

The applicant will gather quantitative data through outcome evaluation from summative assessment scores, on track for college and career readiness indicators, increase in teacher knowledge and skills, increased access to resources, and increase in parental support to measure effective use of funds to improve results.

Specific details are provided listing key evaluative questions, sources of information and how the collective information will be used to drive improvement. The applicant provides a thorough response to the criteria.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district is thoroughly responsive to the requested criteria.

Project support funding sources are identified as the school district, technology funds and levy, Title 1 funds, and community support totaling over \$12 million in contributions outside of the RTT-D proposal.

The application provides the rationale for investment and priorities provided by the district and other funding sources as well as a basic rationale for broad categories of funds requested through RTT-D money.

The application clearly displays one time investments versus ongoing operational costs by funding source (grant, district, etc.) in a resources table.

A detailed budget narrative providing sufficient itemization to demonstrate how costs were calculated and the purpose of the expense in relation to the success of project is attached. The thorough budget narrative validates the planned expenses as reasonable and sufficient to develop and implement the project.

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

10

6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal outlines a brief description of funding sources intended to continue providing the RTT-D project. The district itself intends to absorb significant ongoing costs. The district provides a clear designation of one-time versus necessary ongoing costs to sustain the project and describes how it will absorb many of the necessary ongoing costs within existing budgets.

The district explains a fundraising plan which is expected to raise the required funds to expand the iPad initiative to grades 6-8. Significant emphasis is placed on private funding which is not identified. The elements of a high-quality plan are not thoroughly presented, including a proposed post-award budget, or timeline, which coupled with the lack of individual parties responsible designation challenge the credibility of the sustainability plan. However, the district has previously demonstrated its ability to secure private and other funding to outfit the 3rd and 4th graders with iPads this year which lends credibility to their fundraising goal for grades 6-8.

Evidence of support from state and local leaders and community organization is noted in the letters of support in the appendix, but they do not reference financial commitment to the project or sustainability. Although a basic plan is provided, additional plan components and details would have improved the score and the overall sustainability plan credibility.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes a coherent and sustainable partnership between the school district and many community partners in support of implementing Family Support Centers and the Parent University campuses in six district Community Education Full-Service Schools (CEFSS) to serve as hub sites distributed across the district geographically.

The partnership's goals align with the district RTT-D proposal to increase academic performance by providing students with equal access to resources and learning opportunities for students, including the 87+ percent low income families served by the district. The proposal identifies seven intended family results/outcomes and four student results/outcomes in support of educational and overall health improvement.

The partnership will track selected indicators to measure the results to improve services using an information database to facilitate the project monitoring and outcome data. The data will tie directly into the SIS. The proposal describes access to and use of broad student and district data such as enrollment, attendance, and assessment information by the Family Support Center Director, the grant evaluator and district staff to review and refine strategies on a quarterly basis. The data collection, evaluation and scheduled review plan is sound to ensure the program is on track to improve results over time.

The application indicates the Family Support Centers are available to all district students and families. The proposal does not include a strategy to scale the model beyond its own district to other communities.

The proposal describes how the Family Support Centers will integrate education with other comprehensive services and includes partner organization letters of support and commitment validating the services to be provided. Holistic services will be provided at the hub centers including early childhood and after-school services, health, dental and mental health services, counseling and other services. The services were prioritized based on a comprehensive needs survey completed by parents.

The outlined Family Support Centers address the priority needs. The district provided a helpful table outlining the partners and their support services they provide through the Family Support Centers. The implementation timeline, tasks, responsibilities and milestones are also presented for the Family Support Centers and Parent University in the project narrative. The comprehensive list shows significant planning and forethought.

The Parent University directly supports the broader RTT-D iPad initiative and personalizing education as well as better preparing parents to support their children's literacy, understanding of the Common Core and wellness.

The partnership will build staff capacity through teamwork with each school's family and community specialist to share and coordinate programming. Regularly scheduled meetings and evaluations will additionally support the cohesion and success of the program. Training will be provided to support the family and community specialist project roles including iPads as effective learning tools, strategies to improve parent engagement and technology to personalize the learning environment.

The proposal aligns outcome objectives with performance measures and annual targets for parents and students. The annual targets vary by performance measure and range from 5% per year to 10% per year increases which are ambitious but achievable targets.

The comprehensive partnership to provide holistic support for students and their families will significantly increase the chance and magnitude of student success.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the proposal the applicant has provided a consistent and clear picture of the intended iPad initiative to support personalized learning environments for each first through fifth grade elementary child in the district. The district has adequately conveyed the adoption of and focus on alignment to the Common Core standards and how they will use data systems to inform instruction and increase student autonomy over their own learning. Significant professional development and support will be provided to teachers to implement high-quality personalized learning opportunities as well as culturally rich and life long skill building tasks for their students while creating more effective teachers and principals. The project's personalized education environments are intended to close achievement gaps and improve low-achieving schools as conveyed throughout the proposal.

Total	210	173
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides clear rationale for the optional budget supplement to serve the district's significant ESOL population.

The district serves a substantial number of immigrant and refugee students and the city has been classified as a refugee resettlement city by the US Department of State. This unique population has spurred the district to offer innovative and necessary programs, such as the NAPA special purpose school to accommodate the special needs of immigrant and refugee ESOL students. The district proposes to replicate the iPad initiative to create personalized learning environments that are ELL-friendly for the enrolled NAPA students, with additional thoughtful supports provided for parents.

Through narrative, the applicant provides a plan for carrying out activities which are similar to the district RTT-D personalization program and identifies five performance outcomes and targets specifically designed for the ESOL population served through the NAPA school. The evaluation methods are also outlined in the narrative and will use several evaluation strategies and instruments common to the district RTT-D program, and other customized tools to meet the additional needs of the supplementary program for ESOL students. The applicant describes significant and sufficient training and support for the project.

The plan lacks details such as a timeline with specific goal driven activities and responsible parties to qualify the plan as "high-quality". However, the description of the process is sufficient to fully understand the project and its likely effect of improving ESOL students' outcomes through personalized learning environments and family support.

The proposed budget is thoroughly explained and adequate to implement the intended project. The expenses considered are

reasonable for the planned activities, personnel, equipment and training needs identified for a successful project.

