



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0479OH-1 for Cleveland Municipal School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Overall, the applicant sets forth a strong comprehensive and coherent reform vision for CMSD, and supports the vision with evidence of past performance, rigorous research, and strong community and partner buy-in. Evidence of the innovative vision includes, but is not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Cleveland’s Plan for Transforming Schools;” a systemic change plan constructed in partnership with the mayor, the community, and business and university partners. • “Transformation Alliance;” an oversight group responsible for the evaluation of the systemic change plan comprised of citizens, parents, and educators. • “Portfolio of Schools;” a program by which external agencies may operate schools within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). <p>The approaches to reform in CMSD appear to build on past work in the four core educational areas through truly innovative and well-researched initiatives.</p> <p>Their approach to innovation requires increased explanation as to how the CMSD intends to scale up best practices in high-performing traditional schools. While the applicant mentions its intentions to scale up these best practices, the bulk of this section describes the plan to build the “portfolio of schools” rather than, in tandem, scaling best practices in existing comprehensive schools. However, the applicant addresses scaling best practices in comprehensive schools in other sections of the application.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD supports school-level implementation of Personalized Learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) CMSD has not yet designed the assessment that it will use to assess readiness at each school; however, once CMSD identifies each school’s readiness phase, schools will be empowered to determine their own research-based approach to support personalized learning. • (b) and (c) all schools will participate in the CMSD reforms. The CMSD clearly presents each school’s participants, and all required data fields to support the application. <p>Involving all 99 schools in the proposal is ambitious and serves as evidence of the applicant’s commitment to LEA-wide reform.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD provides ample evidence in their comprehensive reform plan to support the scaling up of LEA-level reforms to all schools. The theory of change is clearly articulated through the implementation of sweeping reforms that begin at the LEA-level by inviting innovative school models to the LEA, and continue by involving community oversight to evaluate and scale up both existing school successes and best practices identified in the reform efforts.</p> | | |
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 8 |

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is highly likely to achieve the assessment goals listed in this section.

- (a) The student learning and performance goals are in line with the state's ESEA waiver proposal for AMO, cutting deficits in proficiency in half over six years.
- (b) The achievement gaps appear to be properly identified and the proposal is consistent in CMSD's goal to cut gaps in half over the course of six years. CMSD importantly notes the reference groups for the gaps in each assessment.
- (c) Graduation rates are ambitious and consistent with assessment growth rate calculations.
- (d) While the calculations for college enrollment are adequately addressed by CMSD, it is difficult to understand why the "Multi-Racial" category is N/A indicating that there are fewer than 30 students. There is ample Multi-Racial data in all selected assessments as well as high school graduation rates. This could be due to a number of factors including state/federal coding, student self-identification, etc., but if fewer than 30 Multi-Racial students are enrolling in college, then it seems like this would be addressed specifically in the reform plan as the number of Multi-Racial students is growing throughout the Nation.

The CMSD presents National Student Clearinghouse data to support postsecondary degree attainment. The growth calculations are consistent with previous goals.

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

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 11 |
| <p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The CMSD acknowledges the challenges to the system that may have impacted their record of success over the past four years, and highlights successes as well as areas for improvement.</p> <p>(a) CMSD highlights modest growth in the Ohio Performance Index scores, and acknowledges the increase in the achievement gap between white and black students. While the percentage of schools receiving a "D or F" rating from the state report dropped from 72% to 66% over a four-year period, this is certainly an area for improvement for the CMSD.</p> <p>(b) The CMSD makes a strong argument for the success of their growing "portfolio of schools" in this section. The portfolio schools, however, represent a relatively small number of the total number of schools during this four-year period. The reforms for traditional schools seem less ambitious in the CMSD explanations. For example, it is difficult to identify the ambitious reforms as part of the refocus schools. "Receiv[ing] support based upon specific needs" is a general statement that lacks detail to assess the ambition of this reform effort.</p> <p>(c) CMSD uses nationally-recognized data systems to provide access to student achievement and goal setting data (i.e., SchoolNet and Naviance). CMSD acknowledges that the SchoolNet achievement data is available to teachers, and not yet to students, although they plan to provide access to students in the future. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how teachers have used SchoolNet in the past--either as an occasional use summative assessment tool, or as a daily use formative assessment teaching tool.</p> | | |
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD links to the Ohio Treasurer of State's database of public employee salaries. This database makes school personnel salaries available to the public. CMSD acknowledges the lack of transparency in actual school-level expenditures. CMSD notes that they have retained an outside agency to assist in the budget process and in increasing budget transparency.</p> | | |
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD provides adequate evidence to support their position that both state and local laws support sufficient autonomy and the opportunity to fully implement the "Cleveland Plan." State and local legislative support is provided in the text of the legislation in an appendix to this application.</p> | | |

