



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0813PA-1 for Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU)

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>There are many indicators of a credible and coherent plan in the First PLACCE application that will address the goals of the Race to the Top grant.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. accelerating student achievement:<i>Through the use of evidence-based practices and interventions that FP incorporates into its model and a continuous loop of assessment and intervention. This shows that FP takes care to implement effective programs that will likely lead to success.</i> 2. deepening student learning:<i>By using the Keys to College and Career Readiness,First PLACCE is deepening student learning because it aligns with the CCSS. Because Milton is also part of PA Leads, it already has the foundation as a Standards-Aligned System with a shared leadership structure.</i> 3.increasing equity through personalized student support:<i>By assessing on a continuous basis, FP will be aware of which students need support both behaviorally and academically.</i> 4. common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests:<i>FP's plan is desgined to tap into and nurture students' academic curiosity so it will engage students on a personalized level and promote " learning to learn" in every student.</i> <p><i>By addressing these four areas in the FP plan and creating the partnership that encourages a cohesive approach to solutions, they have prepared a credible vision to meet the requirements of the RTT grant. The personalized learning environment FP describes should lead to deeper student learning. This section scores in the high range.</i></p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>FP's plan has some indicators that show they are on track to success and a few areas of concern in this section. Indicators are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. process to select schools to participate: <i>Clearly defined in as low-income students in early childhood program and all Milton schools will participate because of history of low scores not meeting state benchmarks on Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and PVAAS (growth data).</i> 2. list of the schools that will participate : <i>Three Milton elementary, one middle, one high school as well as 90 early childhood students</i> 3. total number of participating students:<i>90 students in early childhood and 2,235 from Milton district schools</i> 4.participating students from low-income families: <i>all early childhood and 46.4% of students in Milton districts</i> 5. participating students who are high-need students:<i>Milton struggles in all subgroups in reading and particularly low-income and IEP. A group of Hispanic students at Braugher Elementary.</i> 6.participating educators: <i>All educators in Milton district and 14 from early childhood</i> <p><i>Overall, because of the thorough nature of FP proposal and the thoughtful process of analyzing the challenges in the Milton schools (i.e. achievement gaps among economically disadvantaged and IEP, Hispanic students at Braugher, etc.) coupled with the possible unrealisitic number of activities and outcomes that are part of the FP proposal, this section scores in the middle range.</i></p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The FP model has indicators of a proposal that could be scaled up, but there are also indicators of concern in the logic model proposed. Indicators are as follows:</p> <p>1.how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change: <i>FP has a plan to be scaled up through two avenues: 1.)expand to other low-income high-need districts in the CSIU area, 2.)expand to other PA LEADS schools that are in the network. This seems likely since the umbrella organization is CSIU and it already has influence with other districts. Also, Milton has existing relationships with the other PA LEADS districts and the state of Pennsylvania would encourage sharing successful ideas.</i></p> <p>2.how it will reach its outcome goals (e.g., the applicant's logic model): <i>Though there are a multitude of inputs and outputs in the logic model provided by FP, there may be not an exact direct correlation between an input and output (i.e. whiteboards in every classroom and 95% of children increase emergent literacy skills on the PCHP assessment) and who is responsible for what. This is essential in a high-quality plan.</i></p> <p><i>Because of the realistic explanation of how the FP plan could be expanded to other entities coupled with the lack of coherence in the logic model of the proposal for implementation, this is not a high-quality plan and this section scores in the low middle range.</i></p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the FP plan includes multiple criteria in this area, there are concerns in the areas noted below:</p> <p>1. ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup for each participating LEA in the following areas:</p> <p>(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth).</p> <p>(b) Decreasing achievement gaps:<i>By setting the expectations that all subgroups would reach 100% by the end of the grant, that is ensuring that the existing achievement gaps would close. However, the logic used in setting these targets so high so early in the implementation of the grant is unrealistic. Also, chart A4b describes comparing the closure of achievement gaps to the state averages. This may not be as logical way to approach denoting progress as comparisons to each subgroup within FP itself.</i></p> <p>(c) Graduation rates:<i>Expectations for graduation rates for each subgroup seem low considering the high expectations for growth on the state tests for elementary and middle school. The one category that seems unrealistically high is graduation rate for IEP students (i.e.45.8% to 75% over the 4 years of the grant.)</i></p> <p>(d) College enrollment rates: <i>The enrollment rates are present and seem ambitious yet achievable in all categories with the exception of economically disadvantaged students. The FP plan does not seem to include detailed support for addressing that group's needs.</i></p> <p><i>Overall, in spite of having high expectations for district students in multiple categories, the expectations seem unachievable considering the kinds of support built into the FP plan - especially in the early years of the grant. This section earns a score in the low range.</i></p>		

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	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For this section, the FP plan is lacking specificity in multiple areas:</p> <p>1.A clear record of success in the past four years</p> <p>(a) Improve student learning outcomes</p>		

-closing achievement gaps: *No evidence*

-raising student achievement: *Other than middle school math, there is not a clear record of improvement. There is a concern in the logic that CSIU's influence in the Shamokin district has led to improvement as their rate of improvement is not as high as White Deer School in the Milton district.*

-raising high school graduation rates:*No evidence*

-raising college enrollment rates: *No evidence*

(b) Achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving/performing schools: *Although the reforms implemented in the Milton schools last year may lead to improved achievement (Data Teams, etc.), it is too early to tell. There is not the 4-year track record asked for in this section of the application.*

(c) Make student performance data available to students, educators and parents; *Limited information (grades) is currently available on eSchool system.*

Because of the lack of evidence that shows this district and partner (CSIU) have made gains over the last 4 years, it is difficult to justify a score higher than the low range for this section.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The FP plan is lacking information about many of the criteria in this section.

A high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments

-including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.