Overall, the district has developed an innovative and interesting approach to the very unique needs faced by the district's significant immigrant and refugee population.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0504MO-2 for Board of Education of the City of St. Louis

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>After facing high levels of superintendent turnover between 2002 and 2009, which resulted in declining student enrollment and staff reduction, the district now has had stable leadership for the past four years and has engaged in deep reflection regarding policy weaknesses and has put in place research-based models for supporting and articulating change.</p> <p>The applicant has set out a clear and achievable vision to turn around the district's student achievement. Building on an extensive curriculum audit in 2009-2011, it has derived a focused plan to increase student achievement and eliminate achievement gaps, provide access and equity to its students, and turn around its low performing schools by concentrating on linking curriculum and instruction to available resources. In this process, it has fully implemented Common Core Standards, adopted an inter-disciplinary literacy program, put in place a district-wide technology plan and taken steps to implementing digital learning technologies in its elementary classrooms along with increasing students' and teachers' technology skills. It has put in place a viable plan to effectively use human resource strategies to restructure and stabilize leadership and to retain and develop key staff members.</p> <p>The vision addresses the four core competencies comprehensively. It outlines how it will continue to implement the Common Core curriculum to build skills in its elementary students that in turn will increase achievement in core academic areas. A key component of the vision is to increase the percentage of students who are career and college ready.</p> <p>The vision fully outlines how the district will increase teachers' knowledge and skills through professional development so every student has access to highly qualified teachers who can implement personal learning environments tailored to individual learning styles and paced to their students' needs. In 2013-2014 it will implement Missouri's educator evaluation system which focuses on improvement of professional practices and on growth of teachers, principals and school superintendents.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a clear rationale for its choice of all elementary schools in the district. The percentages of low income students and high needs students are very high in all the schools (over 90% for both categories in the majority of schools). With a previous history of declining enrolment, budget deficits, school closures, and administrator turnover now that the district has stable and proactive leadership, it is focusing its RTTT project on all its 47 elementary schools and plans to use RTTT funding to expand the districts' iPad initiative, begun this year in grades 3 and 4, to grades 1, 2, and 5.</p> <p>All participating schools are listed along with #s of participating students and educators, broken down into student numbers/grade level/school. The numbers of high needs and low income students are clearly presented.</p> <p>The applicant provides sound evidence of all the A2 requirements.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This plan is the initial part of a system-wide initiative that the district plans to expand to include all students K-12; the next phase after RTTT will include grades 6-8 and the district is currently engaged in a community-wide fund raising challenge to support the reform beyond elementary schools, with the expectation of raising \$4.5M which the district will match.

The plan provides a coherent logic model for realizing significant gains in student achievement based on aligning system-wide processes; using human and fiscal resources to develop and support high quality educators; providing targeted support to schools, using data-driven processes for accountability, and designing and delivering a high-quality curriculum that addresses the needs of all children. The key goals and rationale of the plan are clearly stated. The activities, deliverables, and responsible parties are evident. A timeline defines the implementation process: Implementing it in phases increases its credibility and ensures that the plan is ambitious yet feasible. To engage in district-wide reform, however, would require plans to expand the personalized learning initiative to high school students, as well, and such plans are not mentioned.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides detailed evidence of current student performance data on summative state-wide assessments for each grade level disaggregated into sub-groups. It based its growth projections on a linear regression formula calculated from data from prior years. State growth projections will be used to calculate the districts growth when they first become available in 2013. The applicant has detailed ambitious yet realistic and achievable growth projections for all grade levels and all subgroups.

(b) Overall, current achievement (2011-2012 levels) are low with less than 30% of district students in all grade levels scoring proficient or above in mathematics and communication. Evidence on the summative assessment data provided indicates very large gaps in achievement between white and Asian students and other sub-groups, in particular, Black, ELL, and low income students. The method of calculating growth is clearly identified is compared to the state average. Growth projected over the RTTT period clearly indicates a significant yet achievable reduction in the achievement gaps in identified subgroups in all grade levels.

(c) The plan indicates an overall graduation rate of 63.2% for 2011-2012, with considerable gaps in Hispanic and IEP student graduation rates. The plan projects a progressive and achievable increase in graduation rates that reduces the gaps between all subgroups over and beyond the RTTT period.

(d) The plan indicates college enrollment is currently at 62% and projects gradual growth in college attendance of all sub-groups over and beyond the RTTT period. Black and low-income students have the highest college attendance rates. However, the overall college attendance rate provided is higher than that of all the sub-groups - which is not possible and indicates some error in computation of numerical values.

In conclusion, projected growth rates in % proficiency in math and communication are ambitious yet realistic and achievable in the grade levels targeted by RTTT funding and indicate that achievement gaps will be reduced among sub-groups. As this plan focuses on elementary students, the less ambitious projected increases in graduation and college-going rates are realistic as the students impacted most by the grant will only be in grades 5-9 at the end of the RTTT 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	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As detailed in Section A, the district underwent a period of turbulence between 2002 and 2009 and lost accreditation in 2007. Under new leadership over the past four years the district has demonstrated a clear record of success. This year, it met state performance standards in advanced courses, career courses college placement, graduation rate and attendance, and increased the number of schools making AYP. In addition in October 2012 the state restored the district's accreditation.

a) Evidence of improved student learning outcomes is provided by

- an increase in number of advanced placement classes and in students participating in those classes.
- reduced dropout rate among high risk 9/10 grade students
- increased college attendance.

Over the period 2009-2012, the applicant provides evidence in chart form of sound growth in the numbers of students proficient in English II and in Algebra, in attendance and in graduation rates. This evidence is compared to the State of Missouri and although a deficit still exists data indicate a large reduction in the gap between the district and the state in all these areas.

b) The district reports a record of success in reforming persistently low performing schools. Eleven schools in the district are currently receiving SIG funding to support Turnaround and Transformation models. Since the program was initiated attendance has increased, disciplinary incidents have decreased, and proficiency scores have increased in math and communication arts.

c) The applicant reports that in addition to report cards and parent conferences, the district has in place a password-protected data-base system whereby parents can access grades, attendance data, class schedules and transcripts for their children. The district has been proactive in providing a variety of parent supports which is a necessity in a district with over 90% poverty, in which parents may not have computer and Internet access at home. Lacking are specific details as to how the data system will be used by parents, teachers, and students to improve learning and participation.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a process that more than fulfills the minimum requirements for transparency in B2. The salary schedules for teachers, principals, and librarians are published on the district's website under the Human Resources tab. The General Operating Budget (GOB) is also posted on the district's website and shows actual personnel and non-personnel costs by school. Information on district-wide expenditures is also provided in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (on website), which shows actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and support staff; at the school level for instructional staff only; and at the school level for teachers only, as well as non-professional expenditures.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Pursuant to Missouri Revised Statute 162.1100.4, the district's Special Administrative Board (SAB) is empowered to, among other things, (1) create an academic accountability plan, take corrective action in underperforming schools, and seek relief from state-mandated programs; (2) explore alternative forms of governance for the district; (3) contract with nonprofit corporations to provide for the operation of schools; (4) oversee facility planning, construction, improvement, repair, maintenance, and rehabilitation; (5) establish school site councils to facilitate site-based school management and improve the responsiveness of the schools to the needs of the local geographic attendance region of the school.

This mandate provides the district with more than sufficient autonomy to implement its RTTT proposal. In addition, the Missouri Department of Education letter of support provided in the Appendix indicates that the district has full support from the state of Missouri to implement its RTTT proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
---	----	---

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The plan presents a strong description of the ways in which stakeholder input was solicited for the project. Students were surveyed and a large number of parents interviewed to gain their input. In addition, teachers and principals were surveyed. Input from all these groups was used to develop and formulate the project. The applicant provides comprehensive details of stakeholder suggestions.