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| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD demonstrates a high level of stakeholder engagement. The vast number of agencies involved in the development of the “Cleveland Plan,” including (among others) the mayor’s office, city council members, the teachers union, local businesses, and parent representatives, signifies a unified commitment to change.</p> <p>Letters of support are included in the application, as is the requisite signature for teacher union support.</p> | | |
| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD presents a high-quality plan to assess the gaps in implementing personalized learning across all schools. CMSD clearly spells out their interpretation of personalized learning and provides adequate measures for schools. What is difficult to assess in this section is that much of the gap analysis will depend on a yet-to-be-created school self-assessment. The instrument will likely clarify what it means to have a gap between current practices and the proposed personalized learning environment, but at this point that distinction is not clear. The applicant does, however, list the various areas that they will explore to identify gaps between the proposed plan and current practice, and the list is fairly comprehensive.</p> | | |

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>The CMSD presents a high quality plan for personalized learning that supports college-and-career-ready goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Each student will actively participate in tracking their progress through the various strategies stated in this section. The strategies include both individual tasks and responsibilities as well as group and project-based responsibilities. The applicant addresses their commitment to student-centered learning, where students construct their own knowledge under the guidance of a teacher/facilitator. Importantly, CMSD addresses parent and student access to CMSD proposed programs through a well-developed communications plan. CMSD notes that while parents have school choice now, it is difficult for parents to access information about the many programs available throughout the school system. CMSD assigns funds to support "Project C1," which is an effort to increase programmatic awareness. Furthermore, CMSD will service its schools (in Project C2) by providing professional consulting to develop an assessment to help schools determine their readiness for personalized learning. (b) CMSD commits to providing a sequence of instruction that is tailored to every student’s individual learning goals, and provides evidence that individual counseling and technology-enhanced progress tracking will provide the means to accomplish this task. The applicant mentions the need for a “platform” to implement blended learning—combining high quality digital content with classroom instruction; however, CMSD mentions only that content will be available to students within the SchoolNet tool. CMSD does not comment further as to how the content will be selected, or how it will tie into the overall instructional plan. CMSD addresses their “Phase 3” approach to personalized learning which details the opportunity to base student progress upon mastery of concepts rather than grades, which provides evidence of the intention to deeply integrate personalized learning. (c) CMSD provides evidence to support their training plans; however, absent from the student-level training is the blended learning platform mentioned earlier in this section. While formative data and college-and-career-ready data will be available by the two systems mentioned, access to rich digital content—at the core of this approach to personalized learning—requires more attention in this section. | | |
| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 18 |
| <p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD provides support for a high-quality plan for teaching and leading.</p> <p>(a) Through innovative partnerships and legislation, the CMSD and the Teacher’s Union have collaborated to create a voluntary transfer system that enables teachers to take full advantage of school-based professional with little concern that they will be transferred to another school which may subscribe to a different model of teaching and learning. Like their approach to</p> | | |

personalized learning for students, CMSD proposes to offer mastery-based professional development to teachers where teachers may demonstrate proficiency to advance into another area of professional development more suited to their desire and skillset.

(b) Access to student data will be easier through the creation of a single-sign-on portal where the formative data from SchoolNet and college progression data from Naviance will combine for quick teacher access. This portal is also described as including digital content both for students and for teacher professional development. It is not clear, though, when and if this system will be fully implemented as described, and when CMSD expects teachers and students to actively use the system in their daily teaching and learning.

(c) Participating school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment. CMSD leaders create this effective learning environment, in part, by extending the student calendar to span a greater amount of time. CMSD also details the need to operate outside of the traditional high school schedule, and creates a personalized learning environment focusing on college-and-career-ready goals by empowering 7th grade students to construct a high school course taking plan.

