



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0847TX-1 for Dallas Independent School District

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 District's vision has coherence and comprehensiveness. It has adopted a Destination 2020 model. Its proposal includes a variety of research-based concepts that are crucial to the success of its reform (e.g., changing principal and teacher recruitment).</p> <p>What distinguishes Dallas's plan is its (Student Advocacy Management) SAMs component. This component provides wrap-around services/connections to other social service providers that are essential for the success of students in this demographic (low SES).</p> <p>All four core assurance areas have been addressed in the Destination 2020 plan. The District appears to have adopted college/career readiness standards notwithstanding the fact that the state did not adopt Common Core Standards. It puts teacher effectiveness as a core component of improving student success and intends to increase equity by redistributing its best teachers to its neediest schools.</p> <p>Effective use of technology will be critical to the success of the program. By its own admission, the district's technology resources are outdated, But it has committed itself to improving these resources which will require a great deal of focus and resources. The schools chosen here, likewise, are very high-needs low-achieving schools. Thus, this is ambitious in the sense that its focus is on its neediest schools.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's proposed schools meet the eligibility requirements as they relate to the requirement concerning low SES.</p> <p>(a) The district described the process by which schools were selected, including focus groups. Interestingly, the schools it has chosen as anchor schools (Lincoln and Pinkerton) have slightly different demographics and housing characteristics that make a useful comparison models for the project going forward.</p> <p>(b) and (c) are also satisfied. Participating schools, students, and teachers with relevant data are listed in the application.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district does plan to use the RTTD money to scale up its reforms set forth in "Destination 2020." The district asserts that it will be constantly measuring the effectiveness at various intervals as it anticipates scaling up. The plan seems ambitious and realistic in the sense that it adds additional schools on a planned basis under the "Strategic Feeder Pattern" models. Given the ambitious nature of the plan and the resources it would require, there is some question as to the viability of scaling up the plan to the total number of feeder schools proposed. The theory of change -- which revolves around teacher quality -- is an good place to start reform.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The plan contains essential elements that the research suggests improve student performance/outputs such as those listed above in (a)-(c).

- The district's plan benefits from its goals of building instructional capacity. The quality of educators should be the primary focus of any district because it is the most important in-class factor that improves student outputs, such as summative assessments, and improvements on standardized tests. Use of data analysis, such as summative assessments and coaching, to drive instruction is included in the vision. The plan also proposes to improve technology capacity as it relates to using data. Thus, in this regard, the plan's chances for improvement of student learning and performance improves as it relates to summative assessments and improvement on standardized tests appears a step in the right direction.

- The plan is carefully implemented in the first stage on a smaller scale, at first. This is through the feeder model. This seems an appropriate level at which to start and to make adjustments, as necessary, and carefully monitor the student performance measures listed above.

- The increase in equity is also an important dimension and potential result for the district. In particular, with this plan, the district proposes to increase student access to higher quality teachers in some of the lowest SES school areas of the school district which have been chosen by the District as the initial feeder schools.

Yet, there are concerns from an equity perspective. The plan's ambitiousness with respect to closing the achievement gap on an LEA-wide level is lacking. The goals do not seem ambitious enough. For instance, with respect to reading and math scores, the district sets for a goal reducing the achievement gap by 1% each year between now and school year 2015-2016. Likewise, the district proposes to increase graduation rates by approximately only 5% from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016. Given the level of resources that could be potentially employed with this grant, these goals are not ambitious enough.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district stipulates its record of success in advancing multiple initiatives aimed at improving student performance has been mixed. Thus it is difficult to conclude that there is evidence of a "clear record of success." That said, there are some indicators of improvement. These include:</p> <p>(a) raising student achievement (improved passing rates on the state test exam for African Americans and Hispanics since 2007). Yet to the extent that this explains how it closed the achievement gap could have been improved in its explanation.</p> <p>(b) Reform has been attained, to some extent in the passing of standardized tests, in the selected schools of Lincoln and Pinkerton. These are solid signs. But they are not reflective of achievement of significant and ambitious reforms across the district's lowest performing schools.</p> <p>(c) Discussion as to the extent to which the performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents is lacking in this subsection.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district represents that the website contains the links to the requested information. It represents that 3,766 "hits" occurred off this website and that link is well-marked on the district website.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district has autonomy to implement the various reform measures it has discussed here. The district's application points to

several state statutes that confer this autonomy. The district has implemented a new teacher evaluation system under these conditions, for instance.

None of the initiatives proposed here appear to be limited by the regulations or statutes and are permissible.

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

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The district provided for a number of opportunities for teachers to comment and endorse/reject the teacher evaluation model. The district's involvement of the teachers should be commended. The district contracted with an outside source to obtain focus group input. The application could have elaborated more on process by which this feedback contributed to the development of the plan with revisions, etc.

There exists a spreadsheet of community support located in Appendix . The parent support came largely in the form of form letters and this is a weaker indication that this group had "meaningful engagement," as required under this subpart.

The district represents that 90% of the teachers in the feeder schools support this proposal and that this was obtained through a survey.

(b) The district received numerous letters of support that involved a variety of officials and organizations (e.g., Girls Inc., Capital One of Texas)

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The District, in preparation of its developing of its 2020 plan, conducted needs assessment that identified seven (7) areas for growth. The identified needs were consistent with needs that many underperforming districts identify. The district's proposal correlates to the identified needs in a number of respects. For instance, it identified a compensation framework that needs revamping and its proposal attempts to address this issue. It also identified the need for supplemental instructional time to address math, science, and reading gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(a) The district relies on Destination 2020 to satisfy this regulation. It proposes to add to this an effective approach to personalized learning in the form of blended learning and technological advances. This is cutting edge and is the most compelling part of the plan as it relates to learning. The plan also permits students to have deep learning experiences, with its Annual Capstone Projects. The plan could better address how the plan permits students to access and be exposed to diverse cultures.</p> <p>(b) The district proposes different "Flight Paths" that will assist students in pursuing individual goals. A "tracker" to this will help students receive ongoing feedback. Having students complete an annual project is an innovative method to allow students to pursue individual interests. The plan could have tightened the link between its accommodations and high-quality strategies for the various subgroups of high-needs students (homeless, foster needs, special needs)</p> <p>(c) The district is poised to offer a number of tools to track and manage learners trajectory and progress. These are available to both administrators, students and parents.</p> <p>In sum, the district has a well-organized plan of approach to learning that contains many promising components.</p> <p>High</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The District addresses this section by considering the quality of teachers it has serving its students. It is identifying and placing its high quality teachers where they are needed most through its <u>Strategic Staffing Initiative</u>. The district also is demonstrating attention to <u>finding</u> the right talent by ramping up its screening process. Moreover, the feedback/evaluation system provides both proper feedback and, importantly, time for a teacher to demonstrate competence. The district is right in adopting a model that attempts to spread the expertise and instructional leadership already within the district through its "Teacher Leadership Model, "as well as its innovative PD program (including spot observations, and on-demand resources).</p> <p>(b)(c) The Data Coaching Teams, specifically devoted to training with the use of data, address this subpart in an organized fashion. The plan includes processes and tools to match student needs with instruction (e.g., access to student data through database). The district's plan calls for the Data Coaching Team to analyze data for feedback and interpretation. In this way, the district is committed to continuous improvement and making data actionable. The plan calls for increasing the number of Data Coaches and Analysts thereby further deepen the use of the student information to improve achievement.</p> <p>(d) The district has embarked on a Strategic Staffing Initiative that is laudable but may be problematic. If it is accurate and they do intend to move the best teachers to the highest needs areas, then the district has embraced an innovative and effective approach to this subpart. However, embedded in this approach are serious potential unintended consequences. Shifting teachers around a district may be unsettling to teaching staff. It may create a culture whereby teachers perceive the potential reward of being a good teacher -- a placement in a very needy school -- as an improper motivator.</p>		