Union input is evident: It is stated that the President of the St. Louis Federation of Teachers collaborated in planning the project.

Twenty-seven letters of support from stakeholders are included, for example, from the state of Missouri, the office of the Mayor (St. Louis), the St. Louis Public Schools Foundation, various community advisory councils, universities and adult education programs. These letters are in enthusiastic in their support of the project and many indicate ways in which they will

participate.

No letters of support were provided from Parents and Parents' organizations, and Students and their organizations. However, given the high degree of parent and student input sought by the district into the formulation of the RTTT, it is noted that these groups have had active involvement.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The social context of the district (poverty, low parental literacy, unemployment) in which 87% of all students are from low income families is clearly described and comprehensively explained.

The impact of poverty on students' educational achievement is presented convincingly and backed up with research findings. The gap between low and high income children is now twice as large as the gap between Black and White students.

The applicant provides detailed evidence of the steps the district took to ascertain where the gaps lay. The district conducted a longitudinal analysis of MAP data and identified a wide range of skills in which students had deficits. District and school administrators followed up their analysis by conducting classroom walkthroughs to further explore areas in which students had problems.

The district has derived a comprehensive menu of areas in which its students struggle and has also analyzed its status in implementing personalized learning environments. It has reviewed its initiatives in this area. The result is a high quality plan that addresses achievement gaps not only by using technology but also by focusing on the relationship between the student and the teacher. The plan delineates how it will provide learning opportunities based on the students' interests, change the role of teachers to facilitators who will work with students to empower them to take ownership of their own learning. By personalizing learning and providing engaging learning opportunities, the objective is for all students to become active learners.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

C1

a)

- i. The district has set forth a comprehensive and innovative plan that specifically outlines how it will engage and empower students in their own learning. The district envisions the role of iPads not as the focus of all learning but rather as a powerful resource to support students initially in teacher-led learning. As students become more proficient in the use of iPads, learning will become increasingly student-oriented. How the iPads will be used to increase student learning is clearly delineated. Students will establish learning goals and monitor these via their learning electronic portfolios. To help their children be successful academically, parents will receive training in strategies to reinforce the learning objectives at home.
- ii. The plan clearly delineates how students will pursue learning goals related to college and career readiness through personalized goal setting and monitoring within their electronic portfolios.
- iii. A sound plan to involve students in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest is evident. The plan provides for daily interest-directed project-based instructional activities.
- iv. Detailed evidence is provided regarding student access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives through digital lessons with a global or multi-cultural focus and by personal contact and collaboration on projects via SKYPE with students in classrooms in other countries.
- v. A strong focus on collaborative and cooperative learning projects both within the schools and with students in the US and internationally is an integral part of the plan. Such an approach to learning not only reinforces content but also builds skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and team-working.
- vi. The applicant provides convincing evidence of how students will develop goals and a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development to ensure on-time graduation through the learning portfolios.

b)

The applicant provides convincing evidence of how students will develop goals and a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development to ensure on-time graduation through the learning portfolios.

The applicant provides a thorough description of a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments that will prepare each student to be college and career ready. While textbooks, the library and high quality digital content are a part of the approaches, the district recognizes that teachers who have received ongoing PD in building personalized learning environments are an integral component.

The role of teachers in reviewing and revisiting individual goals to ensure students are progressing towards college and career readiness, and in providing regular feedback and personal learning recommendations to students is clearly explicated in the plan.

Appropriate provision is made in the plan for accommodations (Rtl and extended school) for high-needs students to ensure they remain on track

(c) The applicant acknowledges that implementing personalized learning will not happen overnight and that teachers and students will have a steep learning curve and require much support. Explicit details of how specialized coaches will provide support to students and teachers in the classroom during the implementation phases.

In summary, the applicant has addressed every item in this category thoroughly and thoughtfully and described a comprehensive plan and timeline that fully meet the RTTT criteria.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
---	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C2 Teaching and Leading: The applicant sets forth a comprehensive and detailed plan that proposes robust and on-going professional development opportunities to support district educators as they implement personalized learning plans for all students. The plan is aimed at improving instruction and increasing teachers' capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards.

- i. Explicit details of various formats of teacher PD are provided including the district's on-going PD program, frequent on-site coaching from specialized personalized learning coaches, 30 hours per year of paid after school PD, 4-day summer institute, and opportunities for teachers to take fully-funded technology related university coursework. The format of each type of PD is described in full. The district will hire coaches who are trained in personalized learning to support teachers and their students in creating and monitoring personalized goals and plans so that they are ready for career and college.
- ii. A second area of PD described fully in the applicant's plan is focused on adapting content and instruction to students' academic needs and interests through the use of digital applications, videos, problem-based learning, and independent and collaborative work projects.
- iii. There is a strong emphasis throughout the plan on the role of teachers in managing instruction and assessment by using benchmark testing to redirect instruction and providing feedback to students on their progress.
- iv. The plan clearly describes the role of the state new educator evaluation tools in providing a robust measurement of educator efficacy and in identifying areas for educator growth and development

(b) To ensure all participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements, the plan describes thoroughly the extensive training the Personalization coaches will receive from Apple on using the iPad to personalize the learning environment. The coaches, in turn, will provide this training to the district educators on optimization of learning approaches to meet the needs and interests of individual students.

The plan specifies the availability to district educators of high quality digital lessons aligned to the Common Core Curriculum and State career-ready and graduation ready standards as well as teacher training in creating their own standards-based digital resources.

The plan clearly describes the ongoing role of teachers in reviewing and revisiting individual goals with students and in monitoring the degree to which the personalized learning environment is meeting individual students' needs.

(c) With respect to training of principals, the plan clearly specifies in-depth training for all principals that is focused on teacher and classroom assessment for continuous student improvement. The plan details concisely a comprehensive schedule for principal training so that they are prepared to lead their schools in developing personalized learning environments and closing the achievement gap. The plan emphasizes that by conducting classroom walk-throughs principals must focus on becoming knowledgeable regarding the practices that are occurring in their classrooms so that they can identify and address any issues.