- which the applicant already makes available the following four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds:

(a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff : *Not available*

(b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only;*Not available*

(c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; *Not available*

(d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level (if available): *Not available*

Because of the current lack of transparency and the limited ability to gather and make this information transparent in the future in multiple ways to multiple stakeholders, it is difficult to support any score higher than the low range for this section.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

FP has done a very solid case for the conditions of success surrounding its plan. Indicators are as follows:

1.Successful conditions: *Framework of implementation of CCSS from state, accountability system (PSSA and Keystone exams); support for project-based learning, etc. These state supports are helpful and not confining and leave FP sufficient autonomy to implement their plan.*

2.Sufficient autonomy: *Autonomy to design curriculum is left to the districts and local boards of education, current Milton SD policy that promotes personalized approach to learning, etc. Like state conditions, the local school board supports the autonomy and individualization of the educators and students in the district.*

Because of the thorough explanation of the context that FP is in as it moves forward with implementing a personalized learning environment for all 3rd-12th grade students, this section receives a score in the high range. There is a slight concern that no information appears to address the early childhood structure in the state and how that might impact the vision FP has designed.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	4
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The FP plan included some evidence of stakeholder input, however there were concerns that the plan itself was not constructed with multiple stakeholder representatives present. The survey described would provide a starting or reference point for discussions, but there is a concern that there were not stakeholders at the table during the crafting of the final plan.

1. Meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal: *Survey of stakeholders on learning for students in the future up to 2024*

2. meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal: *Evidence is lacking.*

(a) A description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback

(i) evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposals from teachers or

(ii) evidence that at least 70 percent of teachers from participating schools support the proposal

Although the Survey stated that "Milton has a very caring staff and is eager to move forward" there is no evidence of direct input on the kind of plan designed by the administrators of FP. There is no letter of support from teaching staff included in this proposal.

(b) Letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education: *Evidence of support is limited (i.e. mayor and board of supervisors)*

Because the survey of stakeholders encompassed all groups and gave direction to the Technology committee, there is no further proof that parents and teachers or others had input in the final development of the entire plan. The lack of a letter of support from teachers is another reason this section scores in middle range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

There are general descriptors of FP's analysis of current status:

1. analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments

The description explains in a general way where the district is in implementation of standards, knowledge of assessment systems, and use of technology, but there are not specific details to provide evidence that this was a thorough analysis. (i.e. what the current state of access to technology is, what the current use of standards in classroom instruction is, what 20 EC students are in need of high-quality education and what does high-quality mean? etc.)

2.the logic behind the reform proposal including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

Although the FP proposal shows the challenges that the district faces in a general way, it does not drill down into specific analysis. (i.e. how the Hispanic students needs would specifically be addressed through this proposal)

Because of the lack of specifics in the analysis in this section, it scores in the middle range

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The FP plan is has incorporated many of the essential elements that meet criteria in this section. There are multiple indicators as follows:

1. approach to implementing instructional strategies that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to CCSS

Because the Pennsylvania assessment system is going to be based on the CCSS, FP is looking ahead and designing their

district initiative to align with that.

2. accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs. : *FP's plan allows for individualized learning so that learning can be accelerated at the student's own pace.*

3. students

(i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals; *The FP link to career paths begins when students create their Personalized Learning Portal. This site will be continually updated and keep all focused on end goals.*

(ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to CCSS and understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals: *Again, the use of the Personalized Learning Portal will keep students aware of their progress toward their career goals as it will link assessment information to their individual learning plan.*

(iii) Are involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest: *Through the use of personalized learning tools and the incorporation of deeper instruction that is brain-based (i.e. Wicks) and proven to improve student achievement (i.e. Marzano), teaching and learning will look different in FP than it does today. Also, through the use of individual modules of learning (i.e. Kahn Academy and Gooru) students will take more ownership and be more engaged in the process.*

(iv) Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives: *Exploration and social learning available through the new media will enhance students' abilities to connect with other cultures and perspectives.*

(v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving;: *Through the use of technology tools envisioned by FP, this plan would increase student mastery of critical content as well as develop other life-long traits. (i.e. middle/high school students must sign a contract and be held accountable for their learning)*

(b) students have access to

(i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development: *Multiple sources that follow a sequence (i.e. Kahn, etc.)*

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments; *FP includes a variety of approaches meant to enhance the quality of instruction. (i.e. project-based learning with rubrics, individualized modules, etc.)*

(iii) High-quality content, including digital learning content *The FP model has included resources that have been noted for their engaging content and easy digital access. (i.e. Kahn Academy, etc.)*

(iv) Ongoing and regular feedback, including,

(A) Frequently updated individual student data. *Under the FP plan, FP stakeholders will have the capability to see individual data alongside the career path and requisites through the Personalized Learning Portal that will be updated at least quarterly. This ubiquitous accessibility is bound to influence students' motivation and sense of efficacy.*

(B) Personalized learning recommendations: *Through the PLE Portals, students will receive recommendations from teachers, parents and others about how to increase learning. This means of personalizing feedback is important to continually advance student learning.*

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students : *This is one area that is not specifically addressed other than the use of Inija app for special needs students for some skills. Lacking the other sources and plans for Hispanic students and other levels of special needs students, etc. Although the proposal mentions the Erie Migrant Education Program, it sounds like that is a grant application and the district has not actually received the funding at this point.*

(c) training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. *The FP plan has some general comments about training students to use technology, but not enough specific information to understand how it would be done across the district.*

Overall, the vision put forth by FP is wide-ranging and creative (i.e using the Personalized Learning

Portals and resources such as the Kahn Academy), but there is not the specificity in this section about all the populations served (i.e. high-quality strategies for high-needs students and details about training in technology for all) to warrant more than a middle score.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There are some indicators of the FP plan that exemplify a high-quality plan for teaching and leading.

By using a new evaluation tool for teachers and leaders, FP is trying to expand student access to an environment of quality instruction. The creation of model classrooms and identifying distinguished teachers and principals help all the educators in the system concretely see what good teaching and leading looks like.

1. improve instruction: *Data Teams, professional development of teachers and leaders from the PDE through KtO grant, model classrooms,*

2. increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting CCSS: *implementation of instructional improvement data system,*

(a) educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to—

(i) Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments: *Not specifically addressed*

(ii) Adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks

, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches: *Not specifically addressed*

(iii) Frequently measure student progress

use data to inform the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators

Through their implementation of Data Teams, the FP K-12 staff is able to accomplish this aspect of using authentic data to inform instruction and improve the collective practice of educators. There is no mention of whether this initiative is going on in the early childhood setting.

