



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0651TX-1 for Aubrey Independent School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District's sets forth an extensive comprehension and coherent reform vision. The vision addresses all 4 core educational assurance areas in Appendix A 1.1.</p> <p>a. The district plans to adopt rigorous standards that include a culture of high achievement, standards based instruction, parent participation, engaged learners, and adult advocacy. In the area of assessments, an electronic management system for curriculum, instruction and assessment will be implemented. Common assessments will be administered that include MSTAR and TALA assessments.</p> <p>b. Applicant details a strong data system that utilizes a district website portal for district data, Region X Empower Project-Texas State Data System, and PEIMS report links. Additional data systems include the establishment of REVEAL early warning system.</p> <p>c. The applicants reform vision addresses assurance #3. The plan focus on evaluations based on student growth, embedded professional development, review of teacher qualifications, higher education and certification incentives.</p> <p>d. The reform vision for assurance #4 details access to rigorous courses, alternative approaches to schooling, provide academic support to pass 124 hours of dual and technical courses, create a college-going culture, make learning relevant, and offer incentives for excellence</p> <p>The Audrey Independent School District reform vision is clear and articulates an approach to accelerating student achievement, deepen student learning, and increase student equity.</p> <p>a. The method to accelerate student achievement strategies was specific to all grade spans. Their rosters of assessments to increase student achievement were all inclusive. Partnerships with local college and universities, parental involvement, teacher and administrator support through continues professional development will foster an environment of consistent student achievement.</p> <p>b. Their approach to deepening student learning details sound strategies that include the use of data driven decision making, setting rigorous expectations, development of common and well as individual progress monitoring and scheduled interventions.</p> <p>c. Personalized student support was demonstrated through sequential processes and methods that include but limited to establishing a detailed College to Career Blueprint that reflects student academic interest.</p> <p>Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the high range. The applicant set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the 4 core assurances as well as offers a credible approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Audrey Independent School District approach to implementing its reform proposal will partially support high quality LEA and school level implementation.</p> <p>a) The plan provided a thorough process of selecting LEA participants. A need assessment was conducted that involved 5</p>		

specific eligibility requirements. The LEA was also expected to demonstrate commitment to the 4 core educational assurances and implement grant requirements by year 2014-2015.

b) This reform encompasses 10 local education agencies. The plan includes 2 rural LEAs 4 small isolated LEAs, and 4 suburban LEAs. There are a total of 10, 263 participants in this consortium.

c) In the narrative it reports that 50.9% of consortium student participants are economically disadvantaged which exceeds grant requirements. However, the A (2) chart titled Applicant's Approach to Implementation reflect 47.25% of participating students were from low income families. Narrative and A (2) chart should depict the same information

d) Appendix A 2.2 and A 2.3 list all participating schools, total number of participants, low income identification, high need students and educators. There are 10 LEA included in the proposal and 50.9% are economically disadvantaged. The high need criteria were established by the identification of specific Texas Accountability Intervention Systems such as LEAs with academically unacceptable, corrective action, and restructuring status due to low achievement.

e) There are 993 secondary school educators participating in this initiative.

Aubrey Independent School District evidence earns a score in the high range. The well written narrative and the data chart clearly details the processes of selecting participants, list participating LEAs, reports the total number of participating students, participating low-income families, participating high needs students, and participating educators. Appendices 2.3 and data chart A (2) should remain consistent.

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

Aubrey Independent School District application includes a high quality plan that will be scaled up to support district wide change and assist applicant to reach its outcome goals.

a) Through the development of a Successful School Collaboration grant, the district will have an opportunity to expand resources, action steps, performance measures, and expected outcomes for rural schools. The applicant identified secondary campuses as their focus area; however, the plan will incorporate an elementary framework. At the culmination of the grant, schools will use this blueprint to design successful school improvement initiatives.

b)The second program that will be scaled up to support district change includes the Dual Credit and Advanced Technical career pathway. Affording students the ability to earn 24-36 hours of college credit will encourage students to earn a degree or certification at the high school level. The Rural Technology grant originally started with 5 schools but currently serves 10 schools that assist students to develop pathways in high demand career fields in their region. Educators may also receive a stipend and earn a Master's degree in their field. Presenting content online effectively is another advantage of the community college collaboration.

Based on the evidence provided in these criteria, Aubrey Independent School District score is in the high range. The plan to scale up activities included partnering 6 rural schools with 4 suburban schools correlates to the applicant reaching their outcome goals.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Aubrey Independent School District vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrating ambitious yet achievable goals.

a) District assessments goal is to achieve 95% proficiency in English/Language Arts and 90% proficiency in Math to meet state standards. The goal is to exceed state expectations by 3% in English/Language Arts and meet expectation in Math. These goals are ambitious yet achievable based on baseline data. Benchmarks assessment swill be administered 6 times per year that can be accessed through district database system. Other factors that will be reviewed include retention rate, truancy, and conduct. District data chart reflects 9th grade projections only during to a lack of correlation of assessments. Taft 9th grade English Language Art goal is unrealistic as report indicates a baseline of 52% with a goal of 99% in 2017. This school goals exceed those schools whose baselines percentages were greater.

b) Narrative defines a goal of 80% of economically disadvantaged student will achieve one grade level of growth in both reading and math. Math has failed to show proficiency increases and as a results actions steps require restructuring of school day and tutoring implementation. Data chart reflect persistent gaps in English at Calallen as well as persistent gaps in Math at Celina, Gainesville, and Pilot Point between the economically disadvantage and the all subgroup.

c) Overall Graduation rate goal is 90%. With the implementation of a Grad Coach and tracking mechanisms in place, this is a realistic goal. However, the graduation chart reflects a subgroup disparity at Gainesville and Graham high school.

d) College enrollment rate is goal at 85% in 2017. This percentage may serve as ambitious yet unachievable goal. There are several strong support systems in place to assist with this goal that include online college preparatory program, assistance with FAFSA applications, and providing college 1 college tour a year. Based on the data chart, the trajectory for economically disadvantaged students is unrealistic. For example, Bowie college enrollment rate in 2012 was reported at 5% however the 2017 goal is 95%.

e) The plan goal for post-secondary degree attainment is 70% with students completing 24 hours of college credit in a postsecondary degree; obtain an associate or tech certification within one year, or bachelor's degree in 3 years of graduating high school. This goal is ambitious however for those schools that have 13% and 17% baseline data, the goal appears unrealistic.

Aubrey School District demonstrates ambitious yet achievable goals.

a) Plan details 4 goals tailored to address the 4 core educational assurances. Each goal is accompanied by clear action steps, specific timelines, and responsible parties. Copies of support staff expectations are detailed and job qualifications are rigorous.

Aubrey Independent School district's college enrollment rates for economically disadvantaged students are ambitious yet slightly unrealistic. This section shows evidence of a high score. The goals to improve student outcomes should reflect a true trajectory of success.

**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	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The extent to which Aubrey Independent School District describes their records of success in the past 4 years in student learning and achievement is limited.</p> <p>a) The narrative alludes to a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing excellence and equity through high school completion and success programs. For example, Celina ISD was awarded Texas Title I Priority Schools grant as a result of improving student learning outcome, increasing student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and raising high school graduation rates. However, there was no supporting evidence provided in the form of data charts or graphs to validate record of success. The plan fails to address in narrative or graph an improvement in graduation rate, closing achievement gap, and increase in college enrollment rates.</p> <p>b) Aubrey Independent School District demonstrates evidence to achieve ambitious and significant reform in persistently low performing schools. The example in narrative detailed Gainesville ISD partnering with 2 colleges and a medical center. This collaboration resulted in the development of a dropout reduction program.</p> <p>c) 4 collaborative districts were awarded a Rural Technology Pilot grants that affords access of data to students, educators and parents. Parent portal and online websites provided parental access to student achievement data.</p> <p>Based on the evidence presented in this criterion, Aubrey Independent School District ranks in the medium range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District maintains a level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.</p> <p>a. The district publishes a district wide salary schedules that report actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school level instructional and support staff</p> <p>b. Salary schedules are posted on each participating district website annually.</p> <p>c. Appendix B 2.1 details Aubrey ISD Hiring schedule for classroom teachers, librarians, and nurses only. Salary schedule reporting includes administrators as well as support staff.</p>		

Based on the evidence provided, Aubrey Independent School District's level of LEA transparency in processes, practices, and investments are convincing and score in the high range.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District shows evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environment described in the application.

- a. The successful conditions for Collaborative schools identified 2 flexible plans: 1) Optional Flexible School Day which will allow flexibility of school hour and days to assist students at risk or have dropped out of school. 2) Optional Flexible Year Plan modifies the calendar year and provides intensive instructional services.
- b. In the area of autonomy, Texas has adopted College and Career Readiness Standards of high school reform. The plan identifies 5 strategic priorities to address postsecondary success. The School Improvement program supports flexibility in school management i.e. professional development and hiring. The School Improvement program supports flexibility in school management i.e. professional development and hiring.

Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District score in the high range.

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

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District has obtained stakeholder engagement in the development and support of this proposal.

- a. The collaborative team was comprised of school educators, administrators, higher education agencies, community members, and industry leaders. Applicant fails to make clear if all LEA were engaged and support this proposal. There was evidence of support from several stakeholders. There was evidence that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools support the proposal.
- b. There is no evidence of student engagement or parental involvement included in this proposal. A family and student needs survey would improve the level of stakeholder engagement. Teachers were presented the proposal but there is no evidence of teacher engagement.
- c. Plan details revisions were made when practices and activities were found to be ineffective.
- d. Key stakeholders that offered support to plan include a variety of college and universities, community agencies, and educational foundations.
- e. There is some of support from student and parent organizations or parents.

The applicant has some evidence of stakeholder engagement and support. This places Aubrey Independent School District in the mid medium range.

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

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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District has demonstrated robust evidence of a high quality plan to implement personal learning environments and establishes the logic behind the reform proposal.

- a. Analysis of a comprehensive needs assessment includes a variety of assessment data, retention rates, teacher effectiveness systems, and college readiness indicators.
- b. Demographics reveals the majority of LEP learners are from low income families
- c. District has a clear understanding of individual and grade level achievement levels. Lowest scores are found in the middle grades. Achievement gaps exist within the economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient learners, and general education students in Math and English.
- d. Formal instructional programs, campus programs and procedures, and parent participation are utilized to combat achievement gaps.
- e. One in five students attend rural school and these numbers continue to grow. There are great discrepancies in teaching and learning in suburban and rural school. Narrative details the difficulty of rural schools ability to have access to higher-level math instruction and resources.
- f. Adequate support and resources were embedded in the plan.