(d) The plan places emphasis on ongoing professional development for principals and for teachers so they can effectively meet the needs of students and collectively raise student achievement and increase graduation-rate and college and career-readiness. While the plan is of high quality and has been meticulously developed to ensure it is ambitious yet achievable, areas upon which it fails to specifically place emphasis is hard-to-staff schools and subject shortage areas such as mathematics, science, and special education.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan provides comprehensive details of the district organizational context which has undergone major restructuring to ensure a targeted approach to school improvement. District administration has been divided into three are teams, each with a focus on particular schools. The applicant demonstrates clear evidence that this restructuring has allowed greater levels of support to all participating schools, providing a systematic means of monitoring, intervening, and supporting the lowest performing schools.</p> <p>Principal autonomy and flexibility within schools is addressed in detail within the plan. It is stated that a school team approach to instructional improvement and decision-making operates in alignment with the district curriculum and with priorities set by the superintendent. Decisions are usually made collaboratively among principals and the LEA team.</p> <p>With respect to current student opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery rather than the amount of time spent, the plan addresses mastery through MAP testing, but provides less specifics as to whether all students have the ability to progress through courses at their own pace. However, evidence is provided that students in the district credit-recovery program can work on their own schedules and receive credit independent of time.</p> <p>Concerning providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, the plan is details a range of instructional practices and programs form Advanced Placement and gifted education to credit reovery and teen parenthood. It Indicates that accommodations will be made for students with disabilities and mentions additional learning resources for ELL students. Throughout the proposal is a description of how the plan is adaptable to ensure all students create personal learning environments that will help them make meaningful goals towards learning, graduation and college and career-readiness.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The plan states that all participating students will have access to the necessary content, tools and learning resources (iPads and applications) during the school day. Access to iPads for students will not be available outside the school day. Parents and students may access computers outside the school-day at St. Louis Public Library. In addition, several of the schools in the district currently are equipped to provide out of hours services to parents, students and community members. In an area with such high poverty levels, the district has made much progress in providing services to studentsAND parents to access tools and learning resources outside school.</p> <p>(b) Teachers will receive their own personal iPad and will be provided with several tiers of professional development and support. Students will have extensive in-school training, and parents will also have training on iPads and personalized learning systems.</p> <p>(c) Although the plan states that the district information management system includes a parent portal, earlier in the proposal it is mentioned that few parents have Internet access. This is a challenge that the district has tried to address by partnering with the public library for out-o f-school computer access and providing district family and community specialists.</p> <p>No details are provided as to the compatibility of achievement data from the iPad Aps with the student information management system.</p> <p>(d) Ensuring that LEAs and schools use inter-operable data: Little information on district plans to ensure that its various data systems are inter-operable. improvement data.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes an extensive range of data it will collect and review quarterly to ascertain in a timely manner what adjustments and revisions are required during the implementation process. Included in the plan is a rigorous and comprehensive checklist to ascertain the degree to which implementation is occurring. Extensive data will be collected and analyzed and procedures monitored. Annual progress will be reported to the state and to stakeholders via the LEA website, as well as annual reports provided to parents, project partners, and community. What is omitted is the method by which these reports will be communicated to parents. Given that few have Internet access, paper copies may have a wider reach. Lacking is the method by which reports will be disseminated to parents and the community.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has outlined a range of communication media by which it will disseminate the project activities and progress. Internal communication processes (weekly and quarterly meetings) among district and school leaders are planned; however, no mention is made of communication and engagement with educators and staff at the school level so that they can provide input and feedback on how the project is progressing at the grassroots level.</p> <p>Methods of communication with external stakeholders are described (articles in publications for parents, principals' weekly newsletter, postings on the district webpage, and programming on the district's television station). However, these means of disseminating information are one-way (top-down) and passive. Absent are strategies, practices and processes by which the district will endeavor to actively engage its external stakeholders and gain their input and feedback.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a clear rationale for each of the 14 proposed ambitious yet achievable performance measures that fully meet the requirements for performance measures. It has provided data tables for each showing how data will be disaggregated across the sub groups.</p> <p>With regard to the collection of formative information, it provides three detailed, extensive, project-developed measures of implementation: A project-level measure will assess the extent to which classrooms across the project are implementing the project on time and as planned; a classroom level measure will assess the extent to which each classroom is implementing the project on time and as planned and a student-level checklist will measure the extent to which students have access to their iPads and are receiving teacher feedback. This information will be used to measure the extent of the implementation at all levels.</p> <p>No details are provided as to how it will review and improve the measures over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has detailed a strong plan to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to determine the impact of the project on students, teachers and the district and to continuously improve the plan. Data will be collected in two categories: process data and outcome data - in a wide range of areas to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities in. Areas evaluated include the project organization, professional development, quality of the partnership activities, and the quality of the digital learning resources.</p> <p>It has provided a timeline for each evaluation activity and a thorough evaluation plan that spans the entire project period. The approach to evaluation is clear and of high quality.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has clearly identified all funds that will support the project and the dollar amounts that will be provided to support the project from each funding area.</p> <p>The comprehensive budget itemizes and details expenditure thoroughly appears to reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal with the exceptions of no budget for increased technology personnel across the district to ensure technology is in full working order, and no budget for maintenance, repair and replacement of the technology. It is stated, however, that each computer purchased will have a warranty and so repair costs may be minimal. But given the young age of the population that will be using these iPads, damage not covered by warranty may be inevitable.</p> <p>The budget provides a thoughtful rationale for all investments and priorities, and clearly indicates items that are ongoing operational costs, those that are one time investments. The fact that professional development for teachers is ongoing will provide sustainability for the personalized learning environments after the grant period is over.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The fact that teacher professional development will be on-going is important for sustainability of the project. With respect to outlining a high quality plan for sustainability, however, some specifics are lacking in detail. It is stated that the program will be expanded with a combination of district and private funding. District funding has been earmarked for that purpose, with a fund raising challenge underway to raise funds for expansion of the project into grades 6-8; however, no evidence is provided in the proposal or in the letters of support for the source(s) of the private funding.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The applicant has indicated several organizations with which it will partner to provide Family Support Centers and Parent University Campuses at six of the district's Community Education Full Service Schools. It has described sustainable partnerships between these schools and the community.</p> <p>The objective of the proposed plan is to build family supports which will in turn lead to increased student achievement. The applicant has identified several adult and family oriented initiatives it will set up, most of which are related to health and social support for parents and families, as well as an adult education initiative. As 90% of the district is comprised of students from low income families, the plan indubitably targets high-need families.</p> <p>While the supports the district plans to initiate are valuable, particularly in a low income area such as this, the links between some of the proposed projects and Absolute Priority 1 in the RTTT proposal (in particular, creating personalized learning environments) are indirect. The rationale, which is well-supported by research, is that increasing health access and access to emergency and community services for families, and providing adult literacy programs, a parent university, job counseling, and parenting programs will strengthen parent engagement and home-school connections, which in turn will lead to increased student achievement.</p> <p>(2) Performance Outcomes.</p> <p>The process objectives identified for parents are clear and refer to increasing access to and providing information about various health, community and education services. Most of the performance measures focus on increasing the number of family members who access the services provided by the plan by five or ten percent each year.</p>		

The objectives for students are outcome-based: increased school attendance, reduced-school related disciplinary measures, increased physical fitness, and improve achievement in communication arts and math. As mentioned before, any impact of Competitive Priority activities will be indirect and as such, a direct relationship between plan activities and specific student outcomes and academic outcomes in particular cannot be isolated.

(3) The applicant has identified measures for meeting student objectives and a tracking method is described. As students do not participate directly in the Competitive Priority activities and any impact on student performance will indirect and difficult to measure.