(iv) use teacher and principal evaluation systems including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness provide recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement: *Again, FP's choice of using Data Teams is one example of how they are providing the format of individual and collective feedback on teaching effectiveness. The use of the new state evaluation tools and model classroom initiative also help provide some support for improvement in instruction. There is a concern that even though the Data Team process is in place, there will be a competitive environment set up with the model classroom and distinguished teacher/principal initiatives. Leadership is critical to ensure those two aspects of improvement are well-received.*

(b) educator access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources

(i) Actionable information to identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests;

The FP plan includes supportive research and theory to provide evidence for some parts of its plan, such as the Charlotte Danielson model, and states that free training modules on this are available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website. This shows that FP's is anticipating the need for training and has identified a readily available and affordable resource for this. There is a concern in not having the same kind of identified resources for training on approaches specifically addressing individualized teaching methodologies.

(ii) High-quality learning resources

(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs and with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness: *The Data Team process incorporates the continuous feedback about effectiveness of instruction and some match of student needs with specific resources. The*

Milton district's use of this model will likely lead to improvement if implemented with fidelity so that principals and curriculum experts(instructional coaches) are involved as well as students who monitor their individual and collective progress. The model also must be given ample time to become the culture of the school. The fact that FP is embedding this previous initiative with the new Race to the Top plan indicates there is already a sense of its importance in creating a culture of change.

(c) All participating school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources. The training, policies, tools, data, and resources must include:

(i) Information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system *There is no evidence of this provided.*

(ii) Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress:*Access to free professional development on the state SAS webpage provides one source of training for FP teachers. Data Teams represent a practice that continuously improves schools.*

d) Plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

With the new teacher evaluation tool, FP is in the transition phase of finding out what an effective teacher and principal is.

By identifying distinguished teachers and principals, FP is attempting to spread access to other students whose teachers and principals then learn and replicate the practices of those models.

Because by FP's own admission in this section that "the three initiatives --PA LEADS, keystones to Opportunity and Data Teams - have been challenging for Milton's teachers and administrative leaders to implement", this section again shows a grand and visionary idea that perhaps needs more personnel and more expertise, but certainly more time to implement well. Also, even though there is a description of multiple criteria, there is not the specificity of designated personnel and a clear timeline to make this a high-quality plan. This section earns a mid-range score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There are some indicators that the FP plan has policies and compatible infrastructure to implement the comprehensive reform described in previous sections. Indicators are as follows:

The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by—

(a) Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure:*FP has a diagram that shows the relationship between all administration and teachers. There is no description of how parents/families or community stakeholders would fit into this structure. Because family and community stakeholder support are an integral piece of this grant, this is a concern.*

(b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools (as defined in this notice) with sufficient flexibility and autonomy:

The FP plan does say that schools have leadership teams that are responsible for multiple issues (i.e schedules, staffing, school budgets, etc.)The superintendent and school board maintain control over the calendar. This indicates the school teams do not have total flexibility. This is another concern.

(c) students progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery

The FP plan would allow students to show mastery. The FP plan noted that there is an existing school board policy that allows for that although this issue is not specifically addressed at all grade levels that would be impacted by the RTT grant.

(d) students demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways

There are descriptions in general terms (i.e. "rigorous scoring rubrics, examples and non-examples", exams, projects,

presentations, etc.). Again, there is not a specific description included on how this would work at all the various grade levels and with all the different populations of students including early childhood and English Language Learners.

(e) learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students

Data Teams lead to teacher conversations about how practices and resources can be adapted for all students including those with high-needs.

Because of the existing policies (i.e. School Board policy on mastery) and infrastructure (i.e. Data Teams), that Milton district has to support their plan, but the barriers still left to overcome (i.e specifics to address multiple grades and student populations) , this section scores in the middle range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There are some indicators that the FP plan would support the technology infrastructure needed for their personalized learning plan.

The LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by—

(a) stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school: *There are challenges implementing large technology initiatives in a smaller local such as FP's but they have found some possible solutions to those anticipated barriers.(i.e. after-school programs, partnership with the library, etc.)*

(b) stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support: *Through multiple layers of support (CSIU Help Desk, student peer support, etc.) there is a plan for educating the FP population for this new initiative. However, there was no mention of ongoing tech support for broken and lost tablets, or the recurring costs associated with the continuous training and retraining of all stakeholders.)*

(c) open data format: *This is included in the FP plan.*

(d) interoperable data system: *This is addressed in the FP plan including the information about how they have been a leader in this area.*

Because of the recognized technology expertise mentioned in this section coupled with the ongoing issues that were not fully addressed, this section earns a mid-range score.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

First PLACCE has designed method to continuously monitor and improve the originally designed plan. It includes the following :

1. strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process: *Besides their own internal monitors, there is a plan to have an external evaluator regularly monitoring progress. This person/organization is not specifically named, but the basic framework of the monitoring strategy is in place.*

2. timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and: *Because of the implementation of the new data system FP describes, there will be timely and regular feedback. It is impressive to see that FP has included monthly meetings of stakeholder representatives and both qualitative and quantitative data in their feedback loop. This is important as the initiative unfolds so adjustments can be made.*

3. opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.: *With the mindset of district change, FP has laid the foundation for ongoing improvements. They also have the FP Steering Committee to oversee changes*

both during and after the term of the grant. This long-term plan for evaluation is likely to yield stability and focus both during the grant years and beyond. By including multiple stakeholders, there is group consensus on how the initiative moves forward even if any current personnel leave at some point.

4. how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments; *Besides the monthly meetings with the FP steering committee, a detailed evaluation plan is still being developed that will allow analysis of work requests, etc.. There was not a clear description of how this information would reach the public.*

Because of the basic solid foundation of the FP evaluation plan, but the lack of details (i.e.exact personnel, external evaluator, and timeline) about final implementation, this section scores in the mid-range.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The FP plan describes ways that the Milton School District and the community lines of communication operate. The criteria addressed in the application are as follows:

1.Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with

a.internal stakeholders *Although the internal stakeholders (students, teachers and staff) may also be community members, there is not a specific way to continuously communicate with staff, students, etc. on a regular basis about the revision of the plan described in this section.*

b.external stakeholders. *The means described would support communication between external stakeholders and the FP. It did not specifically address how the continuous improvement of the plan would be communicated though. Also, there was no mention of the specific ways targeted populations would be draw into the continuous improvement of this grant project. (i.e. Early Childhood families, English Language Learning families, etc.)*

Because of the general nature of the response about how these existing lines of communication described would specifically channel information about improvement of the RTT grant plan, this section scores in the low mid-range.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

There is a listing of the performance measures that First PLACCE plans to use to continuously guage success of their initiatives.

Ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant must describe—

(a) Its rationale for selecting that measure. *By choosing the state assessments, FP is aligning its evaluation with state, federal and even international benchmarks. This shows they are focusing on the long-term goal of overall impact in comparison to other outside entities. They are also designating key benchmarks along the way (i.e. entering school readiness, 3rd grade reading, etc.) Because the state has established the goal of 100% of students must be at or above proficiency in reading and math by 2014. FP realizes this is not realistic and sets its own ambitious, yet achievable benchmarks for the RTT grant. This shows how they are able to temper state mandates with reality from the field.*

There was also a rationale for why the measure of teacher and principal effectiveness is not yet in place. Even with this explanation, it would have been helpful to include some narrative on previous tools or policies of educator effectiveness up to this point in time at either CSIU or Milton School District to give a sense of historical context and how this shift to the new state tool will mesh with previously gathered information.

(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. *State testing provides rigorous information, however it is not timely and may not be useful as a formative assessment depending on the degree of analysis provided in results. Similarly, the Teacher Effectiveness Tool may not yield timely feedback for evaluating and changing the FP plan and, timeliness aside, the explanation of the impact of that tool on the grant initiatives was not evident in this section.*

(c) How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. *There was no mention of improving any of the measures over time if shown to be insufficient.*

The applicant must have a total of approximately 12 to 14 performance measures. Yes

The FP has listed the variety of 12 performance measures to be used to mark progress. Because of the concern mentioned above about the lack of timeliness of information and the connection between grant initiatives and evaluation tool results, this section earns a low middle range score.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is some evidence that CSIU and Milton can evaluate the effectiveness of the grant. (i.e. Their track record of success with other software initiatives.) However, there is a concern that there are multiple activities the CSIU Technology Group is responsible for throughout the grant years and this development of Return On Investment software may take time away from some of those. Also, because this software is not yet developed, there was no specific information about exactly what and how FP would track individual components of the grant (i.e. professional development, time, staff, etc.)

Because of this concern, this section scores in the middle range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The FP plan has detailed budgetary information that includes funds from other sources. (i.e. Federal Striving Readers Grant, PA LEADS Grant, etc.)

Because it is so comprehensive, it appears to have accounted for multiple expenditures accompanying the various layers of the plan. Of particular interest is the reference to the PA LEADS grant which is ending in 2014, but seems to have been a foundation upon which FP can build the next layer of improvement through the RTT grant. Leveraging that foundation indicates there is a solid leadership team in place at FP. Also, by delineating the funds over the 7 years, showing both before and after the grant period, it shows there is a master plan for development.

Because of the detail provided in this section and the comprehensive approach to budgeting, it scores in the high range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is some limited support for the sustainability for FP's goals after the grant period ends.

Although there is a letter of endorsement from the mayor, there is no evidence of additional resources from city funds and/or state funds. The grant PA LEADS is due to expire in June 2014, so that does provide some extra funding up until that point.

Because of the extensive plan put forth by First PLACCE and the extensive cost in maintenance and sustainability of the plan, it would be good to know there was a pipeline of funding or other outside sources (community, state, additional grants, etc.) to support this going forward. With the information provided that only shows evidence of very limited support, this section scores in the middle range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority

Because of the coherent and sustainable partnership Milton and CSIU have formed involving multiple local and state resources, the FP plan is indicative of comprehensive plan that leverages all funds and personnel to support the whole child. To track its success FP has identified key measures that monitor progress for the long term in multiple areas. (i.e. parent behaviors, student behaviors, benchmarks of quality, safety, etc.) Through the use of the new data system, FP will have the capability to track their school-wide success and approach to behavior management. This is the kind of data-driven decision-making that allows for allocation of resources in a powerful way. Also, because of FP's existing connection with other CSIU network members and PA LEADS associates, it will be a natural outgrowth of their program to scale it up to the other network partners.

Through the continuance of the assessment, targeted intervention, reflection, etc., FP has designed an integrated and coherent plan that addresses multiple aspects of school and student success at once. Particularly impressive is the description of the SWPBS Team who plays an invaluable role in the success of the program. The information gathered from many stakeholders provide excellent data from which to evaluate and develop programming. (i.e. Survey of school and support staff in how and when to teach lessons on behaviors, survey of parent involvement, etc.)

The FP organization has laid out a comprehensive and well-established program to support students and families in improving behaviors. The focused mission, organizational structure of the SWPBS team, cohesive approach, and data-tracking built into this program are exemplary. Although the targets for behavior improvement are not evenly distributed, it is plausible that there will be a big impact at the start of the program and then a drop-off.

Because of the comprehensive approach and solid foundation of the FP partnership to implement this, this section scores in the high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

First PLACCE has forged a strong partnership that could be the foundation for a cohesive approach to improving schools and supporting families in the area.

There are many initiatives in the FP plan that show extraordinary commitment and efforts to improve support for the Milton Schools' teachers, instructional support staff, principals, students and parents as they implement a personalized learning environment in their schools.

1. The development of the Personalized Learning Portal for each student is a visionary idea that focuses students on one of the main goals of an education - to be prepared for the workplace. By designing this portal so that students are able to see how their performance in school is on target toward that goal, FP has shown they have innovative ideas and the will to draw students into making that connection between work and school.

2. FP has also shown real commitment to improving student and family behaviors in their description of the SWPBS model. It is a comprehensive way to approach improvement in behaviors that connects students, staff, and families in this effort. By using the data system to track progress of individual students as well as the overall success of the program, First PLACCE demonstrates they have an idea that will allow them to target interventions, use resources wisely, and continuously improve as a school system.

First PLACCE's determination to succeed comes through in this application, but the support for FP and the detail necessary to implement the ideas put forth were not evident.

1. The lack of commitment and support from the teachers and community is one area that stood out.

2. The admission by FP itself that implementing the 3 current programs has already been a challenge (Data Teams, PA LEADS and Keystones to Opportunity). By adding one more initiative to an overflowing plate, FP does not lend credence to

their case for success with Race to the Top which will require enormous amounts of time, effort and personnel to implement. Because of the lack of specificity, but not a lack of effort and commitment on the part of the organizations, FP's plan does not meet all necessary criteria for this RTT grant proposal.