The district plan on this criterion places them in the high range. The applicant's plan for implementing personalized learning environments and the justification of logic behind the reform were addressed in the needs assessment and gap analysis.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Aubrey Independent School District has an extensive, high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Course plans created to provide concepts and skills in the student's chosen career field. First generation college goers will access resources to explore career choices and establish academic and personal goals.</li> <li>b. A career pathway course sequence will be used to identify career pathways for the workforce. In linking college and career -ready standards and career-ready graduation requirements, an online program will be developed to identify career interests, investigate jobs, and explore colleges.</li> <li>c. A peer mentoring model will be used to deepen learning experiences in areas of academic interest. Access to online courses in each career pathways will be provided via technology. Shared videos, Skype, and websites will be used to link students to college to career.</li> <li>d. Exposure to diverse culture, contexts, and perspectives include online courses, lab classes, and/or distance learning. Students will be introduced to other students, educators, employers from other communities, cultures, and economic backgrounds with the hope of deepening student learning. The opportunity to participate in paid employment or internship serves as a motivating factor.</li> <li>e. Service learning projects with a culminating capstone class will provide employment or work study that will develop multi-dimensional skill for their profession</li> <li>f. A personalized sequence of sequence of instructional content and skill development was evident in the plan. A Personal Graduation Plan using the Naviance Succeed online program initiated in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Grad Coach and College Career Advisor will assist students with their postsecondary program.</li> <li>g. The plan details high quality instructional approaches and environments in the form of project centered learning activities that involves collaborating with peers to solve real world problems.</li> <li>h. Incorporating digital content includes a robust list of tools that include CSCOPE, TALA, MSTAR, use of electronic textbooks, and development of ePortfolios. Economically disadvantages students will have the ability to check out electronic tablets.</li> <li>i. Through the use of Texas Data System GPS Dashboard and TPEIR component, student data are readily accessible. Plan does speak to accessing real time data.</li> <li>j. Monitoring Response to Intervention (RTI) and utilizing REVEAL Early Warning System will address at risk youth factors.</li> <li>k. Extended Learning Time Intervention is used to ensure high needs students are on track towards meeting college and career ready standards</li> <li>l. The plan speaks to training families on the use of the GPA system. There is sufficient evidence that ensures students are appropriately trained and supported.</li> <li>m. The plan engages and empowers all learners through the identification of learning goals, cultural exposure, and deep learning experiences. Support mechanisms are in place for parents and educators to ensure high quality instructional approaches and environments. Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students. Teachers are required to train students on the purpose and use of these data sytems.</li> </ol> <p>Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the mid high range. The district details college- and career-ready strategies that elaborate on student training on tools and resources. To make plan credible, include timelines for implementation and name responsible parties.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Aubrey Independent School District has a plan to engage educators in training and work in professional teams and communities.

- a. Effective implementation of personalized learning environment is addressed through rigorous curriculum, assessment, and instructional best practices. College preparatory curriculum is aligned to standards. Regional math and science trainings will simulate project based learning. Educators have the opportunity to receive scholarships for graduate work based on excellence.
- b. Professional development focuses on strategies in administering assessments, using data to make instructional decisions, and access resources. Optimal learning included the use of response to intervention and other innovative strategies. Plan briefly mentions the development of classroom instruction that engages students.
- c. Through the TPEIR component, data are used to expand existing data reports, generating and using accurate and timely data. Restructuring the campus school schedule is a good example improving practices. Student progress was measured every 90 days.
- d. Improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness will be accomplished through the use of enhanced and redeveloped teacher and principal evaluations, annual summative evaluations, establishing coaching schedules, use of formative and summative evaluations that include professional growth, and equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

All participating educators will have access to, and know how to use tools, data and resources to accelerate student progress.

- a. Actionable information involves the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) that will differentiate to meet the needs of each learner and provide intensive intervention. The use of on line programs such iStation and Think it Through will support this initiative.
- b. Appendix C 2.bii2 provides an extensive list of high quality learning state and RTT resources. Some resources include the Texas State Data System, Project Share, REVEAL Early Warning System, and Texas Virtual School Network Gr. 8-12.
- c. Key practices, resources, and progress monitoring tools were provided in Appendix C.2.b iii.1. This exhaustive list of feedback mechanisms are separated by state resources i.e. Professional Development Appraisal System and RTT resources i.e. ELA and Math Coaches. These process and tools will effectively match student needs with specific resources and approaches.

School leaders and school leadership teams will have access to training, policies, tools, and resources to facilitate an effective learning environment.

- a) Teachers will work with campus administrators to implement academic and social support programs. Campus Improvement Teams will consider learning approaches specific to high needs populations of secondary students.
- b) Training, systems, and practices to increase student achievement include using an electronic management system to house curriculum, lessons, and resources. Curriculum seminars, vertically alignment of assessments and interventions along with common assessment set the course of increasing student achievement. As a result, Action Steps will be revised and feedback will be reviewed. Through the use of various automated systems, school will increase student performance and close achievement gaps.
- c) The applicant recognizes the difficulty in placing highly qualified teachers in small, rural schools. Therefore, the plan establishes a peer mentoring training model that will allow LEA to "grow their own" educators. Offering scholarship incentives and extra duty salary pay are valid strategies to increase the number of students who receive instructions from effective and highly effective teachers. Plan details an increase in the number of effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The applicant has a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing learning environment that provides all students the support to graduate college and career ready. This plan addresses the implementation of instructional strategies and accelerate learning. All educators engage in training and in professional teams or communities through the implementation ELA and Math Coaches and Regional Math and Science collaborative trainings. Educators have access to, and know how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate student growth by utilizing processes and tools to match student needs. School leaders have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress.

Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the high range. The plan would be strengthened by defining specific timelines around these processes.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Aubrey Independent School District shares its practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organization of the LEA central office will ensure that support systems and services are available to all participating schools. District support staff includes Director of Curriculum, Project Director, ELA, Math, and Technology Coordinators.</li> <li>Plan details implementation of District and School Improvement Teams. Through the use of data teams, learning approaches are tailored to the content field and high needs students. Initiatives are site based which provides sufficient flexibility and autonomy. There is no evidence of team discussions around school schedules, personnel, or school level budgets.</li> <li>Students will progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. Courses will be offered during non-school hours based on their own abilities and will have the opportunity to enroll in additional courses when they are ready. Additional options include online courses and on campus courses in advanced coursework.</li> <li>There is evidence of multiple comparable ways of demonstrating mastery that include common assessment as well as electronic assessment systems. However, there undocumented evidence to support mastery of standards multiple times.</li> <li>Differentiated Instruction by distinguishing between content, process and product afford full accessibility to all students specifically students with disabilities.</li> <li>The applicants practices, policies, and rules facilitate personalized learning by effectively organizing the LEA central office, providing sufficiency flexibility and autonomy, giving students the opportunity to progress at their own pace, and demonstrating mastery in multiple ways and multiple times throughout the year. RTI was sited as the main platform used to provide learning resources that are adaptable and accessible to all students.</li> </ol> <p>Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the medium high range. Increasing school level autonomy would strengthen this plan.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Aubrey Independent School District and school infrastructures strongly support personalized learning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participating students, parents, educators and other stakeholders use technology as the primary means of accomplishing this goal. Technology content, tools, and learning resources are available both in and out of school. Students and families will have access to personal technology tablets and on demands digital programs, complete college exploration, and access real time resources.</li> <li>The plan details appropriate technical support that will be provided to schools by offering training to review program expectations and requirements. Families are required to attend training in order to receive Personal Technology Handbook and technical devices. Plan lack specifics on the frequency of these meetings and if this training will be held before, during, or after school to accommodate parent work schedules.</li> <li>The plan articulates an export data function available for parents and students. All FERPA regulations will be followed. An online math tutor is available to students and families that will provide support at any time.</li> <li>The district details an innovative plan that uses interoperable data systems. Said systems such as ePortfolio will combine school academics, extracurricular activities, and online learning systems.</li> </ol> <p>Overall, Aubrey Independent School District scores in mid-high range.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The Aubrey Independent School District lays out a sound plan for continuous improvement processes of timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals, corrections, and improvement during the grant.

- a. The plan details the use of calendars that include key practices such as Professional development workshops, purchase of materials and resources, and personnel. Through the implementation of Decision Making Teams and data sharing by the principal, the public will be informed on the quality of investments.
- b. Through the implementation of Campus Improvement Teams and Site Based Decision Making, timely and regular feedback on progress towards project goals will occur.
- c. Project timelines will be used to ensure grant implementation pacing is appropriate. Committee will review and revise timelines as needed.
- d. Tools in place to measure and monitor continuous improvement in the area of staff, professional development and technology include the implementation of an advisory committee, use of data, and through the utilization of decision making teams.

Overall, the district continuous improvement process for correction score in the high range. There is evidence of ongoing corrections and improvement after the term of the grant.

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

Aubrey Independent School District's plan details their approach to continuous improvement through modes of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

- a. Plan details that all communications occur between all internal via face to face meetings. For example there are common planning meetings, coaches meeting with principals, and quarterly meetings with Advisory Committee.
- b. External communications were facilitated through providing A College to Career Progress Report that details the grant implementation and progress made to date.
- c. Communication and engagement strategies should include support of grant partners i.e.. higher education institutions and support agencies.
- d. The Project Director is identified as the primary person responsible for all internal and external communications. The applicant will use a meeting matrix with timelines and staff responsibilities.
- e. This section has earned a perfect score to due it varied strategies for ongoing communications and engagement with internal as well as external stakeholders.

Overall, this places the district in the high. There is evidence of continuous external communications and stakeholder engagement

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District performance measures are ambitious yet unachievable based on the goals, measures, and targets set.