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 district deserves high marks here. From its representations in the application, the district has provided a governance structure in an important areas. These are:</p> <p>(a)-(b) Personnel -- The district has focused much of its governance energy on restructuring this Department, which is part of its central office team. This includes the adoption of a proactive recruitment strategy, as opposed to most traditional models that do not attempt to identify talent.. Here the district represents that it is establishing relationships with more non-traditional feeders of teachers that may have talent. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the district repeatedly uses the word "talent" with respect to these government revisions. The District also recently developed a School Leadership Department and through this department Executive Directors have been on campus more often, and have implemented weekly Data Progress Monitoring meetings in schools. This addresses subparts (a)-(b).</p> <p>(c) The Teaching and Learning Dept has also been revamped in important respects that support the District's work in implementing its curriculum reform. However, this could be spelled out in more detail (e.g., its relationship to credit earning, etc.) and subparts (c)-(d). It is somewhat questionable how the placement of an Executive Director over principals contributes to increased school leadership flexibility and autonomy, as the district contends.</p> <p>(d) The plan calls for individualized instructional strategies and the development of "Student Learning Paths," and Exploratory Elective courses that are designed to give students multiple ways to demonstrate mastery of subject area.</p> <p>(e) The district's plan for ELL learners could be accelerated and addressed in greater detail. At the moment, the district is conducting only Focus Groups to determining appropriate ELL models.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) There remains a question of access to the necessary tools and content that part of the plan calls for, particularly with respect to students and parents access to resources and tools <u>outside of school</u>. Given the demographics of this student population (low SES), issues of access to resources is particularly important.</p>		

(b) To the extent that plan provides technical support much more attention could be given to needs of parents here. Again, this is particularly important in this context, where the students and families are low SES.

(c) The application is lacking with respect to the link between information systems and exporting important data that may be relevant to other stakeholders, including parents, tutors, etc.

(d) The district does not give a sufficient discussion with respect to these subparts in this section. To some extent, the district suggests that it will develop partnerships with philanthropic/universities to address these needs and already has. This is the most questionable -- and difficult -- element of the plan. The application would benefit from more details here.

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 district appears to have its eye to the fact that things change -- and that data is one way to identify the need to change and the required change. The Destination 2020 plan incorporates "Key Targets," "Key Indicators" for instance to assess its work toward goals. The district represents that it has a relationship with the Gates and Dell foundation to integrate data. The plan also has a number of elements that suggest it is ready to assess and adjust when needed, such as "School process reviews." Yet a more thorough discussion on the public sharing of return on investments is needed.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has identified a number of mechanisms to relay information in a succinct and frequent manner. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quarterly newsletter, - A Strategic Action plan through its Family Relations Dept. that includes a component to increase engagement by developing a core group of parents. These parents, in turn, would provide a link between less-involved parents and the school. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has included measures that, to the extent it is possible, will provide important benchmark indication for success. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly effective teachers/principals. However, the proposed percentages of students with a highly effective teacher could be higher, given the importance of teacher quality on student achievement. - HS Graduation rate - The state standardized tests in math and reading. These provide a measure of performance as it relates to statewide peers. - Average daily attendance. <p>The number of measures included satisfies requirement (12-14) of this subsection.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district should be commended for its clear attention to measuring each reform effort as it relates to its goals. This is problematic because social science research <u>rarely, if ever</u> produces a cause-and-effect result. That said, the district has an approach (e.g., meeting of the core leadership to assess results) to attempt to measure the reform it proposes.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) Satisfied. The budget spells out the funds that it intends to use for this project.</p> <p>(b) Satisfied. The budgets appear reasonable and related to the goals of the proposal and individualized instruction.</p> <p>(c) Satisfied. The requests appear aligned to the needs of the district's proposal. The one-time investments are delineated, as are ongoing costs that would be incurred post-grant.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district acknowledges that sustainability is an elusive question, given the uncertain state of funding in public schools. This is a serious concern.</p> <p>The use of RTTD funds could promote sustainability in a number of ways. In particular, the RTTD funds appear to be used in many respects to implement more quickly the Destination 2020 plan that the District has committed itself to. The district assumes level funding in its projections as one way to suggest that the project will be sustained and implemented in the post-grant phase. Implementing this proposal district-wide will be expensive. Given the unknowns and the costs of spreading this program district-wide, there is doubt that the project will be sustained over time in the manner consistent with implementing the plan completely.</p> <p>The overall sustainability of supporting the positions required to satisfy this subpart is questionable, given the level funding assumption. The district offers a number of possible solutions (e.g., a school funding lawsuit). However, any remedy to that lawsuit would take years to realize, even if the suit would result in more funding to Dallas.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The district has described a sustainable partnership with outside organizations through TMZ. Importantly, and a good sign, is that this partnership is comprised of stable groups within the community, (e.g., Southern Methodist University, United Way). The SAM approach (wrap-around services, basically) is key to the success of the program, given the high needs of the district. T</p> <p>(2) Results include PSAT score, daily attendance rates improved.</p> <p>(3) With TMZ and SMU, the district has developed a protocol for data. It also proposes a scale up plan.</p> <p>(4) The description is included here and has citations to applicable research on the subject.</p> <p>(5) The SAM Team (the in school team) will be the linchpin of the connection between school and community resources. The application includes a detailed strategy here.</p> <p>(6) The district has developed and articulated goals in this area.</p> <p>In sum, the district is leveraging existing entities to develop an important program -- the SAM program -- that will complete the connection between school and community</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

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	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The priority is met. The district has demonstrated a commitment to a plan that has important components for personalizing instruction including: T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revamping its recruitment and retention plan for high quality teachers - Using data to design individual instruction - Leveraging community resources to connect school and community resources. It should be commended for its SAM proposal which recognizes that improved student performance relies in part on collaboration with outside social service providers. 		

Total	210	174
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is ambitious program that appears to have a good rate of success. This is a unique program that aims to increase students career and college-readiness through a Culinary Academy. The research on the program suggests that there is a high rate of success with respect to some of the goals of RTT-D. For instance, the program has a high correlation to increasing the graduation rate and sending students to post-secondary learning opportunities. The extent that it satisfies (1) could be addressed more fully, however.</p>		



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0847TX-3 for Dallas Independent School District

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>Dallas ISD detailed a comprehensive vision through Destination 2020 (to graduate all students college and career ready by 2020) by creating and building upon established systems to address the four core educational assurances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) District has adopted the Texas College and Career standards and piloting of College Readiness Indicator System and College Readiness Measurement Model; plans to establish an innovative goal to create a Career Readiness Certificate through a partnership of local agencies/stake holders and the LEA; 2) Plans to create a data system to aggregate and track student, teacher, and administration information; currently using 		

Parent Portal, Tracker, and MyData. Goal is detailed to increase use of these systems to track data and tie data to teacher effectiveness and teacher evaluation;

3) Recruit and retain effective teachers and principals: Comprehensive reform of evaluation system indicated to include career ladders, compensation for work in high-need areas, attainment of goals/milestones, and development of performance rubrics;

4) Turn around ineffective schools: Reorganization of staffing completed; innovative plan to establish a Student Advocacy Management team to address the non-academic issues of high need and/or at risk students through the use of community and school resources.