Total	210	111
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0813PA-2 for Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	0
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: First, there is a concern that CSIU is not a LEA, but rather a service provider to a number of LEAs. There is no evidence given that would indicate that the proposal vision is built on work that has been done in the four core educational assurance areas. No points are given for this section. Further, There is concern about use of funds. The narrative indicates that other CSIU districts would be a part of development of a robust data system. Those LEAs have not been named and are not a part of this grant proposal.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: (A) All schools and students in the Milton Area School District will participate. That population includes 3 elementary schools, one middle and one high school (2,286 students). In addition 51 students from Head Start and Pre-K programs at the CSIU will be involved. 47.6% of the students are from low-income families. (b) A list of the schools' names was provided with the number of students and teachers. (c) 1,089 or 47.6% of students come from low-income families. 1,542 or 67.5% are high-need students high-needs. 189 teachers will be taking part.		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: No narrative was included for this section. A logic model chart was included. Highly effective teachers are the catalyst to scaling up and transforming the proposal into a meaningful reform. The chart indicates a goal of 40% of teachers are effective by 2014-15, 66% are highly effective by 2015-16, and 100% are highly effective by 2015-16. Professional development to support this goal is not indicated. It is highly unlikely the reform proposal will be successful without a highly trained professional staff. In addition it is hard to imagine the goals achievable without a plan for training.		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments: There is no narrative for this section. Data achievement charts with projections are included. (a) Student achievement in nearly all areas decreased from 2010-11 to 2011-12. In some cases dramatically. There's no		

indication what will support or cause the large achievement gains that are projected to occur.

(b)The proposal includes plans to have STEM activities outside of the classroom. STEM activities need to be included in all aspects of the program when an integral part is the purchase of laptops or iPads for all students Pre-K-12th grade. There is no indication of how STEM activities will be targeted at the low-income, high-needs students.

(c) There is no rationale as to an expected 30% increase in Students with IEPs graduation rate increase. In addition, it would appear that these are the students that you expect will hold down your graduation rate to 91.5%.

(d) The chart states unreasonable expectations.The goals may be ambitious, but there does not appear to be any plan in place to make them achievable. (i.e., .6% of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in college during 2011-12, your projection is that that percentage will rise to 35% over the 3 years of the grant. There is no indication as to how that dramatic improvement will occur.)

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	2
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: There is not a clear record of success in the past 2 years, for which data has been provided. (a) The narrative chose to compare Milton to a neighboring district because the student learning outcomes using the State's standard have not been improving in Milton. Nor have achievement gaps been closed. (b) The lowest performing schools have continued to be the lowest-performing schools. (c) Data is being provided. The proposal says that information will be significantly expanded. Points are given here because data is available to parents who have access via the internet.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: There was no discussion of the CSIU transparency in any way. A high level of transparency does not exist at Milton. (a-d) Actual personnel salaries at the school level are not available except as received under FOIA by the local newspaper.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: There were no State or local laws specified in the narrative that gives the CSIU or Milton sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environment in the applicant's proposal.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	1
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: The narrative did not give any indication that any stakeholder engagement occurred in the development of the proposal. No letters of support were included from any of the key stakeholder groups. Comments from the Mayer and Board of Supervisors Chair were included after reviewing the proposal draft. The Union President of Milton signed the application, but there was no letter of support.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: The narrative does not indicate that the applicant has any current status in implementing personalized learning environments.		

The narrative talks about "students who have traditionally struggled" and identifies them as "Hispanic students and students with IEPs." The other subgroup that the Milton data identifies as not achieving is economically disadvantaged students. It is troubling that one of the major subgroups is not targeted by the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The narrative described a plan to provide a data system to aggregate students' data and analyze students' needs. At the same time, an infusion of technology for students will occur and professional development for teachers will occur in the use of technology. It's not clear how the professional development will engage and empower all learners.</p> <p>There is a plan including an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students using technology. The applicant is placing a great deal of pressure on the technology and students' and parents' successful use of it for success in the areas listed under (C)(1)(a)</p> <p>(b) There is a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready if the student is successful with the technology the applicant is planning to provide. There was not a variety of high-quality instructional approaches provided in the narrative. Again, the emphasis is on the use of technology by individual students. Provision of internet (WIFI) is not planned for students to use at home even though the plan is to "flip" the curriculum and have students use their technology at home. This would seem to disenfranchise economically disadvantaged students.</p> <p>The content is aligned with college and career ready graduation requirements as set forth by the State. Instructional coaches and supports will be included as part of their proposal. Accommodations for high needs students are lacking in the proposal.</p> <p>(c) Training for students in how to use the tools and resources provided to them through this proposal was not discussed in the narrative.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A PA LEADS grant has provided Milton teachers with training in the use of a portal used to develop curriculum maps. The proposal would expand that capacity to train teachers to use technology to tie instruction, materials, and assessment to the curriculum maps. The expectation is that the planning will support "continuous student achievement." This fall a "few Milton teachers" are developing model classrooms using this technology and Kindles and Nooks for student use. Teachers will receive professional development during the summer of 2013. Technology will be given to students in August 2013. It is difficult to understand how all of the training and use of technology will support continuous student achievement.</p> <p>During the 2011-12 school year data teams were developed in the Milton district. The teams are made up of 4-6 grade level or content teachers and they look at student formative assessment data and set SMART goals based on the data. The expectation is that more teams will be trained and developed using funds from the grant.</p> <p>CSIU has on their timeline to implement tablets and interactive white boards in the Spring of 2012. Professional development for teachers is planned to occur in the summer of 2013. It would appear that the implementation should occur after training.</p> <p>The proposal seems to have teachers trained in the summer of 2013 on the use of technology and the expansion of the portal use to adapt content to align with the State's expectations. Instruction will be more engaging through the use of technology. Expansion of data collection will provide more frequent measure of students' progress. It is not clear how this will improve the individual and collective practice of educators.</p> <p>A new teacher evaluation system is being piloted this school year at Milton. No discussion of training or evaluations at the CSIU is offered. When or how Milton teachers will receive feedback or use feedback to improve effectiveness is not discussed.</p> <p>There was no plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective or highly effective teachers and principals. The applicant stated that there is no problem hiring staff in specialty areas.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	4
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Support and services are limited to all participating schools because there is not an administrator at each school.</p> <p>The statement was made by the applicant that the schools have "sufficient" autonomy in areas other than the school calendar. No policies or statutes were provided as evidence.</p> <p>Students have some opportunities to progress and earn credits as mastery is demonstrated. Discussion is made of multiple comparable ways for students to demonstrate competency. The narrative seems to be talking about formative assessments, not summative.</p> <p>The plan is to provide learning resources and instructional practices through the use of technology.</p> <p>The lack of a letter of support from the teachers' union is troubling. If support does not exist, it will be difficult to implement achievable, improved student achievement.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a & c) Students and parents will not have access to necessary content, tools, and learning resources if they do not have internet access in their homes. The proposal repeatedly speaks to the fact that there is no intent to provide access to homes where it does not already exist.</p> <p>(b) Technical support will be provided by a school level technical support person in each building. Technical support for parents as an on-going activity is not discussed. Professional development during the summer is planned.</p> <p>(d) The applicant says that when taking bids one expectation is the the new data system will be interoperable.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Project goals are assessed or measured on a yearly basis making it difficult to classify the monitoring as continuous. Monitoring will be done by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from stakeholder groups and administrators. They will meet quarterly and discuss the data. It appears this is the "reporting" component of the improvement process. No discussion is made of reporting to the community at large.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The on-going communication is planned to occur on a quarterly basis to the Steering Committee. The committee is to be made up of internal and external stakeholders. The community at large does not appear to have an opportunity to receive communication and engagement in adjustments that may need to be made to the plan.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No social-emotional measures have been identified in any age level.</p> <p>(a) There is no rationale given for choosing the measures included in the plan.</p>		