- a. Plan identifies the rationale for selecting measures. Rationales include evaluating high school progress in improving college and career readiness, measure students' mastery of skills and content, and measure cognitive growth. Appendix 3 a. 1 included PreK-6 leading indicators for success.
- b. Identified performance measures are rigorous based on the performance measure chart. However, there is evidence that some of the trajectory goals are unrealistic. Several schools with low baseline data are projected to achieve 100% by 2017. For example, performance measures in grades 4-8 at Odem-Edroy reports a percentage of students on track for college and career ready for 2012 is 10%. The goal is to achieve 100% by 2017. Goals are unrealistic within the timeframe specified.
- c. Plan outlines 12 to 14 performance measures along with additional indicators.
- d. Review and improving the measures over time were defined in the plan through a survey of participants at the beginning and end of each school year. Action steps and Key practices responses will be aggregated and analyzed against mean scale scores.

Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the high medium range.

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

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Aubrey Independent School District shared it plan to evaluate the effective use of Race to Top funding activities.

- a. Plan shows evidence of evaluating effectiveness by using a Blueprint of Key Practices and Action Steps. This tool serves as a predictor of future results using research of effective practices, activities, and planning. Key practices will be reviewed and revised.
- b. There is evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing technology, time, or money through the use of incentives, offering non-schools hours and online courses.

Overall, this places Louis County School District in the high range. There is evidence provided to evaluate the effectiveness of funding activities through the development of Blueprint of Key Practices and Action steps proven to be effective in bringing about school improvement. This blueprint predicts future results using research of effective practices, activities, and planning,

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District shows evidence of a sound budget. Project funds are clearly identified, reasonable, sufficient, and provide a rationale for all investments and priorities.

- a. Applicant's budget identifies all funds. Budget narrative and table are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposed plan. Budget table references funds from other sources will be used to support the projects which include LEA foundations, higher institutions, city and state education agencies, and training partners.
- b. Budget reflects a one-time investment in equipment compared to other budget categories that will be used throughout the budgeted funding period.
- c. Plan provides thoughtful rationale for all investments and priorities.
- d. 2.5 million dollars from other sources are allotted through the term of the grant and beyond.
- e. Budget table specifies all funding resources that include RTT funds as well as other funding sources.

Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the high range. The applicant has strong evidence of a sound budget for the project.

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

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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District demonstrates a sound plan for sustainability of project goals after the term of the grant.

- a. The plan dictates that Educational Service centers will provide ongoing support and longevity for each system well after the grant period.
- b. Regional Educational Service Centers will provide ongoing support for each system well after the grant period. Grant activities will employ highly qualified staff after grant period.
- c. Foundations and community colleges will continue to offer dual credit scholarships, tuition waivers, and post-secondary/traditional college and technical center scholarships for students in the consortium.
- d. The 2 million dollars of funds from other sources include LEAs, foundations, institutions of higher education, cities, state education agencies, and training partners.
- e. It appears that 2.5 million are allocated from other funding sources during and beyond the grant; however, the budget reflects funds were distributed throughout the life of the grant and are depleted after the term of the grant.

Overall, this places Aubrey Independent School District in the high range. There is strong evidence of financial support from State and local government.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District has given priority to integrate public and private resources that address social, emotional, and behavioral needs of participating students.

1. Plan details a description of coherent and sustainable partnership with various private and public organizations that include the Business and Industry, workforce partners, regional institutions of higher education, technical schools, and community organizations.
2. Aubrey listed 10 population-level desired results that aligned with the broader Race to the Top proposal. Plan includes students graduating from high school college and career ready.
3. Methods to track selected indicators will be accomplished at the aggregate level for all children using performance measures. Social workers are responsible for tracking students at risk of dropping out of school. Grad Coach and Math/ELA Coach are held responsible for tracking students as well. Data systems are in place to target the general populations and economically disadvantaged students. Students at risk of dropping out and first generation college goers are two subgroups that are targeted.
4. This partnership integrates sharing career pathway templates with partnering education agencies. School collaborations across the state of Texas will allow students to take postsecondary courses. CIA agent will establish relationships with local businesses, social agencies and health care providers. In 2011, Communities In School (CIS) reports a 97% of students served stayed in school. These are strong strategies to that scale the model beyond participating schools.
5. District's plan to integrate education and other services are limited. Due to the change in school counselor responsibilities, this integration will occur through a Community In Schools (CIS) social worker.
6. The applicant identified and inventoried the needs and assests of the school and community using U. S. Census Bureau data. According to demographic data less than 27% of first generation college goers enter college and less than 17% complete a degree. Applicant reports that by 2020, more than 57% of Texas is projected to live in poverty or be classified as low income. These needs will be addressed by providing college credit at no cost to the family during high school and support for the family. Attendance is a risk factor as well. Attendance rates for economically disadvantaged learners are the lowest of all subgroups.
7. Plan will be routinely assess through a tracking process and will provide feedback to ensure continuous improvement. Onsite visit will be conducted to interview and observe practices.
8. Decision making processes are established through the College and Career programs and plan progress will be monitored primarily under the leadership of the Project Director.
9. Applicants annual performance measures are correlated with partners are achievable yet ambitious. Performance measures were provided in the blueprint in Appendix CP 6.1.

Overall, the Aubrey Independent School District evidence reflects a score in the low high range. Applicant presents compelling evidence to support Competitive Preference Priority.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
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Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p><b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District's sets forth an extensive coherent and comprehensive reform vision. The vision addresses all 4 core educational assurance areas in Appendix A 1.1. designed to significantly improve learning and teaching.</p> <p>a. The district plan to adopt rigorous standards that includes a culture of high achievement, standards based instruction, parent participation, engaged learners, and adult advocacy. In the area of assessments, an electronic management system for curriculum, instruction and assessment will be implemented. Common assessments will be administered that include MSTAR and TALA assessments.</p> <p>b. Under assurance #2 references a strong data system through the utilization of a district website portal for district data, Region X Empower Project-Texas State Data System; PEIMS report links which summarize school report cards, the establishment of REVEAL early warning systems.</p> <p>c. The reform vision under assurance #3 specifies focus on evaluations based on student growth, embedded professional development, review of teacher qualifications, higher education and certification incentives.</p> <p>d. The reform vision for assurance #4 details access to rigorous courses, alternative approaches to schooling, provide academic support to pass 124 hours of dual and technical courses, create a college-going culture, make learning relevant, and offer incentives for excellence</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District reform vision is clear and articulates an approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increase student equity.</p> <p>a. The methods to accelerate student achievement strategies were specific to all grade spans. Their rosters of assessments to increase student achievement were extensive. Partnerships with local college and universities, parental involvement, teacher and administrator support through continues professional development will foster an environment of consistent student achievement.</p> <p>c. Their approach to deeping student learning details sound strategies that include the use of data driven decision making, setting rigorous expectations, development of common and well as individual progress monitoring and scheduled interventions.</p> <p>b. Personalized student support was demonstrated through sequential processes and methods that include but limited to establishing a detailed College to Career Blueprint that reflects student academic interest.</p> <p>Applicant's plan addresses all facets of Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	186
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0651TX-2 for Aubrey Independent School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The College to Career Blueprint application is a strong plan and well thought out plan to increase the number of students who are college and career ready. The plan (outlined in Appendix A.1.1.) clearly describes its key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and the parties responsible for carrying it out. In short, this is a high-quality plan supported by local colleges, community service organizations, and district manpower that enlists the aid of the entire school community in creating learning environments that will personalize the education of students that lead to college or career ready high school graduates.

This reform vision is both comprehensive and coherent giving every promise of meeting all four core educational assurance areas by adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace, building data systems that measure student growth and success while providing teachers and principals with data that will improve instruction and at the same time developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals which can turn around the lowest achieving schools.

The Blueprint provided by this plan establishes a number of key practices to achieve educational reform:

Goal #1 seeks personalized teaching and learning to accelerate student achievement;

Goal #2 focuses on data systems to measure student growth;

Goal #3 deals with developing highly-effective educators and leaders; and

Goal #4 looks toward preparing students for college and career.

The first of these goals is particularly important to this proposal. It emphasizes developing a culture of high achievement; standards based instruction, providing academic supports for students and teachers.

Personalized student support is found in a number of ways:

1. Providing differentiated instruction;
2. Making available technology to students;
3. Supplying interactive classrooms with materials that support individual and group tasks;
4. Establishing an Academic Student Center with internet access, academic materials and tutors for extended day learning; and
5. Assessing students on a regular basis to fine-tune their academic program.

This vision includes school dropout prevention while seeking to graduate high school students with 24 hours of college credit toward an academic degree or technical certification in a chosen field.

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

The applicant, Aubrey Independent School District, is the lead district in a consortium of schools. Participating schools were based on criteria involving:

1. State and federal accountability ratings;
2. Achievement gaps;
3. High dropout rates;

4. Low rates of advanced credit enrollment in high school; and
5. Low post-secondary education success rates.

In selecting the participating districts and schools, these criteria required a commitment to a teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation system, college and career readiness and implementing a robust data system. Applying these criteria, 10 school districts are participating in the consortium. Each of these is listed in the Appendix to the proposal.

This project involves only grades 6-12 of the participating districts located on 20 secondary campuses involving a total of 10,263 students and 993 secondary educators. Five thousand two hundred and twenty four students are described as coming from low-income households. Six school districts in the program are rated as academically unacceptable and low performing.

The applicant has provided a sound district and school selection process through the criteria they have chosen. This is a very complete section.

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

Through the RttT-D College to Career proposal, the consortium has set in motion a high-quality plan with the key goals of scaling up school improvement systems. The first program to be scaled up is the personalized system of school improvement and reform. This includes a blueprint developed to plan, implement and evaluate effective reform on secondary campuses in this project.

The second reform program is the Dual Credit and Advanced Technical career pathways that have 24-36 hours of college credit courses available to rural schools. Ten schools will participate in a plan that includes a four-year career plan that outlines dual credit and technical credit courses toward a high school diploma, industry or professional certification and post-secondary degree. Teachers will be eligible to receive a stipend to earn a Master's Degree in their field through the project and will receive training and support.

This is a strong approach to this section. The consortium's plan which includes these elements of reform is tightly tied to the College to Career Blueprint and the goals and outcomes it seeks. The use of incentives, such as the dual credit pathway, college scholarships and stipends for teachers, are strong motivators for both teachers and students. This increases the chance of this being a successful program for consortium schools.