Applicant outlines a clear plan to personalize learning focused on the adopted college and career standards which will be monitored through aggregated student and teacher data. Overall this places Dallas ISD in the high range of the score. The applicant has clarity of vision and has articulated specific steps in attainment and support of the vision.

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

Dallas ISD has clearly identified the two feeder patterns anchored by two high schools which have been rated Academically Unsuccessful based on stated accreditation standards. All students will be included in the grant activities. These two feeder patterns were selected based on the lack of achievement and progress. Both feeder patterns include high-need students and low income families as documented in demographic data.

- Applicant has two feeder patterns selected based on the compilation of high-need students within each of these feeder patterns.
- Schools are clearly identified by name and demographic make-up which is inclusive of high-need students.
- Parents, students, and educators participated in meetings to voice their opinion of the goals of the proposal and demonstrated support for the proposal.
- While the two anchor high schools have similar data points of high-need students, they also provide a counterpoint to each other in their demographic make-up of students and communities surrounding the schools.

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

District outlines a clear, high quality plan for implementation.

- Identified the two priority feeder patterns based on achievement gaps.
- After year 1 implementation, additional feeder patterns will implement the goals of the proposal.
- Goals of the proposal will be managed as projects which will be measured for effectiveness, success, and modified as needed
- Initiative to be fully implemented within five years.

While Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 have attainable goals, Year 4 implementation of 19 additional feeder patterns is unrealistic when considering the scope of the proposed reform.

Identified goals are grouped as short-, mid-, and long-term goals with no guidance as to the time frame for these goals or if they are for only the time of the proposal or extend beyond the proposal.

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

Applicant describes a vision that will provide personalized learning to promote student achievement and growth while closing the achievement gap.

- Proposal focuses initially on high-priority feeder patterns which serve high-need students and over half of the district's economically disadvantaged students.
- Goals set for the two identified feeder patterns are ambitious yet achievable. If students in these two feeder patterns meet these goals, then significant narrowing of the achievement gap will be evidenced.
- Proficiency and growth on state examinations is based on percentage correct due to the transitioning to a new accountability test within the state. Goals are ambitious but achievable.
- Goals to decrease the achievement gap are achievable but not necessarily ambitious as decreases are of only one

percent each year.

- Graduation rates are clearly identified and goals set are achievable.
- College enrollment rates are clearly identified but the increments are consistent for all sub-groups and the gaps between remain constant even 5 years later.

Applicant does not clearly identify the state ESEA targets nor elaborate on the difference between current district data compared to state data.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant identifies strengths and success of the district inclusive of mandatory changes and voluntary changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated learning for students not passing state examinations • Extended year programs for struggling students • Development of curriculum guides • Establishment of learning communities <p>Applicant notes the results have been mixed with the implementation of changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of learning communities created a gap in vertical alignment • Highly prescribed curriculum guides did not allow for teacher autonomy to reach students based on their needs <p>Applicant demonstrates success in academic achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African American and Hispanic students passing math exams has steadily increased • Graduation rates improved 14.8 % in four years • AP enrollment and passing rates have increased <p>Applicant does not address specific measures used to turn around low-achieving schools beyond the reorganization of personnel mentioned in other sections.</p> <p>Applicant does specify how data is made available to students and parents. Applicant does discuss how advisors use data to help inform instructional decisions on behalf of the student.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant identifies several means by which it communicates information to the public and its stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Public Information Portal available from the district website. Portal includes annual operating budget, district expenditures, and contains links to individual school data • Individual school data is inclusive of payroll and nonpayroll costs by function <p>Applicant clearly demonstrates a clear level of transparency in providing information to the public and stakeholders through its publishing of costs, expenditures, and salaries.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant describes and demonstrates a clear authority to implement the changes and goals of this proposal.</p>		

- State department confers all authority for budgeting and operation of the school district to the LEA
- District has the responsibility to implement the state's system of public education and ensure student performance
- District can implement the proposed new evaluation system and compensation without state approval

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

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant clearly describes process by which administrator and teacher feedback was garnered.

- District officials presented goals of proposal
- Presentations and discussion sessions held
- Audience of educators surveyed for support and 90% pledged support
- It is not clear if all involved participants of this proposal were present and/or involved in the presentation

Applicant provides a robust compilation of support as evidenced through numerous letters from elected officials, higher education officials, businesses, community based organizations/nonprofits, charter schools, parents and community members.

Applicant does not declare how feedback was used to revise the grant proposal.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant describes a high quality plan for needs analysis which has taken place and identified key areas of weakness and plans to address those.

Applicant clearly identifies seven areas of need based on current comprehensive data analysis and plans to address each, which align to the overarching goals of the proposal.

1. Need for development and revision of a clear, specific, rigorous curriculum
 - On-going professional development needed to address disparities in teaching
 - Dissemination and adoption of methods used by highly effective teachers and principals
 - Development of Teacher Leader model
2. Additional supplemental materials, time, and training needed
 - Lack of uniform assessments has created need for mandatory common semester assessments
 - Training on current resources for teachers
 - Training on how to interpret and effectively use data which is currently collected
3. Involvement and engagement of parents and community
 - Develop new and enhance current partnerships with community members
4. Low post secondary enrollment of graduates
 - Increase number of on campus college advisors
 - Supplement Parent Portal to include college readiness levels
 - Introduction of career readiness certificate
5. Revision of compensation system to support recruitment/retention of highly effective teachers
 - Creation of Strategic Staffing Initiative
 - Inclusion of differentiated compensation for proficient teacher
6. Additional/specialized resources needed for instruction of high-need students and those of under-performing subgroups
 - Creation of the Student Advocacy Management model to track student progress and identify targeted resources to address specific needs
7. Personalized training for teachers to address use of quality, best practices for instruction.
 - Training on re-tooled evaluation system based upon student achievement

Training on intervention strategies based on individual student needs.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant outlines a high quality plan to personalize learning which is articulated through the grades concluding in students which are college and career ready.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle grades (grades 6-8) will participate in Exposure. Exposure will provide students information on numerous and varied careers and interests to expose students to opportunities which might be unknown as well as help students refine their learning goals. • In grade 6, students develop a Student Learning Plan (SLP) in conjunction with parents and teachers which will document learning styles, interests, and academics. SLP will be evaluated annually and revised as needed. • High school grades (grades 9-12) will participate in Flight Path. During the conclusion of grade 8, students will analyze the SLP to determine a course of study for high school unique to their interests, abilities, etc. • All grades 6-12 will involve a Capstone Project tied to the interests of the students. Student may continue and build upon project year to year or select a new one annually based on their evolving interests. <p>Applicant outlines several avenues by which students will receive support and their individual data will be analyzed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student advocates will be assigned in all grades 5-12 to meet individually with students and use data to assess and monitor progress. • Student Advocacy Management (SAM) model will be implemented on all campuses. High-need and at-risk students will be monitored by the SAM team and develop plan for wrapping resources around student. • Implementation of Small Learning Communities to provide strategic interdisciplinary instruction and interventions to students. • Students will participate in student-led conferences where students actively lead the discussion of their progress, strengths, weaknesses and data analysis with parents and teachers. <p>Applicant outlines multiple measures for reviewing and analyzing data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropout Early Warning System to alert educators of students who are failing. • On-track indicators to mark students at transitional grades who are on track for college readiness. • Parent Portal which provides real time data to parents and students on course enrollment and grading. • College and Career Readiness tracker for high school students to monitor accrual of credits toward goals. • Student Profile Reports to aggregate student data to teachers. • Counselor tracking and career cluster tracking to monitor progress of course requirements in respective areas. <p>Applicant describes plan to address time and availability of courses and instruction to students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening schools before and after normal instructional times to allow tutoring, conferences, and homework help. • Extended school year through the implementation of Jump Start--a one week voluntary participation program prior to start of the school year--for review of content • Implementation of Saturday and Summer school to ensure the academic support for students who are not on grade level in reading and math. <p>It is unclear how needs or accommodations for high-need students will be addressed beyond the measures being offered to all students through this proposal; however, the applicant does denote that the overwhelming majority of high needs students for the district are encompassed within the two targeted feeder patterns.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant outlines a comprehensive strategic staffing initiative inclusive of training, evaluation, and assessment of its employees.</p>		