(d) CMSD identifies innovative strategies and partnerships to place teachers in schools where they desire to be and where they are needed, and incentivizes placing the most effective teacher teams in the lowest performing schools. Furthermore, CMSD and CTU “are currently designing a Differentiated Compensation System” with the assistance of various public and private entities. The compensation system is designed to “deepe[n] the capacity of administrative and teacher leadership around collaboration in support of reform efforts.” The compensation system both rewards good teaching, and empowers leaders to dismiss ineffective teachers. Overall, this approach seems innovative in its approach to ensuring that students are taught and schools are led by effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 11 |
| (D)(1) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>(a) The “Cleveland Plan” provides evidence that the CMSD central offices will play a supportive role to school-based autonomy as outlined within this application. Accompanying legislation facilitates personalized learning by empowering schools to self-assess into a particular level and model of personalized learning, and change course as necessary to promote student measure growth. Newly created “Action Teams” provide a supportive role to building administrators. CMSD also denotes the need to revamp their human resources department, enhancing their abilities to support schools in the recruitment and retention of talent. A potential issue, however, is the fact that the position responsible for district technology seems to be buried in the organizaitional chart, whereas many parts of this application bring technology to the forefront. This lack of a direct connection between the technology leadership and instructional leadership--at least from an organizational perspective--could potentially lead to gaps in the program implementation as detailed in this application.</p> <p>(b) The Academic Achievement Planning Process (AAP) provides evidence to support CMSD’s commitment to support localized decision making. The agreement between the CMSD and the CTU supports personnel decisions with an increased focus on building-level decisions. It is unclear as to how administrators are empowered to remove underperforming staff from their schools in a timely fashion.</p> <p>(c and d) The applicant has an innovative policy in place that permits students to earn credit based upon content mastery; however, it is cumbersome to enact as each case currently requires superintendent approval.</p> <p>(e) CMSD provides adequate evidence and explanation that all programs will accommodate the special considerations of all students.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
| (D)(2) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>(a) CMSD provides multiple points of access to school learning materials through the use of technology. They address the issue of access to technology by relying upon public libraries.</p> <p>(b) Beyond the typical methods of application support, CMSD offers a Parent University targeted at low income families. The</p> | | |

goal of the outreach program is to both support families in accessing technology as well as informing families of the many CMSD programs and opportunities.

(c) The applicant does not use “open data format” in the correct context as defined in this notice. The examples provided in this section refer to access to system-secured data and do not speak to the data format which would provide an indication of the ease of integration of one system’s data into another system.

(d) The applicant partially addresses data interoperability in their response in listing systems that do not integrate. The Harvard Strategic Data Project personnel are not relevant to this section as they do not contribute directly to data interoperability.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 12 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD takes the opportunity in this section to explain how they have used data in the past to ensure continual improvement. At the very end of CMSD’s response to this section, they state that CMSD will incorporate RTT-D strategies and projects into the existing Continuous Improvement Process. Furthermore, CMSD notes that they will highlight the portions of the CIP relevant to the RTT-D initiatives to the public.</p> <p>The existing CIP is described as an important process by which CMSD measures their progress at the school and district levels. This section requires detail on how CMSD will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of investments funded by RTT-D. Stating that it will be a piece of the existing CIP may not provide the level of detail required to denote progress and expenditures relevant to this grant.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 5 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The communications strategy detailed in this section provides a high-level of support for internal and external stakeholders. It is evident that CMSD has considered using various forms of communication, from face-to-face meetings to social media to disseminate their message, and to solicit feedback from stakeholders. CMSD ensures all schools are aware of district-level progress towards goals and how each school contributes to the overall progress of the district.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Overall the applicant provides a sufficient number of performance measures and appropriate rationale for their selection.</p> <p>Regarding the teacher and leader effectiveness measures, the CMSD notes that they cannot provide Highly Effective Teacher and Principal data, nor can they provide Effective Teachers and Principal data due to this being the first year of the new teacher and principal evaluation system implementation. It is unclear as to how the CMSD currently tracks this information.</p> | | |
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 5 |
| <p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMSD provides a highly-structured approach to evaluating the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities. Through the use of formative and summative data explorations conducted by both internal staff and external evaluators, CMSD will attempt to associate financial expenditures with student outcomes such as achievement. The timeline and report cycle appear to be reasonable and should provide the public and the RTT-D program monitors with timely and accurate feedback of program goal attainment and effectiveness.</p> | | |