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

The plan involves a collaborative approach by matching up low achieving and persistently low achieving schools with schools that have a successful record of school improvement. These schools will work together to share personnel, strategies and resources to improve achievement and bridge the achievement gap between high needs students and the general population. This section sets some impressive goals and activities for this project including:

1. Personalized teaching and learning to accelerate student achievement:
  - a. Culture of high achievement: This involves a shared district and school-wide culture that places its primary focus on improvements in academic outcomes for students;
  - b. Standards-based instruction: Middle and high schools in the project will integrate Texas College and Career Readiness Standards in reading, writing and math classes to prepare learners for rigorous high school courses;
  - c. Academic supports: High-need learners will be provided with personal technology tools to access textbook, internet and application resources;
  - d. Social services: The Grad Coach will monitor student risk factors to keep students on track;

e. Incentives for excellence: Students will be rewarded by tuition scholarships for college and technical credit courses taken through high school.

2. Data systems in place to measure student growth:

a. Data-based decision-making used as a measurement tool.

b. ELA and math coaches will work with secondary teachers to analyze student data, develop content knowledge and apply instructional strategies that differentiate learning.

c. Grad counselors on each campus will work with families to support their child's education, implement incentive plans to increase attendance and conduct prevention programs to reduce behavioral issues.

3. Effective educators and leaders:

a. Effective professional development focusing on providing professional development dealing with teacher content knowledge and best practices for teaching rigorous and relevant secondary courses.

b. Leadership training focused on effective leadership instructional strategies tied to post secondary standards into comprehensive whole-school reform models for high-need schools.

c. Principal and teacher evaluations based on student growth.

d. An incentive program to provide tuition stipends for teachers to attend higher education in their teaching field.

4. Preparation for college and career; and

a. Each district will work with partner higher education institutions to articulate career pathway sequences that have been aligned with post secondary academic and technical courses.

b. Each pathway will include access to at least 24 hours of college credit in a career field.

c. Access to course sequences that will allow students to complete a certification in high school and an associates and/or baccalaureate degree in an academic or technical field within two semesters upon graduation from high school.

5. Family participation: A college and career advisor will guide students, families and educators to access information about college requirements, complete college entrance tasks, promote transition to college and track progress toward a diploma using online college to career software.

While these goals are general plans for the future, more detail is provided throughout subsequent proposal sections. For instance, the data system they describe is an interoperable data system offering real time access to data. Decisions surrounding the personalized learning environment become data-based decision-making that can track student growth and progress.

This is a highly effective and credible plan that is both ambitious and obtainable given the design. However, the goals set for future college enrollment and high school graduation rates seem extremely high given the past history of these districts. It would be clearer if a stronger rationale or evidence was presented to account for this progress.

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	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has developed an impressive list of collaborations since 2008 supporting this section. In Appendix B.1.1, the educational assurance areas cover personalizing teaching and learning to accelerate achievement, closing achievement gaps, data systems to measure student growth, effective educators and leaders to improve graduation rates and preparation for college to improve entrance rates. Eighteen key practices are listed and 11 programs have been initiated such as the Texas Title I Priority Schools, Collaboration Dropout Prevention, Collaboration Dropout Prevention, Intensive Technology Pilot, Rural Technology Pilot, etc. The information provided regarding student achievement, reform for low achieving schools and real time access to student performance data provides the reader with an assurance that they have an established record reaching back over four years. Especially helpful in this section is the recognition of the need for parent training in technology and online courses of instruction that in rural areas has the effect of bringing knowledge into the front room.

In 2008, four collaborative districts were awarded the Rural Technology Pilot grants to provide personal technology programs and performance data to students, educators and parents. The program provided technology-based supplemental instruction including online core and college credit courses to students with limited course selections and resources due to being located in a rural community. Parent participation was a key practice emphasized in the project. Parent training included technology use, strategies for homework assistance and tracking student progress using technology based reports. Through the project, each district revised technology use policies to include a technology lending agreement. Each project was successful in implementing online websites, portals for parents to access classroom grades, benchmark scores, tutorial program reports and Texas state assessments.

The applicant points to the Successful Schools Collaborative, of which they are a member, as having had a significant impact on learning outcomes, increased student achievement, closing achievement gaps, raising high school graduation rates and increasing college enrollment. The extent to which they have actually met with success over a four year program is not clearly defined for the reader and needs additional evidence to support the claims made in (B) (1).

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

The information provided in the applicant's proposal is illustrative of only the lead LEA for the 2011-12 school year.

- (a) Actual personnel salaries at the school-level instructional and support staff have been provided at Appendix (Pages 27-28)
- (b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff is reported at \$25, 479.91.
- (c) Actual ARRA personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only for the 2011-12 school year are listed at \$0.
- (d) Non-personnel expenditures at the school level total \$108,347.72.

Each district has a website in which information similar to that presented above is published and available to the general public. The applicant has demonstrated a high degree of transparency. As the lead district in this program, Aubrey ISD will undertake a separate tracking and monitoring of ARRA funds. The only discrepancy found in this section is the reference to Appendix B.2.2. (Lead LEAs salary schedule). This information appears to be in Appendix B.2.1. and does provide the Aubrey ISD salary schedule for 2011-12. A higher degree of detail regarding salary information for each district in the consortium would provide more evidence supporting this section.

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

The applicant has demonstrated the conditions favorable toward meeting its legal, statutory and regulatory requirements to implement the proposal. It offers as evidence the following:

1. The Optional Flexible Year Plan allowing Texas schools to modify the instructional calendar to provide a flexible year program to meet student educational needs.
2. The Optional Flexible School Day Plan providing flexible hours and days of attendance for students who have dropped out of school, are at risk of dropping out or are participating in an approved early college high school plan;
3. The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards which developed a plan for a rigorous academic core curriculum, personalized learning environments, academic and social support, relevant teaching and learning designed to promote post secondary success and effective educators and leaders; and
4. Development of College High Schools and T-STEM Academies for low-income families.

The Texas Education Agency provides support for the Title I, Part A, Section 1116 School Improvement Program. This Program allows flexibility and autonomy for school management including:

- Hiring, reassigning and transferring employees into and out of the campus;

- Flexibility in the calendar and scheduling of instructional time and non-instructional time;
- Choosing professional development offerings; and
- Employing retention and employment incentives, including financial incentives for effective educators.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

These are LEAs without collective bargaining representation. The consortium is joined together by a Memorandum of Understanding. Except for a statement indicating that 10% or less did not favor this proposal, or did not vote, there is no evidence of support for the proposal from teachers. The principal work on this grant proposal seems to have been through the collaborative team. Whether the team included all LEAs in the consortium is not clear. Little evidence (outside of a mention of community members) is provided to demonstrate the inclusion of the students, families and teachers in the development of the project although teachers were informed after the fact that the proposal was going forward. This section indicates that letters of support from key stakeholders is found in the Competitive Priorities Section. There were 15 endorsements from organizations presently supporting this proposal.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The School Resource Improvement Center at the University of Texas (Austin) has done a comprehensive needs assessment of the district and campuses. The assessment included course retention rates, teacher effectiveness evaluations, graduation rates, college readiness indicators and parent participation in academics, college participation tasks and events.

This section provides information on individual and grade level achievement and found that a significant number of rural had in a number of cases fared poorly on the STARR End-of-Course exams. The applicant states that there is a significant achievement gap between the scores of economically disadvantaged and Limited English Proficient learners when compared to the general population in both math and ELA. The assessment found that schools in improvement require tutorials but have no formal system for reviewing data. Rural schools also lack advanced courses in some subjects such as math. In addition, there appears to be a lack of connect between school and family and surveys of three rural districts found that economically disadvantaged students had limited access to technology and/or internet based programs in the home.

The plan for reform utilizes the College to Career Blueprint. Through this they have laid out a series of actions to deal with these needs and gaps in learning based upon certain characteristics of the learner—low-income families with English as a second language, poor performance on standardized tests and learners in small, isolated rural districts. The activities that are designed to target these areas. Most important is not only setting expectations for students but monitoring the project and student progress every 90 days. This is a credible plan.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The actions taken by the plan are based on several facts. First, low-income households in this proposal have less resources to provide toward increasing student achievement and consequently students find great difficulty with both ELA and math courses. Their approach has been to concentrate on concept and skill development in the students chosen field. This is supplemented by developing pathway course sequences and redesigning (reforming) pathways. Students begin their career exploration in 6th grade and map out their chosen pathway through a personal graduation plan (see below). Most important to the plan is a continued check of student progress on their chosen pathway. Added to this, is the use of technology not only for exploration of pathways, but to experience some of the diversity that is lacking in their own rural schools. Through service learning they will also experience real world work and graduate to work/study experiences. The College Career Center on each campus plays a vital role in this entire process.

Attention is paid to the teacher and ensuring that they are of a high-quality by providing professional development that leads to high quality content within the classroom. By extending the existing data systems support, more real-time data can be supplied to teachers to monitor progress. The role of the parent and family is examined in this extensive plan which clearly defines the path that the project will take to ensure the students are career or college ready by graduation. For instance, students will begin taking credit courses in their chosen pathway in ninth grade with the goal of graduating with at least 24 hours of postsecondary credit upon high school graduation. Schools that value high expectations and high achievement reward significant accomplishments. Students who earn credit in their career pathway during ninth and 10th grade will be eligible to receive a scholarship incentive to attend college and technical credit courses in their career pathway during 11th and 12th grade. The incentive plan will further the personal goals of the student as they earn a certification, degree or credential. This program also accomplishes the goals of improving student achievement and success.

Exposure to diverse cultures, service learning, online courses, technology, the College Career Center, the work-study internships and the personal graduation plan all contribute to preparing students for college or career after high school.

Students from low-income homes must meaningfully engage in ELA and math lessons at school to build an understanding of concepts linked to their physical world to apply content at high-levels. Teachers will attend professional development to learn to use interactive instructional approaches that increase student awareness and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers will transform classrooms and project-based experiences where students collaborate with peers to solve real-world problems that involve the use of essential knowledge skills for ELA and math. Through the interactive lessons, students will develop concepts and applications using technology tools and visual prompts. They will be prompted to use inquiry strategies to critically evaluate learning and create new ideas. Ongoing professional development in terms of classroom demonstrations and co-teaching will be provided by ELA and math coaches to support educators and for transferring lessons learned during professional development into the classroom lessons.

At the College to Career Center on each campus, students will be part of a small learning community of students in the same career field with teacher mentors instructing the pathway. The peer mentoring model and project based learning improves the capacity of all students to work in teams to use interactive technology tools, to develop concepts, apply learning, and create new ideas and products. This small learning environment is especially helpful to high-needs students where a more individual approach can assist struggling students. Important is the ongoing and regular feedback regarding student progress through the data system and the 90 day feedback plan. These small learning communities are helpful in keeping up-to-date with student progress. Students will have access to personal technology devices through a lending program implemented in each LEA. As noted in this section, technology is a key to participation, achievement and success for high-needs students.