(4) The plan focuses on families and parents rather than specifically on students although the objective is that the parent and family interventions will benefit students. However, research indicates that providing social and mental health supports to families, and educating parents in low income areas such as this a have a significant impact on student achievement, health and behavior.

(5) As students are not the direct target of this project, the plan does not address how it would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of participating students and create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results.

In conclusion, while the family supports proposed are highly worthwhile and of value, the student outcomes it identifies are difficult to isolate from the impact of the main RTTT proposal. However, as the RTTT guidelines provided to applicants specify that educational outcomes must be included, the applicant should not be penalized for identifying specific educational outcomes that it hopes to achieve, although there is no means of isolating the impact of the Competitive Priority activities from those of the main RTTT proposal on the educational outcomes identified.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has clearly described a solid foundation of educational improvement upon which to implement a comprehensive plan for personalized learning environments in a district in which 90%+ of its students are from low-income families. The four core educational assurance areas are highly visible throughout the plan, which clearly specifies how it will improve and accelerate learning and teaching through intensive teacher professional development and highly targeted student support. It focuses comprehensively on decreasing achievement gaps across student groups and increasing the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	188
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The aim of the program is to Personalize the Learning for New Immigrants. The rationale provided is that St. Louis has been designated a 'refugee' city and its population includes a large number of immigrants and refugees. The district serves 1667 ELL students. Evidence of an achievement gap between ELL students and the average district score is provided.

The objectives of the program are all very relevant to the immigrant/refugee population targeted. The first specified objective is to increase participating "Newcomer" ELL students' reading and mathematics scores by 2% each year of the project. This goal

does not appear ambitious given the intensive supports provided. The second object is to raise ELL teachers' knowledge, skills, and resources for providing rigorous and relevant learning opportunities in personalized learning environments by 20% over the four years of the project, a goal which also does not appear to be ambitious given the ongoing professional development and coaching that they will receive. The third goal is to increase ELL students' and teachers' access to technology. The fourth objective is to increase parental involvement (how goals 3 and 4 will be achieved is outlined clearly), and the fifth objective is to develop a model for implementing technology assisted personalized learning environments that can be used throughout Missouri.

The plan mirrors in implementation details of the main RTTT plan, the only difference being that it is targeting specifically ELL 'Newcomer' students. It is stated that the ELL students currently in district elementary schools will be served under the main RTTT proposal. Although not specifically stated, it can therefore be assumed that the plan covers ELL students from G6 upwards. The district has already provided resources for 'Newcomer' students at The International Welcome School and a newly created American Preparatory Academy. The additional funding will provided professional development for teachers, time for teachers to develop new course materials and technology for students so that they have access to personalized learning environments. The budget provided is detailed and comprehensive. The narrative outlines the proposed activities and describes who is responsible. It does not, however, meet all the criteria for a high quality plan as it does not provide a specific timeline for implementation.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0504MO-3 for Board of Education of the City of St. Louis

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 St. Louis Race to the Top proposal (SLRT) earned high points for articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. In this section, the proposal provided a summary of the who, what, where and how of their proposed work. SLRT articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that was organized around an overarching goal and eleven specific project objectives. The over arching goal was to “Significantly increase learning and academic performance for all students and ensure their success in school and beyond by providing them with equal access to a broad and rich array of learning resources and classroom learning opportunities delivered in highly engaging, and personalized learning environments.” The eleven specific project objectives structured the work around the four core educational assurance areas and seven other objectives dealing with topics that include broad objectives such as use of digital learn resources and increasing parental involvement to more specific tasks such as increasing student attendance rates and increasing the physical fitness of targeted students.</p> <p>The SLRT further defined the characteristics of the approach including use of Common Core State Standards, use of data systems, use of the U. S. Department of Education definitions of personalized learning. SLRT provided numerous characteristics of their proposed work including the defining RTTD effort of expanding its 3rd and 4th grade iPad initiative to encompass grades 1-5 in all 47 district elementary schools.</p> <p>The proposal articulated 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. The proposal indicated that all state curriculum requirements will be met and to the extent possible they will provide learning opportunities that incorporate student academic interests.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT earned high points for its approach to implementation. The project will expand the existing 3rd and 4th grade iPad initiative to encompass grades 1-5 in all 47 district elementary schools. All 10,549 students in grades 1-5 and 467 educators will eventually be part of the project. Ninety percent of the participating students come from low-income families. The proposal received a perfect score because all the information requested was provided in a clear informative format. Also, the project included 100% of all students in grades 1-5. A third reason was that 90% of the students come from low-income families.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT earned high points for LEA- wide reform and change. St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) experienced some very traumatic times that included frequent changes in leadership and losing its accreditation. It appears that during the last four years under a new superintendent, the trajectory changed positively. The RTTD proposal appeared to very connected to district wide strategies for improvement. The proposal was built on work underway and was essentially an effort to expand and accelerate personal learning efforts already underway. The district's theory of change was driven by the research framework developed at Harvard. They used the Public Education Leadership Project to see how they could:

- Connect the instructional core with a district-wide strategy for improvement.
- Highlight district elements that can support or hinder effective implementation.
- Identify interdependencies among district elements.
- Recognize forces in the environment that have an impact on the implementation of strategy.

The proposal acknowledged that one problem needing resolution was how SLPS would expand this personalized approach to learning to the middle grades and then high school. Several immediate problems in expanding to the middle grades and high school were:

- Funding the purchase of personal computing devices,
- Ensuring quality professional development for those teachers and
- Finding the appropriate content that would take advantage of the increased technology.

Educators appeared confident that the district would be able to fund half the extra costs associated with the expansion and were confident that a community-wide fundraising effort would raise the additional \$4.5 million to expand to the program in the future into the middle grades. The expansion to high school grades appeared to be a longer-term issue. The plan for addressing district-wide change would have been strengthened had they charted key goals; activities; rationale; timeline; deliverables; parties responsible for implementation; overall credibility.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
---	----	---

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT earned medium points for LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes. The proposal lost points for its data errors on college enrollment, low expectations on graduation rates and insufficient explanation of issues and solutions.

The proposal had rich data on student achievement and the projections showed ambitious yet achievable annual goals that were equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA. Though they started from a low base, especially for Black students, SLRT proposed yearly increases of four to seven percent increases in numbers of students reaching grade level proficiencies in each of the tested subject as measured by Missouri Department of Education tests.

The SLRT proposal for decreasing achievement gaps was heavily focused on initially reaching state averages for Blacks and Hispanics as well as decreasing the actual achievement gaps that exist for SLPS students. The existing gaps were quite large for Black students with approximately 30% fewer Black students reaching grade level equivalents and 10 to 15 percent fewer Hispanic students reaching grade equivalents.

The SLRT projections for improving graduation rates were less aggressive with an over-all increase of approximately one percent per year from a base of 63.2% of students graduating last year to 68.5% in five years. For Black students the increase over five years would be from a last- year base of 58.5% to 67.5 percent. For Hispanic students the increase would be more aggressive moving from 35.5% last year to 61.7 percent.