- Revised staffing selection process which will place the best educators in the most needed areas.
- Implementation of new evaluation system which will be based on performance and achievement.
- Development of new hiring protocol for staff to include streamlined hiring process.
- Differentiated compensation system for schools participating in proposal to fast track teacher pay a year ahead of peers; compensation based on evaluation.
- Implementation of Teacher Leadership Model so that master level teachers can share with peers successful practices.
- For feeder patterns participating in the proposal, targeted, frequent professional development to be provided based upon needs of schools, students, and teachers.
- Utilization of Grand Rounds which will provide for teachers to observe peers in action.
- Development of data based decision making for instructional measures.

Applicants' aggressive staffing plan focuses primarily on increasing the number of highly effective teachers employed so as to advance the achievement of students and close the achievement gap.

Professional development is addressed only in general terms and does not clearly outline the measures by which educators will be informed of optimal learning approaches and/or how those approaches will be determined.

Other than the teacher evaluation system which does include some feedback, there is not a clear on-going method for providing feedback to teachers on how they are progressing toward the goals of the proposal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>After the appointment of a new superintendent, the LEA has undergone significant reorganization of the central office such that its focus is on supporting principals and teachers. There is evidence of a clear chain of command with sufficient support provided to individual schools from various departments and assignment of executive directors over schools.</p> <p>Applicant does not address the flexibility, autonomy or authority individual schools have in regards to the implementation of the goals of this proposal. Only the assignment of an executive director is mentioned and it is unclear if this position is under the authority of the LEA or over the individual school to support autonomy.</p> <p>Applicant does not address how students earn credit based on mastery.</p> <p>Applicant does not indicate there are multiple times or ways to demonstrate mastery of standards.</p> <p>Applicant only briefly addresses English language learners and does not offer any substantial evidence as to how resources or practices will be adaptable and accessible.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant does not address this criteria sufficiently and only provides primarily a synopsis of proposal goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant states its technology infrastructure is outdated and cannot support the goals of this proposal in its current state. • Technical support for users is only mentioned for teachers; not parents or students. • The availability of content, tools and resources is addressed in a limited fashion through a description of current technology tools available for use in the classroom. • Use of technology systems to export information is not addressed. • Use of interoperable data systems is not addressed specifically in this section but is alluded to in the creation of a platform for data integration in section E. <p>Applicant briefly describes use of data systems but there is no evidence that information can be exported in an open format.</p> <p>A limited description of what learning tools, content, and resources is provided but is limited to only the classroom; it is unclear to what degree or how these resources are available outside of the context of the school.</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>Applicant outlines four methods by which to evaluate progress and use the information collected to adjust/revise/improve the goals of the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of formative and summative data to monitor student achievement and growth; data to be included in evaluation system • Use of data to determine value added for the making of budgetary decisions, staffing, and instructional practices • On-going evaluations of curriculum, instruction, and assessment through the use of Plan-Do-Check-Act • Alignment of professional development through the implementation of the Teacher Leadership Model <p>Applicant does not address how information garnered from the above will be communicated to the public; presently only the academic achievement which is a result of the proposal will be posted on the district's website.</p> <p>Applicant does identify a quality plan by which to assess on-going continuous improvement, however it lacks sufficient evidence to how the information will be communicated to the public.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant clearly identifies and describes multiple avenues by which to communicate progress of the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Community Advocate for Public Education comprised of parents, community stakeholders, and educators • Biweekly e-newsletter sent to stakeholders • Formal communications to media agents and internal staff • Improved use of Parent Portal by parents • Development of Parent University to address issues pertinent to parents <p>Measures of communication are high quality and varied so as to provide stakeholders with information of grant proposal.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant describes clear and concise performance measures which address the academic achievements and non-cognitive indicators which are in alignment with the goals of the proposal.</p> <p>Measures utilize achievement on state assessment, attendance, post-secondary enrollment, graduation, and completion of FAFSA.</p> <p>Applicant does not address how the measures will be monitored over time or adjusted if need is demonstrated.</p> <p>Performance measures and targets are reasonable and achievable.</p> <p>Incremental increases are doubled for participating schools as compared to the average performance of other schools within the district with limited rationale provided.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant identifies a process to take place annually to review the effectiveness of the implementation of the goals of this proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Leadership Team to meet at the conclusion of year 1 implementation to analyze all summative data and effect of each on the goals of the reform • Interviews of teachers, leaders, and administrators for information on effect of implementation and thoughts on 		

effectiveness

- Use of funds to create an internal process and impact evaluation to monitor implementation for fidelity and verify short/long term impact

While applicant does outline a process, specific evaluation criteria tied to the goals of the reform are not described.

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>Applicant outlines a clear and comprehensive budget detailing one-time expenditures and specific goals each expenditure supports.</p> <p>Expenditures are reasonable and sufficient to support the proposal's goals inclusive of one time expenditures for high start-up costs in projects as well as staffing to oversee and implement components of the proposal.</p> <p>Expenditures align with goals to provide sufficient professional development for staff.</p> <p>Revenue and funds outside of the grant have been identified for specific goals.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant acknowledges that portions of the RTTT-D are difficult to sustain due to the unpredictable nature of school budgeting but describes alternatives to sustain the goals of the grant pending the outcomes of current court/school board cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of RTTT-D funds will be used for one-time high start-up costs • Possible settlement of lawsuit which could result in increased funding for the district • Approval by school board for additional general funds to sustain grant initiatives <p>While the applicant does acknowledge the difficulties in sustaining the grant, the applicant does not demonstrate any concrete measures of continuing the financial support of the goals across the district.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant describes a comprehensive approach to partnering with The School Zone (TSZ) , a partnership of over 20 non-profit community and business organizations to promote and implement the proposed goal of Student Advocacy Management (SAM).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships will address and target the areas of increased early childhood opportunities, support of teaching and learning, and provision of social sector resources to parents. • Partnerships, through SAM, will identify wrap-around services to address the individual and targeted needs of students. <p>Goals of the partnership are aimed to address academic and non-academic factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in retention rates • Reduction in discipline referrals • Improved student attitudes and behaviors • Increase in school sponsored and non-school sponsored activities • Increasing post-secondary plans or career initiation 		

Partnership has developed a data system to measure and collect data on the impact of the partnership.

- Data system will include formative and summative measures.
- Data system will longitudinally track student information and cohorts.
- Data system will include measures to track quality of neighborhood and community engagement and resources.

The community stakeholder involvement in SAM, in-home, in-school, and in-community resources will be aggregated to provide specific support targeted to the needs of the individual student.

Performance measures are ambitious, yet achievable, and align with the goals of the grant to support its implementation and achievement. Populations targeted explicitly by the measures include targeted sub-groups who have historically been identified as high-need or at risk.