(b) The progress measured toward accomplishing the performance measures is annually assessed making it difficult to classify them as timely or formative in nature.

(c) There are some plans to intervene in some areas.

There is no grade-appropriate academic leading indicator of successful implementation of the plan at the 9-12th grade level.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There are no plans discussed in the narrative to evaluate the effectiveness of grant funded activities including professional development, productivity, or use of time or technology to improve results. There is no plan for compensation reform, modification of school schedules or structures. Data teams have been set up but the narrative indicates limited authority or autonomy.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Additional funds to support the proposed reform efforts is made up of 25% soft money and existing State and Federal grants presently being earmarked for other initiatives. There is no explanation as to how these funds will be freed up or what activities will be discontinued to provide the First PLACCE initiative access.

(b) Existing computers are to be donated or sold. There are no funds allocated for training stipends yet a great deal of professional development of staff will be done during summer sessions. It is unlikely that educators will attend professional development in the summer for free and there is no discussion of contractual expectations of educators attending summer training.

(c) Total revenues from other sources has been provided (\$7,003,560). There are no one-time investments. There will remain on-going expense throughout and after the grant timeframe. The First PLACCE Project Director, a contracted position, will be responsible for sustainability. The explanation of how that will be accomplished is weak, at best.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is no high-quality plan for sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) A partnership was described in the narrative that will be formed. Services will be provided. No funds were delineated in the narrative from any of these partners.

(2) Results that align with and support the broader proposal were outlines.

(3) The partnerships would not track indicators. The district would accomplish that task. Referrals would be made by the district.

(4) The described partnerships would not integrate education and other services except at the higher education level for

advanced students.

(5) Building the capacity of staff to effectively use the partnership entities was ambiguous.

(6) Annual performance measures were described.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The lack of a comprehensive plan to address teacher training beyond the use of technology is inappropriate. Teachers need training in multiple areas to implement the proposed plan for reform with fidelity. The lack of support for subpopulations outside of the school so that they can access and utilize their technology and resources is problematic and disenfranchising. The plan is unlikely to decrease the achievement gaps. It may increase the rates at which graduates are college and career ready because of the use of technology in the school setting.

Total	210	46
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0813PA-3 for Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU)

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant set for a comprehensive and coherent vision for reform through the narrative. The narrative referenced what had already taken place in terms of district reform and how Race to the Top (RTT) monies could support further reform.

The applicant directly addresses two of the four core educational assurances outlined in the application.

- The district has adopted the Common Core State Standards and the Pennsylvania Career Education and Work Standards.
- The applicant thoroughly addressed the issue of data. The narrative not only shows an understanding of data, but how data can and data systems can be used to directly serve and support teachers and students.
- The applicant does not thoroughly address the issue of recruiting and retaining effective employees and turning around lowest-achieving schools.

The narrative of the application has many goals embedded within, and a clear and credible approach toward achieving them.

- The goals references and alluded to throughout would provide accelerate student achievement, deepen learning, and personalize the learning environment.

Goals such as personalizing the learning environment, creating robust data systems, and focusing in the four keys to college and career readiness were themes throughout.

Increasing equity for all students was mentioned, but not thoroughly are directly addressed in the vision provided by the applicant.

- The applicant discussed providing personalized support, moving toward a mastery based credit system, and using first class interventions based directly upon student needs as a result of comprehensive data analysis.
- The applicant did not directly address the need or specific plan to close achievement gaps or to specifically address underperforming schools or subgroups of students.

Overall, this applicant scores in the high range of middle scores. The narrative directly applies to most of the components as listed, but other subcomponents are only slightly discussed or not broached at all.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's description of how schools and students impacted by the RTT grant process was uneven. The applicant described what the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit's (CSIU) purpose is, but did not with great detail explain who would be impacted by the grant. Whereas, the description of the Milton district schools participating is through and complete.

The schools listed in chart A2 appear to be comprehensive and meet all requirements set forth in the application. The chart provided is filled out correctly and completely.

The applicant scores in the low end of the high category. The applicant thoroughly addresses the majority of the subcomponents and also addressed how each school was selected.

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

The applicant provided a high quality plan (only void of identifying people responsible for enactment of the plan) that addressed how their plan for improvement would extend to impact not only everyone within their LEA and partnership, but other districts as well.

- The unique partnership of a service agency and a district to form this application allows for the best practices used as a result of the RTT grant to be shared with other area schools, potentially raising student achievement for a greater number of students.

- All goals were focused on overall student achievement and college and career readiness.
- Goals were broken down by grade levels and involved a plethora of activities and outputs to reach one particular measure.
- Goals references professional development, closing achievement gaps, personalized learning environments and digital learning.

Overall, this criterion scores a 9 of 10. The high quality plan was void of identifying people responsible for carrying out each component of the plan or it would have received a maximum score.

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

The applicant established ambitious, yet achievable goals in almost all measures of student achievement.