The RTTT-D project utilizes layers of prevention and intervention accessible to high-needs students. These include:

1. Extended learning time;
2. Online programs in reading/English language arts and math to accelerate learning of developmental skills over a span of grade levels;
3. Personal computers with access to electronic textbooks, learning activities, and online tutors to provide additional practice on course content;
4. Double blocked courses to lengthen learning time to provide additional time in project-based instruction; and
5. Post secondary preparation programs focusing on high-level reading, writing, and math skills.

This section is quite comprehensive and fully addresses the criteria for this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The program provides support through the ELA and Math Coaches. This support includes: rigorous curriculum assessment that focuses on college preparatory curriculum and enrichment through what the proposal calls a “small community of learners.” As a supplement to this, teachers will attend the On Track to College training sponsored by the University of Texas.

One of the primary differences in support for education is the proposal’s reliance on data systems (mentioned earlier) that increase local data capabilities to support instruction and accountability. Many of the uses of data that have been mentioned earlier are used to reshape the student educational experience by frequently drawing upon this information. This is also useful in improving the practice of teachers and principals.

The proposal points out that it is difficult, given the salary scales and travel to work, to hire effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The ELA and math coaches can have a significant effect, and it is within the realm of ambitious yet achievable.

Important to the adaptation of the work to the learner is the use of Response to Intervention (RtI). This model is based upon student academic needs. It ensures that students receive core instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of the learner, intervention based on data analysis of learning gaps, diagnostic and progress assessments and intensive interventions when students fail to show a response to intervention. Online programs in Reading/English Language Arts (iStation) and math (Think it Through) are used to accelerate learning developmental skills over a span of grade levels. Strategies here include:

- Classroom differentiation--hands-on project based learning for diverse student populations;
- Extended learning time--double blocked classes or tutorial classes to provide additional instructional time in core courses for students struggling to master content;
- College Prep Class--reading and writing and math instruction of students struggling in college or technical credit classes; and
- Credit Recovery Courses--credit courses instructed through technology for students who struggle to meet conventional classroom schedules and routines.

During the first summer of the project, common assessments aligned with CCRS, TEKS and STAAR or EOC will be developed for progress monitoring. The electronically administered benchmarks will be uploaded into the curriculum management system to be initially implemented during the 2013-2014 school year. Progress monitoring assessments will be administered each 90 days. Test responses will be uploaded into a data management system compatible with the Texas State Data System.

Teachers will view student, class, and campus data in real-time on their classroom computer using the TSDS GPS Dashboard. Principals and Superintendents will view student, class, campus and district data in real time using the Dashboard. Data will be used at the LEA level to guide educators in making curriculum and instruction decisions to meet student needs during common planning meetings, to develop policies and schedules to support reform, and to implement the student growth component of the Professional Development Appraisal System. At the project level, data will be used to revise Action Steps and revise the Blueprint based on feedback. This will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of project management and allows for continuous improvement of the plan.

Math coaches will attend mentor training provided by the Regional Math and Science Collaborative training and ELA Coaches will attend On Track to College training developed by the University of Texas for the Texas Education Agency. These trainings provide researched, sustained and high professional development to assist coaches in developing strategies to lead educators in administering assessments, using data to make instructional decisions and 90 day plans, use content knowledge to apply and create learning collaboratively, access resources and include parents in learning and achievement.

The use of technology based management systems to automate test administration and data analysis, developing systems for implementing a progress monitoring process and using data to inform decisions will serve not only as a means of measuring the progress of the student and ultimately closing achievement gaps, but will serve as a means to continuously inform and improve the delivery of services to students.

This is a strong high-quality plan, but needs further information about improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback on individual teacher and principal evaluation systems.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The consortium is composed of 10 LEAs rather than one central office staff. Of the 38 persons employed under this grant, they include a Project Director and Director of Curriculum to oversee the program which includes ELA, Math and Technology Coordinators in each of the LEA's. An advisory committee is composed of the members of the Successful School Collaborative representing educational institutions, businesses, industries and the community. The proposal states that: *...all will share in the governance of the project by participating on the College to Career Advisory Board that will make recommendations to the project director.* This is a large number of people and their roles as well as those of the other "advisors," such as the Education Service Centers, need to be spelled out. The actual coordination of all persons involved in delivering the services is not clear. For instance, it indicates that the Project Director will establish networks and linkages between the parties, but the exact manner in which this will be accomplished is vague.

(b)The Director of Curriculum will be appointed by Dublin ISD and the reader is assured that this person has dedicated time for program activities. Yet, the coordination of activities as described in the proposal is a massive enterprise, and it does

appear that holding two jobs--Dublin ISD and the Consortium--in this instance would be difficult. It is not clear how the school leadership teams will provide sufficient autonomy and flexibility. As noted before, this is ambitious, but a very complex undertaking to coordinate several programs (math, ELA, technology) all at once in 10 independent school districts, but with the agreement of these districts, it is possible to control such things as school schedules, calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models as well as local budgets. However, this is not addressed in the proposal.

(c) Students under this plan have multiple options to obtain credit based on mastery rather than "seat time." These include on-campus opportunities for college and career credit, on-line course options (e.g., Texas Virtual School Network, Community College, etc.) and off campus courses. The Academic Study Center will provide students with the technology tools to access courses and the flexibility to take the courses during non-school hours. Students will be able to complete courses based on their own ability and enroll in new courses when they are ready.

(d) The proposal does not discuss how students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple comparable ways.

(e) The applicant does indicate that learning resources and instructional practices are adaptable and fully accessible to all students. While not mentioning disabled or English learners specifically, they do cover this in saying: *Educational leaders in the college to career project will learn to vary instructional approaches in relation to individual and diverse students in the classroom. The approach requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and to adjust the method of sharing information and the types of sources utilized based on the needs of learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the course.*

As a result of the missing information and other considerations mentioned above, this section is scored at the mid-range.

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

In providing the necessary, content, tools and other resources for students, the College to Career project has amassed a large number of technology/tools/resources to reform the campus curriculum by providing access to this information for the entire school community. Among the many things involved in reforming the campus curriculum through technology are lesson plans, data reports, professional development offerings, tracking student progress and extra time on task provided for students in the areas of ELA, math and science.

Parents and students are given an adequate opportunity to participate in a computer loan program. This is a very thorough treatment of putting technology into the hands of parents and students and extending instructional learning resources beyond the classroom. The technology handbook described would provide information to families on the use of the loaned technology and is further accompanied by parent training in the use of the tablet and programs. District support for the use of technology tools is available to ensure its proper use. This enables, through an open data format, career planning at home. At the same time, the interoperable data system will provide them with access not only to student progress but a larger base of career information.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This is a high-quality plan in laying out the steps to monitor, measure and publicly share information. The applicant is especially interested in determining the level of communication within the system and the quality of any of the products or documents produced. The components established for this include monitoring/evaluating the management of the program including the design and implementation. They will closely watch all planning and development activities such as staff training while providing an analysis of what is most effective and using that information modify the program.

As part of this process, each LEA will establish a Decision-Making Team, review the previous Campus Improvement Plan and collect and analyze data based on the College and Career Blueprint. This includes student performance data, parent and

teacher surveys, attendance, discipline records, PDAS results and Walkthrough Observations.

Because we are dealing with 10 LEAs, the plan has centered on site-based planning. The applicant believes that those closer to the problem have better solutions in the long run. This is a sensible approach when combined, as they have, with the larger view of the programs operation and effectiveness.

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Project Director has the responsibility for implementing internal and external communications. Weekly meetings are held between the ELA and Math Coaches while each month they will meet with the Project Director and Financial Manager. At the end of each quarterly grading period, a summary report of grant data, implementation and expenditures will be reported to the Superintendent of the lead LEA. There are other meetings and reports to key stakeholders in this process. These plans represent an effective internal communications process to keep information flowing among involved parties. There is no clear description of the ongoing communication and engagement with external stakeholders.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The College to Career Project provides a well-reasoned rationale for the performance measures. First, there are multiple measures of college and career readiness (number of students taking advanced courses; completion of college readiness tasks; 4 year high school completion; and earning a degree or credential). Second, the plan provides multiple measures of student achievement (student proficiency in reading/ELA and math; student growth in these subject areas; skill based assessments; and the number of students graduating on a Recommended High School Plan or Distinguished High School Plan). Third is a measure of cognitive growth based upon attendance rates, discipline referral incidences and graduation rates for each LEA. These are strong rationales for selecting these measures. To ensure that the measures are working and to adjust them when they are not, the plan proposes a survey of participants at both the beginning and end of the year.

The applicants have presented a strong argument supporting the rationale behind the selection of the measures and their use.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The key to evaluating the effectiveness of the activities lies in the *Blueprint Key Practices and Action Steps*. This is found in the Appendix, A.1.1. *College to Career Blueprint* (Appendix, pp.1-6). This is a well laid out, high-quality plan that includes Key Practices, Action Steps, Performance Measures, Outcomes, Resources and Partners. They are further categorized in the areas of Teaching and Learning. The information presented follows the high-quality approach required by this section of the proposal.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's budget narrative and tables are fully supportive of the proposal presented here. The budget supporting the project has been comprehensive in all aspects. Other funds (LEA, State, foundation grants, federal funds) have not been identified, although on Table 4.1, page 158, but they do list funds from other sources in the amount of \$621,000 for Year one of the grant. The total amount dedicated to this project at end of the four years from other sources amounts to \$2,580,000. This is indicative of ongoing support for the proposal. This budget is both reasonable and sufficient to carry out this plan. All of the budget items have been mentioned one or more times throughout the proposal. There are extensive descriptions of both the long and short range investments in this proposal.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Sustainability of this program is dependent upon a number of factors, including the continuation of the collaboration between</p>		

LEAs and the large number of staff that would by necessity need to continue in their roles within the project. It would be helpful to have a more complete description of how several of these costs( e.g., personnel, substitutes, stipends, etc.) are assumed once federal funding is no longer available. The narrative does indicate that such things as LEA support, high quality certified personnel in place, continued staff development and accessible curriculum systems will reduce the overall cost of continuing to operate the program at the level of years one through four. The applicant provides sufficient information regarding funding from other sources at the conclusion of the grant to provide the reader with confidence in the sustainability of the program when federal funding ends.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has met all of the requirements of this section. It has formed numerous partnerships composed of business and industry (North Texas Medical Center, Bowie Memorial Hospital, Good Samaritan Center of Denton, Bellmire Healthcare Facilities). Aside from serving on the advisory committee for the project they have helped identify necessary skills and competencies leading to certifications in each career pathway as well as providing training for students. Workforce Board Partners include the North Texas Workforce Development Board, the North Central Texas Workforce to name a few of the entities that serve to identify career pathways as do the partnerships with regional institutions of higher education and community organizations such as Communities of Schools (CIS). These are strong relationships which assist the goals of the program.