Applicant outlines a well-thought out plan for partnerships, measurements for the success of the partnerships, and how these align with the proposal's goal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Applicant describes goals which focus on improving teaching practices and increasing the number of highly effective teachers available to students while at the same time increasing student achievement and growth, narrowing the achievement gap, and advancing students toward college and career readiness upon graduation. Through a comprehensive, district-wide plan named Destination 2020, the applicant outlines how it plans to accelerate the achievement of the goals of this initiative in two strategic, high-need feeder patterns years ahead of the planned timeline. Included with both the initiative Destination 2020 and the goals of the proposal are several key actions: improving the quality of instruction, developing instructional leaders, new evaluation system tied to student achievement, and creation of a career ready certificate. The comprehensive plan outlines personalized learning which truly takes hold beginning in middle school with the development of the SLP which carries through high school. The performance goals and targets, once achieved, will demonstrate tremendous growth and a narrowing of the achievement gap.

Total	210	168
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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:

Applicant describes a rationale for supporting and enhancing a plan that is currently in place and has demonstrated a successful trajectory.

- Culinary arts program has a great success rate of graduates enrolling in post-secondary coursework and remaining in the field ten years after graduation.
- Established partnerships will allow current program to be reinvented to target the needs of today's student and expectations of the current work place.

Grant funding would allow the vision for the culinary program to be expanded and fully implemented allowing students who declare this as an interest during the SLP the opportunity to fully participate and pursue this career while maintaining academic achievement.

Many of the budgetary requests are one-time expenditures which are relatively high start-up costs for a school to incur and

would be unlikely without the aid of a grant.

Overall the applicant demonstrates a high quality plan to build upon and enhance a currently successful initiative which will help to also further goals of the proposal.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0847TX-4 for Dallas Independent School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A comprehensive and coherent reform vision was submitted. DISD has envisioned its own, courageous reform agenda, named Destination 2020. With the assistance of RTTT-D funding, it aims to shorten the improvement cycle from eight years (2020) to a more ambitious four years (2016) and will serve all schools within eight years.

DISD made a judicious effort to identify and address the primary areas of concern that it has identified as hindrances to their success (i.e. framework for addressing assets, interests, and needs of each student), heretofore, but will pave a precise path to its success through a No Excuses model.

DISD responded specifically to each of the four core educational assurance areas as follows:

(1) DISD pioneered a rigorous College Readiness Indicator System and a College Readiness Measurement Model that encompass the State's planned indicators. A self-assessment tool was administered to secondary students to gauge their college- and career-readiness. The district will launch two new college- and career-readiness initiatives and create a rigorous, customized learning trajectory for secondary students that is tied to students' interests, abilities, and choices. These efforts will be sustained by the student's continuous investment in their future. College- and career-readiness partnerships with Dallas-area employers and the Dallas Chamber of Commerce will be established to ensure career readiness for occupations in demand in the greater Dallas area. The 4-year curriculum plan is attached.

(2) Technology for elementary and secondary students and teachers will be upgraded for meaningful digital learning in all classrooms and for expanding the capacity for the student data system. The system will facilitate data-based decision-making by teachers, principals, parents, and students. Training will be offered on the performance dashboards and related tools for monitoring student growth from pre-school through 12th grade and on to college. A standard design for technology in the classroom is included in the budgetary addenda.

Data systems that measure student growth and success include the Parent Portal, the College and Career Readiness Tracker, and MyData Portal for Teachers, principals, and administrators.

(3) DISD plans are quite innovative in that it is moving away from traditional evaluation systems where everyone is compensated identically based on credentialing and years of service. To the contrary, it will administer a merit-based system that correlates to effectiveness of performance. The new evaluation system is grounded in individual performance plans for staff with corresponding rubrics and a compensation structure. Moreover, all teachers will be placed on one-year renewable contracts. Staff who select assignment in Strategic Feeder Patterns which include significantly distressed neighborhoods where the highest need populations are, will be rewarded with the opportunity for accelerated advancement.

(4) Strategic Feeder Pattern schools will receive attention with non-cognitive interventions that affect resistance to student achievement. For instance, DISD will implement a Student Advocacy Management that will afford a team of professionals at each school the opportunity to advocate for high-needs students. This work is in support of the good work of teachers. This individualized, holistic approach to meeting students' social-emotional needs includes wraparound services that will assist up to two-thirds of the students on each campus, each year.

The following were included as addendum items:

- >An extensive plan for Destination 2020 along with charts and diagrams.
- >Various charts for meeting district goals.
- >Sample rubrics for effective teaching and leadership.

Weaknesses:

It was appropriate to include an implementation schedule; this one only included the named initiative, which part of the district would be affected, and the strategic feeder patterns. However, the implementation schedule was not completely SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely). Although it seems to be a credible plan and appears achievable and realistic, it omitted measurable deliverables and responsible parties. While there is a plan for staff development, district and building leadership development were inauspiciously omitted.

As this plan aspires to serve the lowest performing high schools, not as much detail was provided about how the district would be proactive in engaging early childhood and middle grades to shore up the district's identified challenges that prohibit historical and generational resistance to school achievement. Also the specific Limited English Proficient and special education groups might be assumed in the stated populations to be served but were not named.

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

DISD's first priority is to improve the educational opportunities of the students with the highest needs which is the foundation for identification of the Strategic Feeder Patterns. A sense of urgency has been established to specifically include significantly distressed neighborhoods.

A chart of the schools that will participate in grant activities was included. The two specifically targeted high schools have less than three-quarters of their students who graduate within four years; their daily attendance is below 90%. Targeted U.S.Census data were provided for these schools including the population of the areas, number of African American and Hispanic residents, median income, high school diploma rates, and residents living below poverty. Such data support the district's decision that all students in these two schools will participate in and benefit from the proposed RTTT-D reforms.

Although not listed in this portion of the application, the number of students that will be served is documented in A1 and totals 14,729 with 89.4% low income and 68.3% as at-risk or high-needs students.

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

10

9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Dallas ISD has designated two Strategic Feeder Patterns in which to initiate the plans of this RTTT-D proposal during school year 2013-14. The District will identify at least two additional Strategic Feeder Patterns for implementation in each of the three remaining school years during the life of the grant. An evaluation of school and teacher performance data will be used to determine the Strategic Feeder Pattern rollout, with lowest performing feeder patterns prioritized for earlier implementation. Eventually, an additional 19 feeder patterns will be affected. This plan is clear on who will participate and which order students have access to its advantages. The target of the schools with the highest needs in the first year is laudable and the gradual inclusion of two additional schools over the course of the grant seems reasonable. The hope that 19 additional schools will be eventually affected appears ambitious but without a timeline for it, just how aggressive or plausible the plan is could not be ascertained.

Each facet of the Strategic Feeder Pattern Initiative will be managed as a project and measured for effectiveness, evaluated for success, and modified based on lessons learned. Each initiative will be scaled across the District based on a project plan, timeline, and implementation protocol that will be most beneficial to the students. All successful initiatives will be scaled up district-wide within five years.

The Logic Model calls for change in the first two Strategic Feeder Patterns for the four-year contract period. The Theory of Change is to hire the right people and prepare them to participate in the great mission of this era, for the students with the greatest needs. It is comprehensive and reasonable.