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a and b) The applicant's budget identifies all funds that will support the project. The applicant presents this information clearly and associates funds directly to each project listed in the various sections of this application. The detail is sufficient to support the comprehensive vision of the CMSD plan.</p> <p>(c) Regarding Project D4, Interoperable Data Systems, the rationale is a not as clear as other expenditures. In previous application sections, CMSD noted that SchoolNet would be the dashboard for formative data. The product mentioned in the budget seems to be a dashboard solution, similar to SchoolNet, but perhaps would serve as the missing datawarehouse component noted previously. This expense requires a bit of explanation as to how it ties in with other data expenditures.</p> <p>Overall, this is a sound and well-thought-out budget with sufficient detail to support program expenditures.</p> | | |
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides sufficient evidence for sustaining the effort beyond the RTT-D funding. CMSD provides a powerful data point that the recurring expenditures generated from the various RTT-D supported initiatives, \$7 million, represents 1.1% of the district's total operating expenses. The district is also seeking a property tax override to further sustain district initiatives.</p> <p>While CMSD intends to develop a sustainability plan during the course of the grant, they identify only a potential property tax increase as a future source of funding to continue the RTT-D initiative.</p> | | |

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The applicant provides evidence of a large number of partnerships and a mechanism for tracking and monitoring needs of the district and how these needs are met by the various partnerships. Relevant to the Competitive Preference Priority, CMSD focuses on two partnerships: Humanware and Community Wrap Around Schools, which both support the "Cleveland Plan."</p> <p>(2) The population-level desired results for students are well articulated for both the Humanware partnership and the Wrap Around Schools partnership.</p> <p>(3) The applicant will use a combination of external evaluators and internal teams to assist in assessing the effectiveness of the programs. The applicant is clear that the performance measures for the Community Wrap Around Schools are in development, and they present the most recent version of the measures in draft form.</p> <p>(4) The applicant notes that these partnerships would add the necessary social and emotional skills into the Common Core and other educational priorities.</p> <p>(5) In addition to supporting the social and emotional needs of students, these partnerships would build capacity of district leaders by providing consulting for district and school-level leaders on social and emotional competencies.</p> <p>The Health/Social Emotional Learning indicator for the secondary levels and the PreK-3 Non-Cognitive Growth measures will be used to track progress in this initiative.</p> | | |

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |
| <p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> | | |

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build upon core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments. The various projects and initiatives listed in this application were both ambitious and well-researched. If programs are implemented according to this plan, the many student outcomes should indicate that students have made significant progress towards college and career readiness.

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| Total | 210 | 181 |
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0479OH-2 for Cleveland Municipal School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The evidence provided in section A(1) is very thorough, inspiring and comprehensive. The proposal impressively embeds a broad scope of the plan and the vision of the community included. The level of detail, thought and effort shows great prior planning and emphasis on a whole village approach to reform.

Missing from this section is a direct articulation of Absolute Priority #1's emphasis on personalization of the educational experience. Emphasis on student success is at the 30,000 foot level more than at the student/classroom level. Each of the four sections is fully explained. The priorities of the transformation seem to be in an order that is contrary to the literature on school reform. For example, a major priority to personalization is curriculum, instruction and assessment and instructional leadership surrounding that. The transformation is centered with student/teacher interaction. This section, while well done, is a bit off that focus on comprehensive, coherent reform. Later in this section, the characteristics of the portfolio do not start with personalization evidence in the curriculum and then move outward to the other items to meet the Absolute Priority. It also appears that the key role of the principal as instructional leader may be less of a priority here.

The major themes of this section included effectively:

Effective teachers

Engaging curriculum

Instructional leadership

Parent/Family connections

The definition of personalization of choice is one aspect of enabling learning. The focus here is teacher curriculum design around student learning needs/preferences.

Again, this is a strong section with many great district-wide systems in place to enable this to be a successful project.

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| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This is a very thorough section. Impressive data are included and all 99 schools are targeted.

The notion of a basic level of personalization is a bit problematic. It is either personalized or not. There is choice included as

one aspect of personalization. Most of personalization is an engaging curriculum taught by effective teachers. What is proposed is sound if grounded in the reality that at some schools it is likely to be whole school adoption and at some it is likely to be more scattered to start.