As required, they identify 10 population-level desired results with such items as attendance rate improvement, reduction of discipline incidences or reducing the district dropout rate. CIS plays a significant role in tracking the selected indicators (pages 129-130) as well as the work of the Grad Coach and the results of the Workforce, Postsecondary Education and Training efforts. Important to this grant proposal is the fact that the approach here can be scaled up to apply to other districts throughout the country and need not be limited to Texas alone. The fact that this program deals with a high incidence of poverty means it could be transferred to other districts with failing schools and greater than 40% socioeconomic status.

Rural districts have a serious lack of resources in the counselor area. This is pointed out in this section. The applicant's approach has been to draw upon organizations such as CIS to provide personnel to address student social-emotional needs-- a role typically played by guidance counselors. The applicant is asked to identify its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students. They conclude with those performance measures on page 135. The project provides the means to accomplish these goals which are both ambitious and achievable.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This is a first-rate grant application to increase the number of college and career-ready students. The appendix and especially the College to Career Blueprint provide an overview of a substantive program that addresses the needs of students in poverty or those academically challenged students while preparing them for future careers. Everything in this proposal is tied together to create successful learning environments for students. While the proposal is directed toward assisting students and parents, it is directed toward creating highly effective teachers and principals as well by giving them the tools to deliver meaningful education experiences to students. This is a high-quality plan.

Total	210	189
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0651TX-3 for Aubrey Independent School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In addressing the four core educational assurance areas, the Aubrey Independent School District addresses each one sufficiently:

1. Sufficient documentation that the Aubrey Independent School District has committed to implement a teacher, principal, and superintendent evaluation system:

- Each school in the district has committed to implementing the revised Texas Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS)
- PDAS has three performance levels measured annually
- Uses multiple valid measures including data on student growth
- Provides useful feedback with growth plans
- Superintendent's evaluation includes feedback from educators, principals, parents, and student outcomes

2. The Aubrey Independent School District provides documentation for adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy:

- Adopted Texas College and Career Readiness Standards
- Curriculum is aligned with standards
- Utilizes a data system to track student risk factors and implement interventions and incentives
- Measures student progress and performance against college and career ready graduation requirements

3. Vision includes a robust data system.

- Each LEA has committed to implement Texas State Data System GPS Dashboard
- Dashboard provides individual teacher and teacher-student match
- Provides real-time data to educators and administrators on student growth PK-12
- Includes class grades, benchmark scores, state assessment scores

4. Aubrey Independent School District has the capability to receive or match student level preschool through 12th grade and higher education data.

- Data system provides data for students PK-12
- Districts have committed to tracking student success in college using Naviance Succeed surveys and National Clearinghouse data

5. Aubrey Independent School District ensures that any disclosure of or access to personally identifiable information in students' education records complies with FERPA.

- District will only share student-level data with partner organizations within FERPA guidelines

The applicant's vision "to redefine the mission of small and rural schools and their community college partners to realize the goal of each secondary student graduating from high school with 24 hours of college credit toward an academic degree or technical certification in a chosen career field," will likely be accomplished with the assurances outlined above. Overall, this places the Aubrey Independent School District in the top score range for their reform vision and comprehensive plan.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Aubrey Independent School District's approach to implementing its reform proposal supports high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation based on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted by Aubrey Independent School District and a Successful Schools Collaborative to select which schools to include in the proposal as participating districts. The selection criteria included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• state and federal accountability ratings</li> <li>• achievement gaps between low socioeconomic status learners and general student population in ELA and math</li> <li>• high dropout rates</li> <li>• low rates of advanced credit enrollment in high school</li> <li>• low postsecondary education success rates</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Applicant's approach ensured participating schools met eligibility requirements and were committed to implementing the project in their districts. Participating low-performing rural schools were paired with high-performing suburban schools which will enable multiple approaches to implementing the proposed Blueprint. This approach is comprehensive and supports the activities identified in implementing the applicant's high-quality plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Applicant provides a list of participating schools with data to support rural status and criteria as listed above. Participating schools are low-performing schools as identified in grant notice).</li> <li>3. Applicant provides a documentation of the total number of participating students from low-income families, high-need students, and participating educators. A chart (Appendix A.2.3) was provided that identified all the required information to meet the requirements for participating students.</li> </ol> <p>Aubrey Independent School District received the top score for this criteria because the data provided was specific, clear, and met all the requirements defined in the notice.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District provides evidence of a high-quality plan and sufficiently describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up to support change beyond the participating schools. The proposal has a well-developed blueprint for middle and high schools to create career and college pathways for all students. The blueprint outlines assurances, key practices, action steps, resources, performance measures, and expected outcomes. It has an effective evaluation process to adjust and improve student learning and achievement based on data and feedback. The blueprint will be completed by the end of the project and made available for other schools to replicate the process and design successful school improvement initiatives. Another key aspect to the blueprint is the ability for elementary schools to utilize the blueprint by only having to adjust the professional development conducted and assessments administered.</p> <p>The applicant did not provide a logic model or theory of change but the narrative was well written to explain the changes being proposed and the relationship between the elements of the program. A logic model representing how the proposal will improve student learning would have provided clarity by presenting the big picture of change along with certain important details.</p> <p>A top score was given to the applicant based on the evidence provided to support the proposed LEA-wide reform and change.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals are ambitious with the gains expected in the four year period yet attainable given the program resources applied to the project</li> <li>• Annual goals are equal to the State ESEA for years 1-3 and exceed targets for year 4</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performance on summative assessments is included and is an attainable goal in the applicant's proposal because it includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research-based and classroom-proven professional development</li> <li>• Increased content knowledge and instructional proficiencies of teachers</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		

- Benchmark tests every 6 weeks
- Data will be used to monitor student progress and build student plans
- Data will be available to educators, students, and parents

2. Decreasing achievement gaps is included in the proposal and the goal is attainable because:

- Restructures the school day to provide tutoring sessions in math for high need students beginning in 6th grade
- Students may attend tutorials in a personalized atmosphere on online
- Staff and college interns will be paid extra to supervise student sessions

3. Increasing graduation rates is included in the proposal and the goal is attainable because:

- A "Grad Coach" will monitor students' grades, attendance, discipline reports, and other risk factors
- Counselors will work with students to develop personal and academic goals and provide coordination of efforts between parents and the school
- Students will be given opportunities for tutoring, social supports, and ongoing encouragement

4. Increasing college enrollment rates is included in the proposal and the goal is attainable because:

- Works with middle school students to create a degree plan
- Students receive scholarship awards to take college credit courses in high school
- Online college preparation program will be purchased
- Family workshops will be held to explore careers, prepare for college entrance exams, completing enrollment, submitting FASFA and scholarship applications, and providing college campus tours

An exception to the attainability of college enrollment rates is the increase identified at some of the district levels going from 5% (baseline) to 95% (end of grant period) with no explanation of how this significant gain will be accomplished. This is an ambitious goal but not feasible without sufficient evidence to prove how goals will be accomplished.

5. Postsecondary degree attainment is included in the proposal and the goal is attainable because:

- Students will have experiences in high school that empower them to access student support programs to pass college credit courses
- Students will monitor their own progress, access student support programs, enroll in courses, and manage their degree program online
- College to Career Advisor will continue to access student's information through the online program and provide encouragement until postsecondary graduation

Overall, the top score is given to the applicant in this area because sufficient evidence was provided to support each of the specific items as defined in the application notice.

## 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	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Aubrey Independent School District has provided some evidence of a clear record of success since 2008 in advancing student learning and achievement. The district has provided descriptions, charts, and raw student data that demonstrates its ability to increase equity in learning and teaching with the innovative blueprint used successfully in small rural schools. Aubrey Independent School District houses the Successful Schools Collaborative which expands the capacity of small schools to plan, implement, and evaluate successful reform initiatives. The College to Career Blueprint being proposed in this application was created by the Collaborative Advisory Board in 2008 and has been implemented in rural schools across Texas.

1. Celina ISD, which is one of the participating schools in this proposal, implemented the College to Career Blueprint in 2010. In 2011, the district received Gold Performance Acknowledgements for Texas Success Initiative mathematics and ELA. The Blueprint is designed to improve student learning, close achievement gaps, and increase college enrollment rates.

Weakness: This evidence is somewhat vague and would have been more thorough if a data table had been provided with

specific student data (test scores, graduation rates, college enrollment) for schools that have implemented the Blueprint.

2. Applicant has provided evidence of ambitious and significant reforms in low-performing schools by documenting evidence from one of the participating schools. Gainesville ISD partnered with area colleges and the Denton Regional Medical Center to develop a Collaborative Dropout Reduction program. The results of the program have led to a framework of research-based dropout prevention strategies, a reduction in the dropout rate, and an increase in student achievement as evidenced by results on college entrance exams and enrollment in college or career schools.

Weakness: A data table reflecting the decreased dropout rate and increased student achievement for schools implementing the Collaborative Dropout Reduction program would have substantiated the evidence and provided justification for the applicant's proposal,

3. There is evidence to support student performance data is available to students, educators, and parents. A technology grant in 2008 provided four of the participating districts with personal technology programs, technology-based supplemental instruction, and parent participation. Each district was successful in implementing online websites or portals for parents to access data that is relevant to helping students succeed.