A chart of how the district's efforts would be scaled up was submitted that included Inputs, Activities, and Outputs along with Short-Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term Outcomes. The blueprint was, in large measure, high quality and credible in that it offered engagement at each organizational stratum and prescribed goals along with deliverables, and responsible parties. The plan was absent definitions for the time frames associated with short-, middle-, and long-term. Without such clarifications, it is difficult to determine whether the urgency purported in the proposal is borne out in the schedule.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

As proposed in A3, the district names the schools in the order they will participate in the proposal's initiatives. The narrative asserts an ambitious plan of aspiring toward the highest college- and career-ready percentage of graduates of any large urban district in the nation. DISD hopes to significantly redefine student achievement expectations for large urban districts. The projected gains are particularly impressive given the fact that the participating schools contain 54.7% more economically disadvantaged students and 43.0% more high-risk students than the State's average. The specific target population is that of the initial strategic feeder schools and those that will be identified in the future which also account for significant subgroups.

The proposal also provides strategies for improving student learning and for increasing equity. Moreover, it articulates goals for decreasing the achievement gap which includes the following actions: DISD plans to minister to the whole child by implementing the Student Advocacy Management model that would serve to alleviate many of the distractions that derail students within and outside of school. It intentionally structured the impact of Destination 2020 to ripple far beyond high school graduation by increasing attainment of a postsecondary degree or a Career Ready Certificate. It is creating opportunities for students to identify and pursue areas of personal academic interest by establishing an aligned instructional arc from 6th through 12th grade that promotes each student's college- and career-readiness. The plan calls for engaging parents and the community in school reform.

This section of the proposal does not speak to whether their specific goals will be equal to or exceed State ESEA targets. However it lays out the performance on summative assessments, graduation rates, and college enrollment, in addition to the predicted outcomes of the future, all by subgroup.

While the district predicts increases in performance of each subgroup, the gaps between the groups are not documented with

the promise of decreasing; this problematic in that one of the main thrusts of this funding is for the purposes of closing the preparation gap between groups.

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	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Named the most improved district of Texas in 2010, DISD has implemented a variety of programs, over the last few years, to increase student achievement. The outcomes have mixed. The proposal included a data table to verify some improvements in math and science learning for African Americans and Hispanics, as well as gains in advanced placement enrollment and pass rates and graduation rates. The combined value of the advisors, improved methods, and better prepared instructional and support staff is reflected in consistent gains by DISD students in all grades, but particularly in low-performing schools like the target schools.

The District introduced new resources designed to support students in preparing for entry exams and to assist their parents in planning for and completing the college admission and financial aid processes. Partnerships have been established with Academic Success Program, Education is Freedom, and the Princeton Review. Advisors from these organizations who help to facilitate college access are present on DISD high school campuses. Advisors review student performance data, existing services, and best practices as well as build the capacity of campus staff to design and deliver a curriculum that supports college readiness. The advisors also diagnose and provide assistance in overcoming obstacles to college admission that are commonly experienced by first generation. The Career Ready Certificate will launch from and enhance the currently strong Career Technology Education orientation and also will align to the requirements of the National Academy Foundation's Certification. In essence, DISD's certificate-holders will be deemed eligible for positions in the national workforce which is progress.

Weaknesses:

In the reporting of the success and failures of Destination 2020 which is the framework of this proposal, some of the greatest pitfalls pertain to the very issues that are outlined as being critical for success in this proposal. Such issues include maintenance of the requisite relationships for the feeder patterns, the stability of an effective teaching staff, success on the college entrance exam, and vitality in community trust and partnerships. With the vision, strategies, and accountability of Destination 2020, DISD is expanding its capacity to transform good intentions into results. However, the last four years do not totally corroborate this desire.

This section is also weak in terms of making student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and/or services.

The proposal only mentioned the use of district and state-required assessments to measure progress.

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

By way of its website, DISD offers a great degree of transparency. For example, it posts its operational budget, General Fund

Budget, Payroll and Non-Payroll Costs on the website. The public can view PDF copies of the monthly check register which covers all district expenditures that are not protected under FERPA. The district offers customized presentations of information, upon request. Costs per student are available and the public can make school-to-school comparisons. Finally, the Texas Education Agency website details teacher salary information by campus and district, including average salary by tenure.

It is possible that community members who live on the other side of the digital divide may be left out of the information loop. In a district that also has a hearty population of families that do not necessarily speak English, ensuring transparency among non-English speaking families and community members is equally important.

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

The DISD Texas has the primary and general authority to provide for the education of students within its geographic boundaries, according to the conveyed Texas Education Code. Trustees are granted the power to adopt policies and procedures to carry out their responsibilities for which the superintendent is held accountable. In essence, the Board of Trustees of DISD has the authority and sufficient autonomy to enact the changes proposed in this application.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Central office administrators introduced all planned initiatives to those who would be most called upon to implement this proposal - teachers, principals, and staff in the Strategic Feeder Pattern schools. This introduction was, reportedly, made in a presentation. The reviewer was unable to discern who was invited to the presentation or the number of staff who attended the presentation. Although the number of the respective teachers, principals, and staff who qualified to attend is unclear, 870 teachers were surveyed about this proposal. The district also conducted a series of focus groups with 60-70 district teachers, administrators, and local stakeholders to obtain their input on the rubric design. The proposal does not speak to the number of building administrators who were engaged in this process. Of course, their buy-in would be critical to the success of this plan. Also, the plan did not offer clarity on the range or spectrum of local stakeholders. On a positive note, 90% of those who were surveyed pledged their support. This group, reportedly, understands the proposed changes to the evaluation and compensation systems.

A plethora of support letters were included from a variety of societal pillars to include politicians, not for profit community based organizations, advocacy groups, the business community, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, charter and parochial schools, health-based organizations, parent letters or signatures and letters from other community members.

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

The said district, reportedly, examined current instructional practices in the district as well as student performance results attributable to those practices. Recent student achievement on the state-mandated State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were the support for this needs-assessment. Indeed an excellent job was done on identifying its current standing and the logic behind the reform proposal.

A district-wide data analysis points to the need for supplemental materials, instructional time, and staff training in the areas of mathematics, reading, and science. Low postsecondary matriculation rates by DISD graduates indicate the need for increased student access to and parental awareness of higher education opportunities. Moreover, DISD's current compensation management framework does not support the recruitment or retention of highly effective educators or principals.

Disaggregated student achievement data indicate that specialized resources and instructional supplements are required if DISD is to effectively address barriers to learning for high need students, including Hispanic, Limited English Proficient, African-American, special education, and at-risk students. The work proposed in this application will advance the district's capacity to address one or more of these student, family, and community needs.

The district realizes its need to shore up the involvement and engagement of parents and the community by addressing the communication needs of nonEnglish speaking families and residents.

Although not addressed in this section, a high quality plan has been presented in other sections of the proposal that would afford implementation of a personalized learning environment to address the identified needs and gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has adopted a definition for personalized learning environment which includes the personal needs and relationships of the student and the corresponding school practices. As defined, the personalized learning environment is the center piece of the success of this proposal.

A Student Learning Plan will empower students to participate in the design of their learning trajectory and foster the mastery of critical thinking skills like making and assessing decisions, managing time, and persisting in a course of study until the end goal is reached. These meta skills are aligned with the mastery of the critical academic content requested in the application. A sample skills inventory is attached.

To ensure college- and career-readiness, DISD will employ the Career Cluster Tracking system to offer choice based on student proclivities. It will accelerate learning through the Secondary Student Trajectory which includes a Student Learning Plan for 6th graders, Exposure for middle school students, Flight Path for high school students, and Annual Capstones.