The inclusion of all schools is ambitious and noteworthy.

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| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

For this section, there is no specific change theory and/or curricular approach included. The rhetoric is outstanding and the whole community buy-in is outstanding. It is not evident what change model is adopted. The philosophy and vision are spot on. For example, this work could be influenced by Michael Fullan or other change theorists. The curricular model could be indicated to be influenced by Marzano, Danielson or others in the field. Later in section 3, Danielson is mentioned as an approach used in schools for professional development, but no mention is made in this section of whether Danielson or Guskey (also mentioned in C) are overarching models used to frame the vision for reform and change. Without a conceptual framework or guiding philosophy it will be more difficult to engender transformational reform and personalized learning.

Many of the approaches and successes are already occurring in spots in the district. It could be clearer on how this effort is building on these successes and what theories they are they grounded in.

This section would be stronger with a theoretical framework to undergird the rationale for this change, specific grounding in sources from the knowledge base and a few examples of success is occurring in the last three years or more to build capacity for the success of this proposal.

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

The presentation of data and the analysis of it are superbly articulated. This section references impressive data systems with systems in place to meet the Absolute Priority #1. College enrollment rates are indicated well. Clearly the team in this district has strong capacity in this area and data are well provided in all sections in a), b), c and d).

However, the goals established seem achievable but less ambitious.

If one looks at the projected data for the students who have disabilities and/or limited English proficiencies, the ultimate goal for 2014-2015 and beyond leave too many children behind and perpetuates extraordinary gaps. The numbers across all measurable goals appear to be ones that might be achievable without this funding. And, they seem achievable for districts with less capacity than indicated in this proposal. The gap-closing section is strong on the surface, but less ambitious for students who are already at proficiency.

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 district demonstrates a multi-faceted and tangible record of reform efforts, particularly in establishing schools with specific themes and areas of focus. There are at least six major school reform initiatives that have enabled targets and solutions to giving students a more positive learning environment. What appears missing from what is part of this section of the plan is a broad community-wide tackling of the ill effects of poverty. Most of the achievement gaps are literacy gaps and poverty's ill effects. The structural changes indicated in the proposal are tremendous innovations. The multi-layered approaches discussed do not indicate how the public sector and private sector are working across social services, counseling, nutrition science, housing, health care, law enforcement, faith institutions, pre-k, after school providers, etc to embed the possibility of a collective effort inside of newfangled and traditional schools to transform education. The burden appears to clearly be on the backs of educators, while young people spend only 1/4 of their days in school.

SchoolNet is a very versatile and expensive system that will create a very high cost after the funding. Professional development for the formative data is crucial, particularly in persistently lowest-achieving schools.

School performance data are available to educators and parents and this proposal will allow access for students and to improve participation, instruction and services.

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

This section in a), b), c) and d) reveals tremendous transparency and ability to drill down to actual costs for personnel and other related expenses. The capacity to know what costs are for any potential effort and initiative is very real and positive. The screen shots and other data were helpful. The authors state that school-wide data are less transparent at this time.

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

The state of Ohio has positioned the policies, regulations and mandates such that districts have flexibility to embrace real reform. What isn't clear is how the state government has transformed itself to allow the flow of resources (people and other) from social services, health care, transportation, juvenile justice, education, etc to accomplish the overcoming of learning impediments. Personalized education may take a different arrangement of state government and private sector providers who often work in silos.

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

There is strong support in this category as evidenced by the support included in this proposal and the process used to garner that support. There is good buy-in in the traditional sense defined in this initiative. The district has worked with the teacher's union to gain very supportive buy-in for this initiative. Stakeholders were fully engaged in the process of planning and developing this proposal. The collective bargaining representation and support for this effort are well documented. Letters of support are strong and show buy-in.