The SLRT projections for improvement of college enrollment seemed to have errors in their computations and thus all data in that chart were deemed in error. The chart obviously summed dated when it needed to provide averages on the totals and it

was impossible to understand any conclusion because of the obvious errors. one example, it showed Asian and Hispanic college enrollment of less than 2 percent and Black students with totals that were sums of the category. Points were deducted because the data was not corrected.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned high points for demonstrating a clear track record of success. There were some notable improvements in English II and Algebra I and in Advance Placement classes. The district improved the high school graduation rates and improved attendance rates by 4 percent. Quite impressively, it reduced the drop-out rate of 9th and 10th graders by more than 50 percent.</p> <p>SLPS worked with eleven persistently lowest –achieving schools. Those schools were seven elementary, three middle and one high school. All eleven underwent either turnaround or transformational interventions. SLPS reported increased percentage of students scoring proficient in communications arts and mathematics in eight of the eleven schools. Unfortunately SLPS did not provide actual raw numbers of those increases so it was impossible to know whether the increases were significant. Ten of the eleven schools increased their attendance rates resulting in nine of eleven having attendance rates of 90 percent or better.</p> <p>SLPS provided considerable access to student performance data. Student and parents received student performance data from report cards and teacher/parent conferences. Parents with internet access are able to obtain additional information. “Through a unique password, parents are able to access the system and retrieve grades, attendance data, disciplinary data, class schedules, immunization records, and transcripts (for high school students) for their children. The proposal provided insufficient information about how parents were being assisted in learning how to access that rich data if they were not computer literate.</p> <p>Teachers, principals, and some central office staff have access to PULSE, the district’s new student information management system. PULSE interfaces with SIS, the source of all student data. The capacity of the system is being expanded to include grades, benchmarks, and other assessment data.”</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned high points for increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. The proposal indicated that all the data asked for in this criteria was available on the district website. It was apparent that for people with internet access and knowledge of accessing data from databases, there was a great amount of information available about LEA processes, practices and investments. The proposal indicated that very detailed information such as the General Operating Budget (GOB) and other specific budgets were available for viewing. The proposal did not mention any specific outreach programs or efforts associated with increasing transparency in unique ways not found in other districts.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned high points for having a positive context for implementation. The proposal cited Missouri statutes that allowed the district legal autonomy to adopt the program SLPS envisioned. In addition because the RTTD project was an expansion of an existing effort, there was clear precedence for its state approval. Most telling, the letter of support from the Missouri Commissioner of education indicated support for the proposed program’s design and implementation and found the proposal acceptable from a State of Missouri perspective.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

SLRT earned high points for stakeholder engagement and support. The proposal documented how SLPS staff met with students, parents, teachers and educational administrators and how they surveyed and otherwise involved them to get their suggestions and advocacy. They noted the very high amount of support from each group. A weakness of the proposal was that there was no indications whether revision were made as a result of all that feedback and how the changes accepted were communicated back to participants.

The proposal had a paragraphs documenting how Ms. Mary Armstrong, President of the American Federation of Teachers St. Louis, Local 420 participated in the development of the proposal. Even though the narrative in the proposal spoke to a positive stance by teachers and educational administrators, there were no letters of support from either teacher or administrator groups. Those letters would have been extremely important in gaging the degree of their support and commitment to the project. There were numerous letters from parent, community, higher education, civic groups and all were positive. There were also letters from museums, major institutions and proposed partner noting their individual contributions and commitments to making the project a success.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT earned high points for analysis of needs and gaps. This section was one of the strongest components of the proposal and was highly deserving of maximum points.

The proposal documented the very high levels of poverty the SLPS students experience and the consequences of that poverty. Three factors were highlighted:

- In the district as a whole, 87 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- A high parent unemployment rate, the number of parents unemployed for long periods of time (six months or longer) more than tripled.
- Many financially challenged parents have lower literacy levels, and many are either unable or unmotivated to serve as positive role models for high levels of learning and academic achievement.

Analysis of test scores revealed that the impact of poverty was dramatic. "At 3rd grade, where district students first encounter the mandated MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) testing, they are already significantly behind other 3rd graders across Missouri, and they tend to fall further behind at each grade level. In 2012, district 3rd graders scored more than 23 percentage points behind Missouri 3rd graders in communication arts.10 District 8th graders scored 28 percentage points behind."

The proposal provided considerable detail for how the district had conducted a longitudinal analysis of four years of MAP data from 2008 to 2012 and determined specific skills that needed priority attention. They found that for grades 3 through 5 communication arts, comprehension; drawing conclusions; relating the main idea and story details; developing comprehension through context using fiction and nonfiction text, identifying story parts, and using details to demonstrate comprehension through inference, compare/contrast, sequence, cause/effect, and author's purpose were items that needed more attention. For grades 3-5 mathematics, skills needing additional emphasis included: applying operations on numbers; estimating and justifying sums, products, and quotients of whole number and decimals; representing and analyzing patterns using words, tables, and graphs; and predicting and justifying the results of combining and transforming shapes.

The proposal shared concrete examples of how already they provide individualized education to certain populations. They highlighted their Special Education Program that serves 4,000 students each with an Individual Education Plan (IEP); English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) serving 58 languages; the Advanced Placement (AP) program serving 1500 students; International Baccalaureate serving 112 students and four other smaller programs.

The strength of the needs analysis were the conclusions, the district developed for why the proposed project was the appropriate thing to do. They concluded that:

"The proposed initiative will provide all of the district's low-performing students in grades 1 through 5 with access to a new universe of learning resources. Each student will have his or her own tablet computer, providing instant access to a multitude of global learning opportunities. He or she will be able to visit the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. or the Louvre in Paris, or share information about St. Louis with a young person in China or Australia, or learn about native plants of Costa Rica or Mozambique. This will be a game changer for most of the district's low-income students who have limited learning resources outside of school. A majority of district families don't have access to the Internet nor are they likely to have access anytime soon. It will dramatically change students' lives in the classroom where even today, the teacher and the textbook serve as the only learning resources for many urban children."