Other efforts to specifically address the needs of high-needs students include accelerating learning by extending the academic year and through offering summer and Saturday school. Longer school days will be available to secondary schools with before and after school services for student academic achievement and socio-emotional support. All are intended to personalize learning by identifying students' interests, assets, and needs in order to offer relevant choices that lead to college and career readiness. These efforts entail student-led conferences, student advocates for each student, and the use of the Student Advocacy Management model and Small Learning Communities. Parent communication and awareness are involved in these efforts.

Depending on the pathways that students select, students may have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. With a diverse student population this could be surmised, although not guaranteed.

A technology inventory and budget was submitted to support a 3-year plan to address technological deficiencies. Areas to shore up include universal student and family access to the internet in all homes and online instruction for hard to staff courses that would afford greater equity and access.

The district is planning for a user-friendly data platform that can be easily accessed by students, parents, and teachers to determine progress toward standards mastery and graduation requirements. Specific initiatives to be employed are Student Profile Reports, Dropout Early Warning System and On-Track Indicators that will provide principals and teachers with information on students' progress. The Counselor Tracking system will be available for counselors while the Parent Portal is for parents and the Career Cluster Tracking and College- and Career-Readiness Tracker is for students. With this comprehensive approach, the key players in student success are aware of student progress. An additional strength of this plan is that a Director of Evaluation and Accountability will be responsible for monitoring the data framework.

The weaknesses are that a high-quality plan was not included and the narrative did not offer information about the depth of student learning experiences or the high-quality instructional approaches of teachers. This section mostly addressed the systems and factors that typically serve as hindrances to learning. The process of learning and how to deepen it are addressed better in other sections.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A teacher leadership model will be implemented throughout the district to capitalize on the expertise of seasoned teachers. DISD will offer peer coaching, spot observations, and on-demand professional development resources. In fact, a new professional development plan will specifically target novice teachers, those who are new to their grade level or content area, and those who are struggling. These teachers will be accommodated with flexible schedules to shore up their pedagogical skills. Principals will be developed and expected to serve as Instructional Leaders. The district will also hire additional Assistant Principals for Curricula.

Improve in instruction with increased capacity to support student progress will also be supported by the Strategic Staffing Initiative which was designed to recruit and retain highly effective teachers and principals in every Strategic Feeder Pattern school in hopes of contributing to all of the proposed outcomes of this proposal. In addition to working with its current personnel, DISD will also reach out to college and university teacher preparation programs as well as nontraditional programs such as Teach for America and UTeach.

Measures to stay abreast of student progress include comprehensive, action-oriented data tools that will be available to DISD teachers, principals, parents and students. Data coaching teams will also be available to help.

A new teacher evaluation system will be employed for the targeted schools. Using an evaluation metric, teachers will be assessed to determine if they are effective. If they are not performing up to expectation, they will be removed from the Strategic Feeder Schools so that a critical mass of effective teachers is in place for the students with the highest needs. While this is an honorable plan to ensure that high performing teachers are serving high-needs students, one wonders if this might trigger a voluntary mass exodus of teachers, leaving the targeted schools completely shorthanded. For new, prospective teachers, the district is giving due diligence to screening for the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions. A career ladder with parallel merit pay has been established. An organization chart was included as an addendum. The system will be evaluated and tweaked, over time.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

With this proposal come a new superintendent, two new trustees, and significant reorganization of the entire central office. Also, the new School Leadership Department has varying positions that pertain to human capital management. To date, it is showing benefits to students by working more closely with principals to quickly and effectively respond to student needs. In addition, every executive director has implemented weekly Data Progress Monitoring meetings to work with principals on thoughtfully analyzing data and planning strategic responses to evident trends. The district is also in the process of revamping all relevant operational practices, policies, and rules, demonstrating sufficient flexibility and autonomy for important matters pertaining to school operations.

Information gleaned from bilingual and dual-language focus groups will be used to serve respective students. Students with disabilities were not mentioned in this section but were address otherwise.

Weaknesses of this section pertain to:

>Not addressing the opportunity for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways

>There was much discussion about the work between the district and its building principals but not much discussion about the autonomy that principals have to tweak practices, as needed.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, the district reiterated its commitment to personalized learning environments. It restated its plans to upgrade existing infrastructure, purchase the content required for meaningful digital learning in all classrooms, and build out the current high-capacity student data system to facilitate data-based decision-making by teachers, principals, parents, and students. Staff will receive training on the technology as well as training in monitoring student growth from pre-school through 12th grade as they chart their way to college.

The technology will also be used to address unique challenges of DISD including a long-standing achievement gap for African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, and special education student. Technology will help to alleviate the inadequate and inconsistent availability of personalized learning approaches and tools in the classrooms and the insufficiencies associated with college- and career-readiness.

This section did not speak to the engagement of parents although some parental engagement has been addressed in other parts of the proposal.

The district touches on how technology would be used to export information in an open data format and how it would use interoperable data systems throughout the proposal, just not in a very detailed manner here.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Continuous improvement for ongoing corrections and improvements is the goal for all schools and departments within DISD's District leadership. This commitment extends to the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent, department leaders in central office and to school principals.

Both central office and campus leadership staff have committed to Destination 2020 which is DISD's strategic plan to ensure standardized, continuous improvement activities that will address, monitor, and measure (through human and technological means) the use of formative and summative data, integrated, multi-factorial data, school process reviews, and professional development.

The plan speaks to implementation and adjustments based on the summative data and mentions the gathering of regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

Although the plan speaks to transparency in operations, budgets, salaries, and so forth in B2, how the quality of its investments will be publicly shared is not addressed in this section regarding matters such as professional development and

technology. Again, the district has not made evident widespread consistency regarding its communication to family and community members who are far removed from the luxury of mainstream media and technologies.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders include well-developed, multiple channels of communication to external stakeholders and various media agents. Such outreaches include the Community Advocates for Public Education program, biweekly e-newsletters, formal communications to media agents in addition to communications with internal staff, at least once per semester. The extent of reach to parents include the Parent Resource and Empowerment Program of which the aforementioned Parent Portal is part. The district will also engage core parent groups on each of the targeted campuses.

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

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, the rationale for the performance measures is embedded in the Destination 2020 undertaking.

The plan echoed the previously mentioned Strategic Staffing Initiative and a rigorous, customized learning trajectory for secondary students. It also spoke to the technological advances for staff and primary and secondary students and the plans to diminish distractions to attending, learning, and achieving.

DISD will monitor semester-by-semester changes in each of the performance indicators so that the point people of the theory of action (i.e. teachers) will know how to improve student performance. Charts to measure performance were included. The community would be apprised of the district's progress.

Aggressive improvement over the life of the grant is expected and appears attainable for FAFSA completion. Even more aggressive improvement is anticipated after the life of the grant. The huge increase in the year after the grant appears lofty and unfounded. For some grades and outcomes, aggressive improvement is expected while only gradual improvement for others. Further explanation is needed for justification.

Overall, the district maintains its convictions to close the long-standing achievement gap for African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, and special education students and is, therefore, more widely adopting evidence-based personalized learning strategies that will lead students to a higher level of college- and career-readiness.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The continuous improvement for the noted performance measures will be employed through formerly referenced initiatives such as the new Strategic Staffing Initiative, a customized learning trajectory for secondary students, technology upgrades, and the Student Advocacy Management Model

Several major reforms will be installed simultaneously in Year One. This comprehensive analysis will inform staffing, resources, and process changes in Year Two and beyond to sustain and build upon successes or to address challenges. In

Years Two through Five, as all reforms are implemented across the District, major performance improvements are projected for all DISD schools and all student subgroups. The goals are ambitious but seem attainable with incremental progress.