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| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

This section includes an impressive level of stakeholder involvement and who is "at the table." Very powerful commitment across the board to "do the right thing" for all learners. This partnership for a large, urban district is indicative of great potential for success. See earlier comments, summarized here: most of the achievement gaps are literacy (math, reading and information literacy) and poverty's ill effects. The proposal does not describe that focus on personalization impediments that are causing the current gaps and how effective teaches led by great principals with community partnerships can overcome those gaps together. Everyone is at the table but not necessarily broadening the causes of the learning gaps as broader than "blaming schools." It is much larger a burden. And the proposal does not include connections to specific best practices related to classroom based personalization, rather than mostly school choice and big theme personalization. Personalization is very specific to relationships between young people and adults in schools. Choice options are a way to have more purposeful curricular themes or approaches, but are a layer above the power of teacher effectiveness. In addition, significant gaps are still projected in the last years of the funding that do not appear to show results ambitious enough for this effort.

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

| | Available | Score |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 16 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The heart of this section is personalization of learning through student self-direction through the portfolio. It is a well thought-out approach and well defended. They include 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 be career-ready. The literature on personalized learning demonstrates that the way forward from the current mixed results toward transformational learning experiences is through more effective student engagement and student ownership of their learning. The level of understanding of this process is very strong in this section. In section a) the assumption is that with school choice as the heart of the effort,

students, parents and educators will embrace the opportunity to see school as a path to personal fulfillment and college/career readiness. The focus on this aspect in section b) will rely on teams identifying personalized approaches that are working and promulgating them in the district. As mentioned in prior sections, the heart of personalization is identifying each child's special strengths and growth areas and in having them in classrooms with brilliant teachers. Given the current gaps, issues with literacy, and issues with poverty, it is less clear in this proposal section (v) how those issues are specifically addressed. For a young person who is three years behind in reading in the sixth grade, the proposal does not include how they will be served with this personalization approach. In addition, it is not evident for the young person who is identified as having a special need what will be different for their experience. The specifics at the student and classroom level are less well articulated in this section.

The notion of seventh graders knowing their futures is noble, but the reliance on specific goal setting for someone who is 13 is a bit problematic. Identifying interests, areas for growth and expanding on skill-sets necessary for success no matter what path is chosen is crucial...collaboration, literacy, presentation skills, technology skills, healthy lifestyle, fitness, etc...these skills will translate to whatever they choose or the marketplace becomes.

The focus on this section c) on formative assessment and technology are great tools for what is planned. The self-direction of students implies that allowing choice in school theme, school projects, etc will enhance intrinsic motivation and will improve and students will be in a good place to maximize potential. The empirical research to support this is not included nor are the models of curriculum theory that support this. The proposal does not include what schools/districts have been successful with this effort. Student success starts with having effective teachers who design curriculum that so powerfully engages students that they learn what is intended to be learned. The connection of the student-chosen projects to learning that is assessed in Common Core Standards is not obvious here. It is not clear how will mastery of key content be gauged as well as student choice and "feeling good" about their school experience. And, given the current mixed results in the district with important subgroups, it is not clear how results will be different for them in terms of closing gaps, rather than enjoying school more.

It is not clear how the student training components for personalization are aligned with Common Core Standard mastery and college/career readiness.

| | | |
|---|----|----|
| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 16 |
|---|----|----|

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section i is strong in the extent to which the applicant has 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 become career-ready. The section ii builds on the plan for students by providing choice for teachers and personalizing professional development. Section iii includes multiple and frequent measures of student progress as defined in the section. Section iv embeds teacher and leader effectiveness systems for all participating educators (section b) and the bold technology emphasis provides real-time information for optimal learning approaches (b1 and b2). The economic crisis and the subsequent budget realities have hampered abilities to regenerate current teachers' capacities. This section details those challenges well. In the section on teaching and learning, the heart of the Race to the Top effort is increasing academic rigor for students and insisting on student mastery of content and skills rather than "covering material" multiple times and over redundancy. The heart of teacher renewal is included in parts of this section around pedagogical prowess, but less obvious is ratcheting up content knowledge from the early grades though high school.

The Danielson model does provide an excellent model for labeling characteristics of effective teaching and gives specifics to the curricular approaches that should be encouraged. And it informs the teacher evaluation process that is well described.

Given the experiences to date, the proposal does not include how the gaps continue to persist in many schools nor include the glitches in current implementation that this proposal will assist with transforming. That seems less clear as they address the items in this section.

The "year round" model is actually extended school year. The data from research on extended school year calendars are not included nor is the rationale. The results from the research are somewhat positive in the early grades, less so clear later on in middle and high school. And, the best benefit is in teacher morale more that student results.