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned maximum points for the learning criteria section because of its excellence. The high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment included the research underlying the theory for the program. The plan provided an excellent rationale for the program, the design of the program, working examples from an existing successful program in Chicago, specific examples of best practices, and realistic outcomes. It provided significant details about what staff development would be provided for teachers to learn about the technology itself but even more its successful use in providing required curriculum and opportunities for student and teacher learning. It had realistic and real-life expectations about what teachers and students realistically could accomplish over time. It provided an overview of how the iPads would be used to assist in delivering the required curriculum within a context of individualized learning. One of the strongest components of this program description was the “Expected Implementation Phases” chart that showed what students and teachers can be expected to be doing at 25%, 50%, and 100% implementation. Table 1 had already explained how computers will be phased in over a four year plan that added an additional grade each year.</p> <p>The plan provided information about what software will be loaded into all computers and how the iPads and that software will be used to pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards articulated in the Missouri curriculum expectations. Those curriculum expectations provided deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest and present exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. The proposal indicated that accommodations for high-need students would be provided. Considerable attention was given to ensuring appropriate assessments that provide feedback to students, teachers, parents and responsible administrators about the learning progress taking place. Table 5 titled “Engaging and Empowering All Learners” provided an excellent interface between the individual learning expectations of RTTD and the project strategies to deliver on those expectations.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned high points for its plan and strategies to improve teaching and leading. The professional development was comprehensive, closely linked to project objectives and intended to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. The proposal addressed two expectations for the professional development of teachers and administrators. One was meeting Missouri Department of Education expectations for being effective teachers and leaders. That Missouri expectation were focused on adapting content and instruction that would help them meet state standards. It emphasized understanding and using standards that prepare students for college or careers and frequently measuring student progress with quality assessment to ensure they get there. The second expectation focused on preparing teachers and administrators to successfully implement the RTTD project. Those professional development objectives focused on helping students be successful in technology-rich personalized learning environments.</p> <p>The proposal was very effective in describing how the implementation of both expectations would be accomplished through five components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Extensive professional development on identifying learning styles, matching learning styles to standards-based instruction, project-based learning, personalizing the learning environment, understanding 21st century learning skills, and implementing the district’s literacy model; (2) Frequent coaching for all teachers from highly-trained personalization coaches; (3) Thirty hours of paid professional development time each year for teachers to work with school teams and professional learning communities; (4) Four-day summer institutes; and (5) Graduate coursework with tuition support. <p>Through information found in tables nine, ten and eleven, proposal writers very effectively interfaced (C)(2) criteria expectations and the proposed professional development opportunities described in the proposal. St. Louis Publics did an excellent job of responding to the expectations of this section and earned maximum points.</p> <p>Points were deducted because there was insufficient discussions about teacher and principal evaluation systems.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLPS addressed in varying details the issues of concern noted in this criterion.</p> <p>(a) Re-organizing the LEA central office from one centralized location to three cluster offices that allow the three regions to make adjustments and modifications that are appropriate to each region. This reorganization allowed the sub-district to make more decisions that were appropriate to the needs of the diverse localities and thus respond to geographic, demographic and economic concerns that had programmatic implications.</p> <p>(b) Creating school leadership teams that work with the principal to make all the decision and determine how to make instructional improvements that were specific to building needs.</p> <p>(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery as appropriate under MAP or MAP-A testing. This sub-criterion suffered from vagueness and points were deducted.</p> <p>(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways is possible only in the various special programs such as the Missouri Virtual School and the ACE program. This sub-criteria also did not have sufficient details and points were deducted.</p> <p>(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. The proposal indicated that they would ensure that all materials will be free of stereotypes and bias.</p> <p>The proposal covered multiple forms or assessments and multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery that facilitated personalized learning in another sections.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal addressed all the factors noted in these criteria in an exemplary fashion except for issues associated with parental access.</p> <p>The LEA and school infrastructure supports was designed to support personalized learning in the following ways:</p> <p>(a) All participating students and teachers were given their own iPad. SLPS staff that work with them were assigned their own iPads. Arrangements have been made with the public libraries for use of other technologies and software. As noted in Section C, extensive training on their use has been planned.</p> <p>(b) Students, parents, educators, and other stakeholder were scheduled for extensive staff development as note in Section C</p> <p>(c) Information technology systems allowed parents and students to access and export their own information after they provided the appropriate identification and passwords. The information was made available on a website with an open data format. There was insufficient discussion about parental access if they did not have internet access at home of insufficient knowledge of computers and database use.</p> <p>(d) Proposal indicated that LEAs and schools used data systems that were interoperable and allowed transfers and integration between them.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned medium points for its design of a rigorous continuous improvement process that provided timely and regular feedback on progress in accomplishing project goals and proving opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements</p>		

during and after the term of the grant. While the materials associated with the design of the evaluation were very strong, the portions of the plan concerned with implementation of evaluation recommendations did not have the strength that other sections of the proposal had. The proposal did address the design of the evaluation in section 4 and did provide the guiding questions there would be used to seek out specific information. The proposal addressed scheduled reviews, corrective action plans and public reporting in an adequate but not an exemplary fashion. There was no discussion of an external panel working with SLPS staff to provide an independent review of findings and action plans for acting on evaluation recommendations. The existence of the external panel would give the process more credibility that a high quality continuous improvement process was underway.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT had exemplary strategies for providing information to internal and external stakeholders. Some of the avenues for public communication included web based information housed on district websites, monthly shows on public television and articles in newsletters. Numerous district communication avenues, such as newsletters and regularly scheduled meetings, will be used to communicate with SLPS staff. The proposal lacked information on how it would engage with stakeholders on receiving information from them. It also did not address how it would seek and utilize any feedback that it did get from those stakeholders. The communication appeared to be one-way from the district to stakeholders.

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

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT earned high points for performance measures. SLRT described very powerfully

- (a) Its rationale for selecting that measure;
- (b) How the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and
- (c) How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

The proposal provided that information in its list of "instructional non-negotiables" and the performance measures in table 12 and table 13.

The required performance measures specified in the proposal were ambitious yet achievable. SLPS provided quality base data and projected annual target wherever possible. Some of the numbers were quite discouraging such as number of students on track for college or careers but given the very low starting base, the projections are realistic targets for improvement. The proposal responded to the required performance measure in a very adequate fashion.

The applicant- proposed performance measures as they related to the three issues (project, classroom, activities) degrees of implementation were very strong. Although the reason and purpose of the other eleven measures were discussed in other sections of the proposal, some those other measures were not as rich in detail as they were in the degrees of implementation measures. An example of this vagueness was measure of school adjustment as the performance measures for disciplinary incidents.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

SLRT earned high points for how it intended to evaluate the effectiveness of investments. The evaluation plan had many positive factors. The evaluation plan used a logic model designed around planned activities and guiding questions. The evaluation examined both process and outcome considerations. Process evaluation was concerned with determining the quality of an activity and how it can be improved. Data for qualitative assessments of project were planned through use of a wide variety of surveys and through interviews of project participants and other stakeholder. Those sources of information would be designed to assess the quality of specific events, activities, and products. At least six factors are expected to be evaluated including quality of professional development and learning resources.

Outcome evaluation efforts were designed to evaluate the project's impact on students, teachers, and the district. Some outcomes that were to be evaluated included increases in student learning and achievement, increases in teacher knowledge and skills and increases in parental support of academic success. The evaluation design noted at least eleven outcome factors.

The biggest concern about the evaluation plan was centered on how insular the evaluation appeared. It appeared that this

project will use a district evaluator.. If that is the case, the district should consider an evaluation advisory committee of external people. It could be argued that a project of this size and importance needed to have people who are not employees of the district provide guidance and overview and thus give more credibility to the evaluation findings.