The score in this area is in the middle range because of the vagueness of the evidence supporting these programs. Without the student data it's difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

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

Aubrey Independent School District operates with a high level of transparency in their processes, practices, and investments by making public by school, actual school-level expenditures by:

- Currently having a DUNS number and CCR that is in compliance with Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act
- District will meet reporting requirements and deadlines
- Each school in the district is a Title I school and adheres to federal guidelines by reporting school-level expenditures in four categories

1. Each participating school publishes a district-wide salary schedule on their websites based on the U. S. Census Bureau's classification and documentation of salary schedules were included in the proposal for 2011-2012.
2. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff were included in the documentation of this proposal for 2011-2012.
3. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only were included in the documentation of this proposal for 2011-2012.
4. Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level were included in the documentation of this proposal for 2011-2012.

The applicant provided sufficient evidence for this area and included an appendix of the salary schedules in Appendix B.2.1. Therefore, the score is high because all the requirements were met.

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

Aubrey Independent School District has provided evidence of successful conditions where it has implemented personalized learning environments by taking advantage of the flexible management options approved by state education agencies to align budget and staffing decisions to meet the needs of students and educators. By providing flexible hours and days of attendance for students who are at risk of dropping out or denied credit for one or more classes as a result of state attendance requirements, the district will likely be successful in implementing its proposal. The district has provided evidence to support their compliance with state regulations by not exceeding the total amount of funding they are eligible to receive and they are accountable to improving academic performance over time.

The applicant has provided sufficient evidence of autonomy by building its proposal on not only the original recommendations set forth by the Texas Education Authority, but by also including additional reforms with flexible schedules, professional development, and incentives for effective teachers. The applicant is innovative in its inclusion of college degrees and/or industry-based certifications for high school students. The applicant meets the requirements for this area which is reflected in the high scores.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates engagement of various stakeholders including a collaborative team comprised of school educators and administrators, higher education institution faculty and administrators, community members, and workforce and industry leaders. Once the Blueprint described in this proposal was developed by the collaborative team, presentations were made to participating districts which resulted in support from the majority of the teachers in each of the schools. Proposal shows 90% support of teachers which exceeds the minimum requirement of 70%.</p> <p>Weakness: Applicant fails to provide evidence that teachers were engaged in the development of the Blueprint, even though there was strong support. Proposal would be stronger if evidence had been provided that teachers had input into the design of the project or that feedback from teachers had been incorporated into the proposal.</p> <p>Letters of support included were from parent lead foundations, business and industry partners, local civic and community-based organizations, and postsecondary education.</p> <p>Weakness: An area of support lacking in this proposal is student participation and engagement. There is no evidence supporting input from students or student organizations in the development of the proposal. Proposal would be stronger if evidence had been provided that students, student organizations, and parents had input into the design of the project or that feedback from students, student organizations, and parents had been incorporated into the proposal.</p> <p>Overall the score for this area is in the middle high range with deductions resulting in the lack of evidence of teacher and student involvement.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Aubrey Independent School District provides a thorough analysis of its current status in implementing personalized learning environments. Evaluation of past performance over the last several years indicated rural districts did not score as high as suburban districts, differences existed between economically disadvantaged and the general student population, and participation of stakeholders was less in low-performing schools. The plan being submitted in this proposal addressed these areas needing improvement and the logic behind the reform proposal is reasonable and will likely result in making the proposed changes. Providing rural districts access to collaborative services through community colleges, online tutoring, and innovative technology, is a sound approach to bridging the existing gap of student performance between rural and suburban areas. The high score reflects the thoroughness of the applicant's evidence to support their plan.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District has an exhaustive approach to engage and empower learners by moving away from the traditional graduation plans to providing students opportunities to chose a career field and build a plan to reach their goals which is likely to improve student learning. The proposed plan takes into consideration each student's personal goals, allows students to explore career choices, and provides support and services to insure goals are successfully met. These innovative strategies are likely to improve student learning. Evidence is documented by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A thorough plan to develop career pathway courses by partnering with area colleges, technical schools, and industry/business leaders will be available to students. Plans will include college credits and industry certifications for jobs/occupations along with appropriate job skills required. Students will associate what they are studying with the career path they are pursuing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through technology, specifically, Naviance Succeed online program, students will be able to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college and career ready standards and graduation requirements. The College and Career Blueprint being proposed details how students develop goals and monitor their own progress to be successful.</li> <li>• Proposed plan enables students to choose their careers paths based on their interests and through technology provides access to opportunities that have not existed in their current programs. Students will use technology to enhance</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		

learning, explore careers, take career/college courses while still in high school, and develop skills needed to be successful in post secondary education.

- Applicant provides documentation of student's exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning by providing opportunities for college/career courses in areas of interest. Students will be exposed to other students and educators outside of their normal routine when they take college/career classes. Another unique aspect of the project is the requirement for students in the project to participate in paid employment or an internship which will expose students to other communities, cultures, and economic backgrounds.
- Participating students will develop teamwork skills through the development of cohorts and service learning projects within the community. Students will be supervised and graded by employers or supervisors and educators. Skills will be developed in their chosen career path.

2. Evidence to support the proposed plan ensures each student has:

- Participating students will be required to complete a Personal Graduation Plan and will be trained to use the online program, Naviance Succeed to develop a career path with the associated courses for instructional content and skills required to complete the program.
- Professional development for teachers, reformed classrooms into project-based experiences, interactive lessons, and workshops for parents will provide a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments.
- District uses a framework, CSCOPE, which is aligned to content area and includes Texas College and Career Readiness Standards.
- Participating schools will implement a common data system, Texas Data System GPS Dashboard, to enable them to design, develop and implement data systems to manage, analyze, disaggregate and use individual student to teacher data. Reports will assist districts in providing ongoing and regular feedback on a frequent basis.
- The Dashboard will provide personalized learning recommendations in real-time and will allow teacher to make data based decisions concerning teaching and learning.
- High-need participating students will be accommodated through technology to determine the need for intervention, identifies risk factors, and provides an alternative learning environment for struggling students.

3. Proposal includes evidence of mechanisms to provide training and support to students by incorporating technology use training for students and a parent workshop to engage parents, career and college planning training to use the Naviance program, and small learning communities with cohorts based on student's chosen career pathway. Students will receive feedback on their academic progress with access to real-time data in the proposed data warehouse development.

Applicant has provided convincing evidence that their implementation strategy will enable participating students pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to career and college ready graduation requirements and the score reflects supporting evidence that all aspects in this area were addressed.

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

Overall, the applicant has proposed a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. This plan includes an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students, enables participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements, and accelerates learning through support of students' needs. Applicant's approach to teaching and leading will help educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students. Evidence to support these statements includes:

1. All participating educators will engage in training and in professional teams or communities to:

- Effectively implement personalized learning environments by ELA and Math Coaches providing training in rigorous college preparatory curriculum aligned to College and Career Standards. Instructional best practices will be included by teachers and project staff attending regional Math and Science Collaborative training and Literacy Plan training for project based learning. Enrichment will be presented by coaches to utilize Project Share to access training, resources, and communication with experts in the field. This will enable teachers to lead students in developing personalized learning plans.
- Use professional development based on scientifically researched strategies and will assist educators in administering assessments, using data to make instructional decisions, uses content knowledge to apply collaborative learning, and include parents in the learning process.
- Implement a comprehensive data system to manage and analyze individual student to teacher data and monitor

students' progress.

- Improve teachers' and principals' effectiveness by implementing the Texas Professional Development Appraisal System which includes measures for student growth. Technology will play a key role in providing feedback to link student growth to educator effectiveness. Educators will participate in trainings on evaluation system to empower them to monitor student growth.

2. All participating educators in this proposal will have access to, and will know to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Evidence of resources include:

- Actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning by using the Texas Response to Intervention model which is based on student academic needs and ensures students receive differentiated core instruction, and intervention when needed.
- High-quality learning by implementing the College to Career Blueprint and other resources documented in Appendix C.2.b.ii. Project leverages state data systems, professional development, materials, resources, and assessments in the Blueprint to ensure sustainability.
- Specific resources to provide effective feedback to meet student needs with real time student data through the comprehensive electronic data systems identified in Appendix C.2.b.iii.1.

3. All participating school leaders will have training and resources to enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. Evidence of training, policies, tools, data, and resources include:

- Information from district's teacher evaluation system for the purpose of school improvement by the project director ensuring all schools have components necessary to implement key practices and action steps of the Blueprint. Each participating district will monitor progress of school improvement and provide an annual evaluation of the student growth measures as defined in the project.
- Systems and practices to continuously increase student performance and close gaps by purchasing technology based management systems to automate test administration and data analysis, develop systems for implementing progress monitoring, and using data to inform decisions.

4. Increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals by utilizing coaches for peer mentoring, scholarship incentives, extra duty salary for teachers and incorporating student growth as part of the teacher and principal evaluation system.

The Aubrey Independent School District has submitted a comprehensive high-quality plan in teaching and learning which is reflected in the high score.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Aubrey Independent School District has provided a comprehensive plan to support the implementation of the proposed plan. Resources and support will be available to educators and students through technology, professional development, and partner participation.

1. The district's central office will house the Project Director who will be responsible for the oversight of all implementation activities and coordinating the reform initiatives among all participating schools. Reporting and all other services will be managed by the Project Director for all participating districts. A team of key personnel will be responsible for supporting the transformation of district structures, strategies, and systems to implement key practices.

Weakness: It is unclear if the key personnel are representatives from each participating school or if they are only lead LEA staff members. Application would be stronger if there was evidence that key personnel supporting the project included representatives from each participating district to ensure all stakeholders are engaged in communications, reporting, carrying out activities, and managing reforms.

2. Initial planning will be accomplished by an advisory team which includes key project staff. The Blueprint has established parameters within which the LEA will function to facilitate reform but has flexibility to enable individual districts the ability to

incorporate strategies that will meet the specific needs of their campus. Each district will build their own unique model to implement under the leadership of the project staff.

Weakness: There is no documentation to identify members of the advisory team. Application would have been stronger if identification of advisory team included personnel from each participating district.

3. The proposed project will enable students the opportunity to become engaged in creating and monitoring their own learning pathway to meet personal and academic goals. The innovative framework provides students an alternative method of completing course work in multiple ways without having to attend traditional hour/day class schedules.

Weakness: Proposal would have been stronger if the applicant provided evidence of how this has proven successful in the schools.

4. Assessments to measure student learning will be created for each type of course being implemented in the proposal. Data from these assessments will be analyzed to guide teachers in designing changes in curriculum and instruction to address the needs of students. Project staff will lead the training, analysis, and program management required to make these assessments effective.