Leadership "training" may be a piece of the puzzle. Rather, it may be considered leadership development or preparation. The kinds of issues facing district and school leaders are tremendously complex and require a new way of thinking about schooling and leading for learning. The relationship between the union and district is a 20th century construct. The vision for a relationship that fosters 100% student success is not included or indicated as a goal. It is not clear if that is the intent of the authors.

In order to recruit, place and keep the next generation of teachers and leaders partnerships with universities or other providers are crucial so that teacher/leader preparation and preparation are on the "same page." This issue is skimmed over here. Recalling some of the teachers who were previously laid off as indicated in this section and who were mediocre who do not know Common Core Standards or new evaluation systems may not contribute to the success of all learners.

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>Sections (a) and (b) are well articulated in the proposal. Very good systems are or will be in place for organizing the central office, the support for participating schools and in encouraging a team approach at the school level with strong autonomy.</p> <p>It is not clear how more local autonomy for decision-making allows student mastery to be determined for sections (c) giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic; (d) giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and (e) providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. There is little evidence that these new processes ensure mastery rather than course credit flexibility. In addition it is not clear if online learning is to be used here how those processes will be more accessible. It is not evident whether dual language specialists will be involved or how special education experts with Response to Intervention be employed to enable more real-time emphasis on mastery and adaptive curriculum to lead to mastery. Beyond "support" for teachers, it is not clear what specifically will be different to ensure student mastery particularly with two subgroups that have less ambitious goals than mastery from the early sections of the proposal or what components of community engagement with after school programs, nutrition, parent education, etc are included here.</p> <p>The proposal assumes a technology infrastructure that is dynamic, evolving and fluid. Systems will need to talk to one another and be housed in a seamless intranet. That issue is not mentioned but assumed.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The systems in place and proposed in this section are convincing and thorough. This section across parts a), b), c) and d) includes a very impressive array of tools to gather and use data to make informed decisions and to provide access for parents. These systems are only as good as the data that are part of them, so the work with Harvard is a strong collaboration. Impressive evidence of work to design complex, multiple systems.</p> <p>Given the proposed achievement targets, it is less certain that these systems are needed to stay on a path the district is on already.</p> | | |

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 13 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal authors provide a comprehensive and detailed array of data sources, methods and processes to ensure the constant revisioning and tweaking of this effort. It is a massive undertaking well schemed. The focus areas are crucial to this...the goal of all of this is academic success of all students. This section starts with the systems instead of academic success. The experience of prior reform efforts is that districts get multiple current and new ways to identify what they already know, that students from poverty, those who are minority, those who speak English second, those who are identified as having special needs will still be lagging behind. This section does not include a specific and targeted set of interventions for those students. And it does not address strongly regarding students already at or above mastery and how stretch goals will be measured for them. The model for improving academic achievement is a sound building-block for this section.</p> | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is a broad community effort with multiple tentacles to communicate to all constituents. It is well conceived. One piece missing is the communication about calibrating proficient or mastery related to strategies for ongoing communication. For too long students have been labeled proficient for completing assignments, not mastering content. This leads, down the road, to a level of weakness, particularly in literacy and STEM areas that weeds students out of college/career ready areas...for example, counting on their fingers instead of knowing multiplication tables "by heart" jeopardizes success in Algebra. Aspects of this communication plan would be more aligned with the goal of this section if re-calibrated to "mastery" so that school people are not blamed when results look "down" instead of up for a while. Standards of proficiency have been raised in Race to the Top and this may not be obvious to stakeholders whose support is crucial to sustain this effort and to get buy-in from educators who may get "beat up" for expecting too much from all learners.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The systems for educator evaluation and data mining for reporting of success are in place or will be as a result of this proposal and are detailed well in sections a), b) and c)</p> <p>What is less clear across the sections is how the short-term data (student test data, etc.) will correlate with the choice and empowerment innovations of the heart of the proposal. Most of the innovations proposed will take several years to show success. The data reported on effectiveness could show negative results as Common Core Standards curriculum ratchets up rigor. Student choice and problem-based/project-based learning will enable student engagement, but not necessarily immediate results that will show well in reporting about teacher effectiveness. For example, a teacher could be rated very effective for engaging students, but scores may go down on more rigorous tests of mastery. That is the dilemma created by what is proposed. The data will be the data, but in the short-run it may create discouragement and resentment on the part of teachers who are already effective but, with the recalibration of the standards, will not appear to be as effective. In addition, the public nature of all of this puts more pressure on those in the most difficult situations and can lead to leadership burnout.</p> | | |
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 5 |
| <p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Outstanding reflective assessments are included here. If the target-change rubrics were more substantiated or referenced from the literature, (such as the work of Hall and Hord) it would likely allow development of school teams who could reliably and validly gauge/measure the effort's success, particularly with targeted subgroups and provide immediate interventions.</p> <p>As mentioned earlier, communicating the recalibration of curricular expectations to mastery will result in some "negative" looking results that are part of this process. Communicating that with all stakeholders may be the project's greatest challenge.</p> <p>This is a thorough and strong section.</p> | | |