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>SLRT earned high points for its budget for the project. The budgets were extremely detailed and easy to read. The proposal provided strong rationale for all the expenditures and all appeared to document real costs. Very commendable was the large budget contributions from other sources. The budget earned maximum points for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal identified all funds that will support the project showing that \$19,997,520 were RTTD funds and \$13,485,465 were funds from other sources. • The amounts were reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. • The budget clearly provided a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. • The proposal had a clear and appropriate management plan and an exceptional timeline that showed tasks, timelines, responsibilities, and milestones. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned medium points for its plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The proposal provided great information on the issues associate with sustainability of the project goals. The district documented what expenditures would not be necessary in the future because they were one time cost. It also provided considerable information on how the costs for a slimmer project would incorporated existing district funding, The most problematic part of the plan revolved around the expectation that they would raise \$4.5 million dollars from private funds. After all the discussion about sustainability, their conclusion was that the project would continue in a smaller format with equipment replace less frequent.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SLRT earned high points for its Competitive Preference Priority. The proposal made a compelling case for implementing Family Support Centers and Parent University campuses at six of the district's Community Education Full-Service Schools (CEFSS), housed within the district's Community Education Division. The project identified partnerships with a large number of these programs will serve project students and family members from across the entire district. The proposal included many letters of support from important partners committing their resources to make this effort successful. Table 17 listed the tasks, performance measures and expected benefits from the partnership objectives.</p> <p>The follow were some specific partnership objectives that were population-level desired results. One point was deducted because there was insignificant effort to further quantify the desired results.</p> <p><u>For parents and family members:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access for family members to onsite health, dental, and mental health services. • Increased access for family members to emergency services such as temporary housing, food, clothing, and assistance with utility bills. • Increased access for family members to a broad-range of other community-based services. • Increased access for family members to Adult Literacy and Adult Basic Education services. • Increased access for family members to job counseling and job training. 		

- Increased parent awareness of positive parenting skills and access to high-quality early learning programs.
- Increased parent involvement in school activities and support of students' academic success.

For students:

- Increased school attendance.
- Reduced school-related disciplinary incidents.
- Increased physical fitness.
- Improved academic achievement in communication arts and mathematics.

The proposal provided details of how it created a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students. The proposal stated that information would be gathered in SIS and PULSE information system. It would have regular reports from the evaluator and

All project-related data will be accessed, analyzed, and summarized quarterly by the project evaluator and shared with the project director, Family Support Center and Parent University coordinator, and each CEFSS Community Advisory Council. Project strategies will be refined as needed on a quarterly basis. Table 17 noted the task and partners that will work with each expectation.

The proposal built excellent support for this effort. Support for the Competitive Preference Priority was provided by the St. Louis Race to the Top coaches, and each school's family and community specialist to share data and ensure coordination between school and community programming. Monthly coordination meetings and quarterly reviews of evaluation were planned to ensure that participant needs are being met and the project was being implemented as planned. "All family and community specialists will receive two days of training each year over three years provided by Apple, Inc. to help them understand how iPads can be used as highly effective learning tools...They will also receive training each year in strategies for strengthening parent engagement using the Achievement-Focused Partnership Model developed by Johns Hopkins University. Family Support Center/Parent University coordinators will also receive two days of training each year over three years provided."

As was true throughout the proposal, the evaluation components of the competitive priority were exemplary. The proposal noted the following process and outcome objectives and related performance measures:

For parents and family members:

Outcome Objective 1: Increase parental support of students' academic success.

Performance measures: Parent University records, school records, pretests, posttest, and follow-up surveys will indicate that parent and family involvement and support increase by at least 10 percent each year of the project.

Outcome Objective 2: Increase literacy levels of project parents.

Performance measures: Annual family literacy statistics provided by Adult Education and Literacy and LIFT Missouri, records of parental participation in project-supported family literacy activities, numbers of parents completing a GED and annual parent surveys and interviews will indicate that project parents will increase their literacy levels by at least 5 percent each year of the project.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This was a very strong proposal and should be strongly considered for funding. The proposal coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

As noted in great detail in the reviewer's comments, the proposal addressed all of these issues in an exemplary fashion. The proposal was especially strong in conveying a feeling that St. Louis Public Schools knew what it was getting into when attempting this work and had solutions to the problems of implementation. The RTTD project was in many ways an extension of work already underway and with considerable of the up-front work already completed. With 90% of St. Louis students coming from low-income families and given St. Louis previous educational difficulties, the success of this project would have significant implications for many high-poverty urban centers across the country. Even if the proposal is not 100% successful, the lessons learned will be well worth the investment of RTTD funds.

Total	210	184
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The “NAPA Race to the Top: Personalizing the Learning Environment for New Immigrants” optional budget supplement was designed to “transform and personalize the curriculum for English Learners (ELLs)” and especially those that are new immigrants. St. Louis was designated a refugee resettlement city in 1979 and since then The St. Louis Public Schools has received approximately 500 refugee students each year. The proposal intended to provide the benefits of the larger RTTD program to this special population.

The proposal had five project objectives. The first objective would increase ELL students' learning and achievement in reading and mathematics by at least 2 percent each year of the project as measured by the annual Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). That objective was achievable but not ambitious given the RTTD investment. The proposal was not specific how the supplemental budget would provide assistance that these students would receive in addition to being part of the regular RTTD program. Perhaps they intended to serve additional grades but that was not explicitly stated.

The second object is to raise ELL teachers' knowledge, skills, and resources for providing rigorous and relevant learning opportunities in personalized learning environments by 20% over the four years of the project. This objective would be measured by a pre and posttest and levels of implementation. This objective also does not appear to be ambitious considering how much professional development, coaching and other support that they will receive.

The third objective was to increase ELL students' and teachers' access to technology. This objective would be measured by an inventory of digital resources and degrees of implementation. . The proposal was not specific how the supplemental budget would provide assistance that these students would receive in addition to being part of the regular RTTD program. Perhaps they intended to serve additional grades but that was not explicitly stated.

The fourth objective was to increase parental involvement in school –related activities and support of student learning by 10 percent. This would be measured by parent conferences, participation in events and annual surveys and interviews. The connection between the objective and the performance measures but their connections to the first three objectives was not clear.

The fifth objective is to develop a model for implementing technology assisted personalized learning environments that can be used throughout Missouri. This would be measured by the development and dissemination of project implementation guides intended to help other adaptors in other locations.

As noted earlier, the proposal does have some additional parental and community elements to it but the proposal suffers from distinguishing how this effort is different for student from the main RTTD proposal. There are research connections between the social supports advocated in this proposal but they were not very apparent in the proposal.

The budget was below two million dollars and the rationale for the costs was included in the proposal. The proposal did not have a clear, discrete, and innovative solution that can be replicated in schools across the Nation. The plan did indicate the partners it would work with and those partners seemed ready to participate based on letters of support. However it was not very clear how they participated in the planning and whether they would be participatory in the intensive ways necessary for the success of the project.

In conclusion, this proposal seemed to be in early stages of planning and not completely thought out on details of

implementation. It did not clearly indicate the value added from funding a supplementary budget