- The application focused on increasing equity by establishing goals that not only improved the achievement of all students, but also closed the achievement gap.
- It was not specifically mentioned so it remains unknown if the goals established are at least that of ESEA. Many of the goals, however, move toward 100 percent of students demonstrating proficiency – so in those cases the applicant satisfied that requirement.
- The applicant compared their subgroups to the state’s white population – hence setting a higher target for themselves.
- The measurements used were state sponsored summative assessments.
- All goals appeared ambitious, yet achievable with the exception of the goals set for college enrollment rates. Having less than half of the district’s economically disadvantaged students enroll in college five years from now is not ambitious.

The applicant will score in the high category. The applicant addressed almost all components of the criterion thoroughly and ambitiously.

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	0

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not prove a longitudinal record of success within the district or that appropriate conditions for reform exist.

- While pockets of increased success existed at individual schools during individual years, it was unclear that a positive trajectory of achievement existed for any particular school or subgroup.
- The narrative discussed achievement, achievement gaps, and demographics but they primarily mentioned them as inhibitors or explanations for lack of success.

There was no evidence of ambitious or significant reforms that have taken place in the past leading to increased achievement per the narrative.

The applicant addressed data transparency by discussing plans for the future. The current system is typical of most schools with students’ grades being able to be accessed online. The information provided did not discuss how this information was used to increase performance, participation, or instruction.

Overall, this criterion receives zero points. There was no thorough evidence provided that satisfied any of the components of the criterion.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5	5	0
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points)		
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's narrative did not provide evidence that the LEA has met the minimum components of the criterion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The narrative stated that personnel salaries and individual expenditures by line item have not been made readily available to the public. <p>As a result of not completing the minimum requirements of this criterion, the applicant will receive zero points.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided evidence that the state of Pennsylvania was supportive of education reform and proactive in helping to cause positive educational change to occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pennsylvania is a RTT state. The applicant discussed many of the state-wide reforms occurring as a result of the state being named a RTT state. <p>The applicant, however, did not provide a clear relationship between their proposal and how the conditions of the state would provide sufficient autonomy to enact its plan. While there was not a direct relationship outlined in the narrative, enough evidence about the state of Pennsylvania was provided that a reasonable assumption can be made that the appropriate conditions for reform exist.</p> <p>Overall, this criterion will score in the high end of middle. The failure to tie a direct relationship between the applicant's plan and state conditions prohibits a high score.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	1
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's narrative failed to discuss how meaningful stakeholder involvement took place during the formation of the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The narrative explained with great detail how both internal and external stakeholders have been prepared and supportive of an increase in technology within the department. There was no mention of any stakeholder having direct impact on the composition of the application. The union did 'sign-off' on the application as evidenced on the front-page of the document. <p>The applicant's narrative did not mention letters of support from outside agencies, universities, parent organization nor did it direct the reviewer to an Appendix that may have contained such letters.</p> <p>Overall, this criterion will receive one point as a result of gaining bargaining unit approval. Outside of that, there was no evidence that the applicant met any of the components of this criterion.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrated strong understanding of what would be needed to gain understanding as to the current status of the district. The applicant did not provide a specific plan for this, however, and simply referred the reviewer to an overall plan for the duration of the grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the plan referenced was high quality, the performance measures to gauge effectiveness did not apply to this criterion. • The narrative provided solid rationale for activities that would be needed to best gauge the applicant's current status and how to incrementally move forward – but no high quality plan was provided. <p>Overall, this criterion will score at the high end of low. While the applicant showed understanding of how to analyze gaps, they did not provide the formal plan necessary to satisfy the components of this criterion.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents very in depth strategies toward implementing instructional strategies to enable all children to be college and career ready. The narrative, however, is void of many of the characteristics of a high quality plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The narrative does not provide specific and measurable goals, specific timelines, deliverables, or a person designated to ensure that stated activities were complete. <p>The narrative provides several examples of understanding that proper education, and to be precise, 21st century education is the key for future success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The narrative discusses recent neuroscience and its impact on learning as well defining and providing examples as to what digital literacy means. • The plan also identifies that skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century such as critical thinking and problem solving are best taught by teachers and the plan thus calls for a blended learning approach. • The plan identifies a specific link to CCSS and also discusses educational pathways driven by student interest. The plan even discusses this methodology extending deep into the primary experience of many students. <p>The applicant provides a strategy to personalize the instructional content in a manner that supports student growth toward being college and career ready.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan outlines a one-to-one device for all K-12 students and access to technology during a child's pre-K experience. • The plan explains that a blended approach that takes advantage of the unique expertise of teachers in conjunction with flipped classrooms, virtual environments, and access to large databases of lessons will provide students with a variety of approaches to allow them the chance at mastering material. • The plan also discusses the adapting of a PLE minimally quarterly and possibly more often pending student progress or lack thereof • Interventions were discussed, but most notably in terms of the parental access and that the constructed PLE would even inform parents as to how better support their child when they experience difficulty in a particular area. <p>The applicant discusses mechanisms that will be in place to provide training so that all stakeholders understand the tools being given to them and how they can benefit the learning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant focuses primarily on teacher and parent training to use the technology to its fullest extent to support students. • It seemed somewhat implied that students, digital natives as they are referred to in the narrative, will not need intense training to understand the technological tools they will be given. <p>Overall, this criterion scores in the middle range. The strategies provided are in depth and address almost every sub-criterion</p>		
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provided, however, the applicant failed to provide a high quality plan with goals, deliverables, timelines, or identification of the people responsible for ensuring that everything takes place as designed.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a narrative detailing many of the initiatives already in place to facilitate professional growth in a variety of means and also included a high quality plan including performance measures, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

The narrative did not directly mention anything explicitly about educators being trained in a manner to support the effective implementation of the digital tools and changing curricula that define the proposal and help to establish PLEs.

- The applicant does discuss how evaluations can help support the growth of professionals by providing feedback and support and it discusses The Leadership and Learning Center's *Decision Making for Results and Data Team* protocol.
- The process mentioned above outlines a process to help educators use data to inform decision-making by frequently measuring student progress toward pre-set outcomes.
- There is no mention about providing support for teachers in the effort to adopt and adapt content best suited for the individual needs of students.

The narrative discussed other grants that had been awarded within the district and how it allowed for a modeling of best practice technology use. As part of the plan an outcome desired by Spring of 2013 was to close the digital divide. The activity to accomplish this was 'tablets and interactive whiteboards.'

The narrative provided a great amount of detail about evaluation and evaluation reform within the state of Pennsylvania. The applicant, did not, however, provide information about how schools and school leaders would specifically use the information garnered from evaluation to drive professional development or help close the achievement gap. There was also not explicit mention of using surveys to gauge climate and culture and its impact on student achievement.