Weakness: Applicant does not provide timelines of when these assessments will be administered to ensure students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards.

5. Modeling of differentiated instruction for teachers, adding technology components to meet students' needs, access to a variety of instructional materials, and providing ELA and Math coaches are appropriate practices to give full accessibility to all students.

The applicant receives a middle high score range in this area for providing documentation for a comprehensive infrastructure to support implementation for their plan with the exception of missing components as indicated above.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Aubrey Independent School District presents a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure which is documented in the table, Appendix D.4.1, of the College to Career Blueprint. All components of the plan have key practices, action steps, performance measures, outcome, resources, and indicate the partners associated with each area. Sufficient evidence is provided for:

1. All participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have necessary content, tools, and other learning resources to support the proposal. Applicant's key factor to implementation is through technology. Each school will establish systems, structures, and strategies for using technology tools for curriculum, data reports, professional development, formative and summative assessments. Technology Lending Agreements will be developed to ensure students have extended learning sessions and home access. The school day will be restructured to extend student learning time in core content. The goal of students having access 24 hours a day, seven days a week is ambitious but achievable over time.

2. Applicant has an aggressive plan to develop a Personal Technology Handbook and the Technology Loan Agreement. Parents will have to be involved in training, signing of agreements, and agreeing to taking responsibility for the devices loaned to them. After technology agreements are entered into, parents and students will have access to technical assistance.

Weakness: Applicant does not address specifically who will provide the technical assistance or how parents will communicate with the technical assistance person providing support. For working parents in rural areas, access to technical support outside of normal hours may significantly impact the effectiveness of the program if technology support is not available during off hours. Applicant also does not address how students whose parents do not sign technology agreements will have equitable access to resources and support. Having access to technology is key to the proposal being successful and the application would be stronger if evidence had been provided on how students who are unable to attain parent support would have equal access to the proposed programs and resources.

3. Evidence supporting applicant's proposal provides parents and students the ability to export information in an open data format is the use of an online technology system, Naviance Succeed. The system allows multi-year plan opportunities, complies with FERPA, and allows parents and students to monitor progress toward academic goals.

4. There is supporting evidence that parents and students will have access to an ePortfolio that will combine data from multiple systems to include test scores, college visit information, scholarship applications, extracurricular activities, college admissions test scores, college applications, teacher recommendations, transcripts, personal communications, and letters of support.

Based on the comprehensive model described in this proposal, the students and parents will have access to the information they need. Since the applicant did not address students whose parents are not involved, the score for this area is high but

decreased to the middle range for the oversight.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Aubrey Independent School District's strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The strategy addresses how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments by placing responsibility on the Project Director to ensure all invested parties are informed of status and effectiveness of project. Evidence to support the continuous improvement process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rigorous continuous improvement process by creating an advisory committee to monitor progress throughout implementation</li> <li>• Advisory Committee will be able to address problems quickly with access to real-time data</li> <li>• Advisory Committee will use data to utilize site-based decision making and improve areas of the plan</li> <li>• Advisory Committee will establish a decision making team to address areas of planning, budgeting, curriculum, patterns in staffing, and professional development</li> <li>• Advisory Committee will review previous campus improvement plans, revisit campus mission and corresponding grant vision to develop action steps to meet current needs of each school</li> <li>• Advisory Committee will collect and analyze data based on the Blueprint and campus improvement plan to ensure implementation is on pace with project timeline during annual planning meetings. Execution of the action steps developed on the Blueprint and review of Campus and District Improvement Plans for each LEA will be done at annual meetings. Advisory Committee will review campus 90 day plans, data, and feedback to review and revise project timelines and targets.</li> <li>• Each campus will identify key practices, action steps, and campus improvement plans</li> </ul> <p>Applicant has presented a high-quality plan with a comprehensive strategy to implement a rigorous continuous improvement process that is ambitious and achievable which is reflected in the high score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders is convincing and supported by evidence of the project director designing and implementing internal and external communications systems that will report to all parties the status and effectiveness of grant activities, budget expenditures, student progress toward performance targets and overall progress toward reaching program goals and objectives. Timelines and staff responsibilities will be published which will provide accountability. Quarterly reports and meetings of advisory boards are sufficient and allows adequate time for monitoring and making adjustments if needed. Applicant meets criteria for this area and receives high score.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant's proposal includes ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. Multiple measures have been identified for the College to Career Project for the required performance measures and additional leading indicators have been identified in the project to ensure each site based teams have information to determine interim growth as well as long-term proficiency outcomes. Proposal includes project performance measures in College and Career Readiness, Academic Growth, and Cognitive Growth.</p> <p>Rationale behind creating these performance measures is appropriate based on the goals established by the project.</p> <p>The measures provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern by addressing college and career goals, educator effectiveness, cognitive growth, community participation, and project evaluation. Plan provides professional development for teacher content knowledge, utilizes curriculum and resources to meet needs of diverse learners, utilizes project based lessons, and uses to technology to manage the process.</p>		

Applicant's approach to review and improve the measure over time is sufficient to gage implementation progress. The proposed plan includes obtaining feedback from participants through a survey at the beginning and end of each school year which is feasible to provide sufficient information on the effectiveness of the program.

The score for this area is high due to the applicant thoroughly addressing all components.

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

Applicant has devised an extensive plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the investment to bring about school improvement. Specific aspects of the plan that documents the effectiveness include:

- Developing a Blueprint of Key Practices and action steps that are proven to be effective
- Performance measures for the project measure contribution of extended day programs with technology
- Survey provides proof of implementation
- Data measures effectiveness of efforts with specific key practices and action steps identified in Blueprint. Predictions are made in Blueprint based on research of effective practices and activities which can then be measured. Applicant provides examples of performance measures developed for the project, i.e., extended day programs with technology resources will increase student achievement measured by a survey to prove implementation and data from assessments to measure effectiveness
- Schools will be able to determine benefits of key practices based on evaluation
- Key practices will be reviewed and revised based on effectiveness
- Compensation reforms include teacher/principal incentive pay, tuition for advanced degrees
- Modifications of school schedules and structures includes online classes outside of normal day/hours, dual college/career credits

The applicant has provided sufficient documentation to support the elements of this area and receives the top score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget proposed by Aubrey Independent School District identifies all funds that will support the project. The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. Applicant has identified one-time investments and ongoing operational costs. Budget identifies funds from other sources used to support the project. There is no documentation of detailed line items identifying these funding sources and the amount each one is contributing. More detailed explanation of these other sources would make a stronger application and also contribute to evidence of sustainability.

A high score has been given in this area due to the comprehensive, detailed budget and narrative supporting this proposal.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A thorough analysis was performed by the applicant to develop a high-quality plan for sustainability by including participant support (state, mayor, partners, participating schools), high quality project management (advisory committee), accessible curriculum systems (career pathways courses, common assessments, community college/technical schools extended after grant), highly qualified and certified staff, ongoing staff development, and interactive learning and teaching resources (technology, data systems, state and federal accountability systems).

Weakness: Applicant identified support funds in the budget from other sources during the life of the grant and beyond. Applicant states these funds are for student incentives for attendance, performance and participation in ongoing college and career readiness activities - dual credit tuition scholarships, entrance testing fees, and graduation cap/gown. There is no documentation on how these funds are distributed among the items listed or what organization is providing the funding. Application would have been stronger with an itemized budget and additional evidence of how these particular funded sources would specifically support the program after the grant.

Sufficient evidence was provided to describe the sustainability of the project with the exception noted above and a middle

score range was given.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Aubrey Independent School District meets the competitive preference priority based on:

- Partnerships with business and industry partners (North Texas Medical Center, Bowie Memorial Hospital, Good Samaritan Center of Denton, Bellmire Healthcare Facilities), Workforce Board partners (North Texas Workforce Development Board, North Central Texas Workforce Development Board, Texoma Workforce Development Board), Higher Education and Technical Schools (North Central Texas College, Del Mar College, Collin College, Kraft Technical Training Center, North Central Texas College Lifelong Learning Department), and Community Organizations (Communities in Schools) to serve on advisory committees, identify necessary skills and competencies for curriculum development, identify certifications in career pathways and resources to support training, provide clinical and internship sites.
- Identification of 10 population-level desired results for students in the LEA or consortium of LEAs.
- Each partner has a specific role in the project and partner collaboration will be tracked at the aggregate level for all participating students and will be determined for each grade level of students
- Use of data to target resources for participating students by working as a collaborative team to integrate workforce skills and post secondary credits into high school courses to develop background experiences to succeed in college or technical school. Will work with partners to identify at risk students through Early Warning Indicator System and students with excessive absences and provide social service referrals, interventions, attendance incentives, academic monitoring, substance abuse gang violence prevention education, and parent education and support.
- Develop a strategy to scale the model beyond participating students by utilizing a model with proven successful results in urban, rural and suburban communities. Model can also be replicated at elementary levels with minimal modifications.
- Improve results over time by working with partners to provide tools to change the structure and strategies for each campus.
- Counselors and Communities in Schools social workers will work together to provide services for at-risk students
- LEA educators will learn to integrate high school courses and workforce skills. Community partners will address attendance using incentive programs which will build capacity of staff in participating schools
- Needs and assets of school and community are aligned with goals for improving education and family and community supports. Postsecondary education and community partners will provide college credit at no cost during high school.
- A decision making process and infrastructure will be created as part of the College and Career program. All components will be evaluated based on performance measures and evaluated by advisory committee to determine effectiveness
- Students and families will have access to Grad Coaches and social workers to determine needs and locate services and resources to keep students on track to graduate
- Project Director will be responsible for continuous monitoring and making necessary adjustments. Progress will be tracked and feedback provided ensuring continuous improvement through onsite visits, collection and analysis of data, and ongoing review of school records.
- Performance measures are correlated with partners and are ambitious yet achievable.

Applicant provides convincing evidence of meeting competitive preference and receives a high score.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

As stated in other sections, the Aubrey Independent School District has comprehensively addressed how it builds on the core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments to improve learning. The designed plan has the

potential 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 and graduation requirements; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The applicant address the four key areas originally identified in the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) to support comprehensive education reform: (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around lowest-achieving schools. Supporting evidence that the plan addresses these core educational assurance areas are documented in the other sections.

The applicant provides sufficient evidence that these areas of concentration will positively effect student learning and insure goals under this proposal are met. The applicant meets Priority 1.

Total	210	190
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