There is some concern about the declaration of “a direct causal relationship” for change as opposed to the likelihood of and potential for change occurring because of the district’s effort.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget seems reasonable and sufficient. The majority of the requested funding is in support of key initiatives proposed (i.e. Strategic Staffing Initiatives, Customized Learning Trajectory for Secondary Students, technology, and Student Advocacy Management, etc.). The plan addressed spending for targeted schools versus district-wide allocations. It also addressed primary and secondary/other criteria and justification for funding in addition to the total requested versus the total budgeted amount, including district and community partnership contributions. The budget gave grant period details, defining the start and end dates for the grant budget years that align with the grant start and end dates. In general, the rationale speaks to whether the requests are one-time versus recurring expenses.</p> <p>As stated before, the first eight months of the RTTT-D project period (January through August) will be spent planning the initiatives and developing customized work plans that will be used to direct staffing, training, and the purchase of technology and related supports. Thereafter, the initiatives will be implemented first within the two high-needs high school and then expanded throughout the district over time. As evidence, screen shots were provided for Current Grant Funding at the Strategic Feeder Patterns Schools.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although DISD does not necessarily have a high-quality plan for sustainability, it is considering options. For instance, there is a possibility that the project manager position might be absorbed into the Destination 2020 budget. The district is hopeful of community philanthropy, the possible gains from the judgment of a law suit against the state, and the possibility that the board could approve an increase of the fund balance to sustain the efforts of this proposal for three years following the grant ending date.</p> <p>One of the creative ways the district is attempting to address sustainability is through the creation of new senior positions that would lead to increased functionality at lower level positions. It is also considering the creation of investment funds that have potential for exponential growth results. However, all of these measures are speculative and not fail-safe. Besides, support from State and local government leaders, and others is not for certain.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district is continuing with established partnerships in the community to help with the Student Advocacy Management model to help implement an extension of the school day and learning for high-need students, and with fostering the resiliency</p>		

required for high school students to graduate on time with college- and career readiness.

Named partners include SMU, the City of Dallas, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, The School Zone and 20 non-profit community-based providers. All will be engaged in the West Dallas neighborhoods around Pinkston High School. They will address affordable homes, high quality schools, accessible health care, and a mix of employment opportunities. They, along with the district, hold a shared vision of excellent schools, safe affordable neighborhoods, and a vibrant economy. The driving theory of change is to provide a coordinated and targeted set of evidence-based interventions that engage parents in their children’s development from birth to college, increase early childhood educational opportunities, support teaching and learning, and provide families with a network of social sector resources. The theory of action is to build a community-wide scaffold of supports for students and their families and to improve the quality of leadership and teaching at all schools that feed into Pinkston High School.

The plan calls for monitoring important student, school, and student learning skills. The Special Projects Officer will organize and conduct focus groups with parents and community residents in the Strategic Feeder Patterns to ascertain the types and degrees of challenges (e.g., economics, transportation, truancy prevention, social-emotional issues). The progress and impact of the Student Advocacy Management approach in the Pinkston feeder pattern will be evaluated by school data as well as by focus group interviews surveys. Data will be used to target resources that will improve results for participating students, with special emphases on students facing significant challenges (i.e. students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty, family instability, or other child welfare issues). The district will expand the existing data sharing system which integrates student-level and family-level data to monitor academic and familial needs and quantify the influence of each service or intervention for Strategic Feeder Pattern schools.

DISD and SMU have partnered in the development of a data system that measures and reports the collective impact of The School Zone in West Dallas in general, and students in the Pinkston feeder pattern specifically. The system has been developed to longitudinally track student cohorts from kindergarten until graduation. It will also track some of the social supports and will seek to quantify their impact on student performance. In addition, it will track three indicators that address the quality of neighborhood and community engagement and resources. DISD has received significant support from Dallas’ philanthropic community to establish and expand enabling data systems. It is already receiving benefits that pertain to literacy, technology, and science. Partnerships in this community appear to be well established. The one apparent drawback is that partnerships for the other high school and its community are not yet in place. They would have a great model but that school will need equally sufficient community partnerships.

The RTTT-D funding will be utilized to minimize educational distractions and to help with family outcomes of all students in the district. However, the other results primarily focus on students in Grade 8 and beyond. While the plan is ambitious and achievable, a scant timeframe was provided. Nonetheless, the performance measures chart outlined gradual increase over time. While the year-to-year improvement goals appear modest, the long-term goals anticipate anywhere from 11 points to as much as 32 points, over the life of the grant. The greatest gains are anticipated in graduation rates for English language learners. Perhaps there should be an explanation for why this group of students is expected to outpace all other student groups. What is more, similar strategies were not suggested for similar gains among the other student groups.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a coherent and comprehensive plan to address 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.

Well-defined, draft organizational charts that support accountability for key responsibility areas were laid out in the proposal (i.e. school leadership, teaching and learning, college and career readiness, special education, professional development, compliance, etc.).

Participating students are 89.4% low income and 68.3% at-risk or high-needs. The district shows ambition the high-needs children in several ways. It is cultivating a culture of staff members who have a commitment to all children and a commitment to the pursuit of excellence. The district has plans to close a long-standing achievement gap for African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, and special education students, and significantly increase personalized learning and college- and career readiness for all students. It aspires to have the highest college- and career-ready percentage of graduates of any large urban district in the nation. It aspires to redefine and raise expectations for student achievement in large urban districts and among historically underserved students with programs that can be modeled throughout the nation.

The district is poised to address its primary challenges and build upon its assets as well as to implement new personalized learning methodologies, especially those that diminish distractions to attending, learning, and achieving that are common among economically disadvantaged and high-needs students.

The initiatives will be implemented first within the two schools with the highest needs and then expanded. Allowing for a pilot program will help to identify implementation challenges and address them before taking the model to scale district-wide.

The case for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, increasing equity through personalized student support, and affording at-risk students the opportunity to achieve at the same rate as all others has been made.

Total	210	174
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The district aspires to use supplemental funding for a culinary arts program in one of the targeted, high-needs schools of the original proposal. The approach for the program would include the tenets of a research-based, best practices model (National Academies Foundation for career academies) with high engagement and the health of the community at heart. Modeled after national programs it would provide internships, career mentorships, and dual-credit course options. This program would maintain the vision, the mission, and the various student-friendly approaches that have been highlighted in the main proposal (i.e. Student Advocacy Management Network).

The program is too new to have collected data as it just began this year; however, national outcomes for such programs are commendable offering (i.e. 97% graduation rates, 80% going on to college, and 85% of 5 and 10-year alumni working in the field).

The budget seems reasonable and sufficient. The budget includes the items that would help to strengthen the current program with enviable features such as farm-to-fork understandings, the filming of cooking shows, and an on-campus restaurant. The budget would help to underscore entrepreneurship competencies. This skill set is commensurate with the leadership skills that are set forth as criteria in this competition.

The district demonstrated strong community collaboration and buy-in with Get Healthy Dallas and even a design firm for the physical design of the space. What is more, middle school students helped to design the initiative.

A high quality plan for the program itself was not presented. However the budget included key information such as the goal/line item, the cost assumption, the year of implementation, and the reasoning for each.

While proposed courses were provided, there were no measures for success, online supports, credit recovery, or plans for English language learners presented here, in particular. Each of these elements could be carried over from the primary proposal. Nonetheless, students would graduate with two professional culinary certificates in addition to restaurant management skills. In either case, students could go on to college or be prepared for a career. This would be an innovative addition to the district.