The applicant did not provide a High quality plan to ensure highly effective teachers and principals serve the schools and students with highest need. The applicant stated that attracting high quality teachers was not a current issue for the district.

Overall, this criterion rates in the mid to high end of low scores. The applicant provided a high quality plan; however, the plan and the narrative did not directly address the vast majority of the components and subcomponents of this criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative provides evidence of having practices, policies, and rules in place that facilitate the development of PLEs.

- Given that the applicant is a partnership between two different entities a unique reporting and support structure exists. As evidenced by the charts provided within and the Memorandum of Understanding in the Appendix a climate exists where support and service to all schools is very possible.
- Schools have simple and limited infrastructures due to the size of the district. This size and the philosophy of the district provide each school and school leader with the ability and flexibility to institute the planned reform.
- The narrative discusses the applicant's philosophical belief and actual policy that allows for student to earn credit based on proficiency rather than simply by time.
- The applicant simply states that students will be given multiple opportunities for success, but does not provide specific examples of how or of how it will be supported at the district-level.
- The applicant stated that the technology proposed in the creation of PLEs lends itself naturally to the adaptation of material, but again did not provide specific examples of how this would be the norm throughout the district.

Overall, this criterion scores at the high end of the middle. The applicant addresses each subcomponent of the criterion, but failed to provide specific examples at all levels.

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

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides evidence that the LEA and school have some of the infrastructure supports in place to support personalized learning.

- The plan articulates that not all stakeholders can have equal access to all tools in and out of school. The plan did account for the lack of internet services in their rural community by stating that it would seek out partnerships with community entities, but could provide no evidence of this already having occurred.
- The narrative provided a thorough explanation and graphic of the technical support structure that would accompany the move to PLEs. The three tiered system was well-thought out and not intensive in terms of financial need.
- The applicant outlined their willingness to forge partnerships with third parties to create open data systems and interoperability. The partnerships standards and principles were outlined in the proposal and aligned in philosophy with the rest of the proposal.

Overall, this plan scores in the high middle range. The inability for all students to have equal access in and out of school precludes a score in the high range despite meeting all other criterion subcomponents.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a comprehensive view on how they would develop a process to provide all stakeholders with timely and regular feedback regarding the implementation and progress of creating PLEs for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan calls for the creation of a steering committee to meet monthly. • The steering committee will meet monthly to analyze progress and share information. • The steering committee will have several foci including leveraging the existing professional learning communities and supporting the work of an external evaluator. • The process in place provides for the ability to make mid-course corrections. • The plan fails to mention if the steering committee will continue its efforts after the term of the grant and if as part of the evaluation of effectiveness the monitoring of effectiveness per dollar spent will occur. <p>This criterion scores in the high end of middle. The failure to address two subcomponents prevents this otherwise thorough criterion from scoring higher.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a history of successful community engagement strategies and proactive communication techniques employed by the Milton School District. The narrative does not, however, provide any details about how ongoing communication regarding the proposed RTT grant will be systematically communicated.</p> <p>The fact that the district has many different blogging organizations and successful community events is not evidence that there is a thorough strategy for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders and as a result this criterion will receive zero points.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant produced a variety of ambitious, yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroups, with annual targets in this criterion.</p> <p>The applicant satisfied the number and types of subgroups called for in the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant failed to provide comprehensive rationale for the selection of each measure, how the measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative information, or how the applicant will review the measure over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only rationale provided was that the measures contained a strong literacy focus, because all teachers should be teachers of literacy. <p>Overall, this criterion scores in the low end of middle. The performance measures were supplied as requested in the criterion, but the background information requested was not produced.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a plan for how they will be able to discern if RTT monies were spent appropriately and with a return on investment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district plans to work with a third party to pilot a return-on-investment software package to track spending The narrative would align spending to stated performance outcomes as established throughout the plan. The narrative states that this will allow for mid-course corrections and the software could disaggregate data to evaluate effectiveness of professional development, technology expense, personnel, etc. The narrative also stated that this information would be shared publicly with the steering committee to help inform their decision-making process. <p>Overall, this criterion receives maximum points. The applicant provided an innovative idea that demonstrated the ability to think outside of the box and form significant, productive partnerships while addressing nearly every subcomponent of the criterion.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identified that 7,000,000 dollars from outside sources will be used to help support the implementation of the grant. The narrative, nor the table, explicitly stated where the outside money was coming from.</p> <p>The information provided demonstrated that the total budgetary amount for creating PLEs in this district would be reasonable and sufficient to fund the project. There were no clear areas of oversight or areas of indulgent superfluous spending.</p> <p>The narrative, supported by the budget tables, provided thoughtful rationale for all spending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The narrative provided a thorough explanation as to why the district felt leasing the technology was a better investment (even if potentially more costly). The narrative also explained why some FTEs would be added and then eliminated after the grant, but according to their plan not impact progress or student achievement. The budget also provided a comprehensive breakdown of the project in its entirety, and also on a project-level basis. <p>Overall, this component scores at the high end of the middle category. The application did not provide clear explanation of where the other 7,000,000 of revenue was coming from. .</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide evidence for criterion (F)(2)

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The competitive preference priority criterion for the applicant outlined a system of continuing partnerships geared to proactively address behavioral and social-emotional needs of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership as described is designed to support students inside and outside of school, but take place during the traditional school day. This may not directly align to the rest of the plan since it was mentioned that schooling may not be confined by four walls once PLEs are fully implemented. <p>The partnership as described involved many community organizations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health services provides Social service organizations Institutions of higher education Civic groups <p>The applicant provided 10 population level desired results that align with applicant's broader proposal and evidence is provided of how the partnership would track indicators of progress.</p> <p>The applicant articulated how they would use data to target resources with emphasis on students facing significant challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant provided the explanation in the form of the traditional Response to Intervention triangle <p>The applicant described how the partnership would integrate educational and non-educational programs and build staff capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant addressed how increasing student positive behaviors would increase student achievement The applicant addressed how data would be used to identify student needs and assist in the decision-making processes determining what students need what supports. <p>Overall, this criterion received maximum points.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The absolute priority was sufficiently addressed throughout the applicaiton.</p> <p>The use of one-to-one technology, blended learning environments, and credit by mastery, not time define the proposed personalized learning environments proposed in this plan.</p>		

Total	210	109
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