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The project budget is well described and exquisitely detailed. The efforts supplement and complement current areas of emphasis and the authors are realistic about the amount of total funding compared to total operational budget categories and about the need to find ongoing recurring funding for post-grant continuation.</p> <p>In two components of transformational learning and personalization, two targets are missing: 1) literacy for all and 2) student content mastery. Some of the efforts are more about student self-efficacy, which is important but is costly and may not result in either 1) or 2). That is the inadequate aspect of this section.</p> | | |

For example, if the goal is every third grader will be on grade level in reading, math and information literacy in four years then the other initiatives surround that. Or if 75% of students who speak English second will master content in all grade levels in four years, then the other initiatives would revolve around that...

This would bring precision to the budget rationale and guide every waking moment of the effort. As it is, there are a lot of tentacles to manage that may not connect toward a common goal of success for all.

This section required budget aligned to the intent of the proposal and the goals of the grant. The current budget is not specific enough about the ways in which funds will lead to the desired results.

The district makes a strong commitment to provide long-term sustainability.

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
|--|----|---|

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability after the grant. The current State and local government leaders and financial support are included. During the life of this grant it is likely new leaders at all levels will come into authority, therefore a plan for gaining written agreements to support this effort for the next decade will be crucial for the long-term nature of teaming, personalized learning communities, technology infrastructure, etc. The ambitious nature of this proposal will take a long-term commitment from all stakeholders to achieve long-term success.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 9 |

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The layer of partnership and comprehensive effort to engage all stakeholders is outstanding..

The performance data are clear, but may not focus on literacy or mastery for all. For example, the PreK-Non Cognitive Growth, Grades 4-8 Health and Grades 9-12 Health/Social-Emotional Indicators are each outstanding initiatives, but do not focus on themes of "on grade level literacy for all students" and "content mastery" as examples. Attendance, while crucial in 20th century terms, is a construct like seat time that does not indicate literacy or mastery.

This section is strong in sections, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This proposal has the possibility of being refined to be a shining star example of the intention of this effort.

By raising the bar for subgroups, connecting school choice options to teacher effectiveness, and emphasizing tangible targets in literacy and Common Core Standards mastery, this proposal reflects a community-wide effort to engage in a transformational effort.

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



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0479OH-3 for Cleveland Municipal 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 applicant has articulated a very comprehensive and ambitious vision for reform that is progressive on many levels. Their goals are strong, as they intend to eliminate failing schools and triple the number of CMSD students enrolled in high-performing schools, which would be a remarkable feat considering that only a few years ago, nearly half of the schools were labeled as emergency (failing) schools (see the appendix). Despite having ambitious goals, they have articulated a plan to make progress towards achieving them. A strength of the proposal is that it builds upon a foundation for reform that already exists, and takes advantage of systemic supports made possible through state legislation, estimated passage of additional public funding through a levy, unprecedented collaboration with business partners and the teachers union, and bold leadership from the mayor and the CMSD CEO. With a three-phase approach, the applicant has a strong vision for improving the personalization of learning through successive reform cycles, based upon assessment of individual school needs and opportunities. A strength of the vision articulated in this document is the determination to find innovation and success in many different avenues, as the applicant describes ideas borrowed from districts as far-flung as Alaska, New York, and Washington D.C., and a willingness to consider many models of charter and public school operation as potential candidates for sustainable expansion. Key to enacting their reform ideas is being responsive to evaluation and assessment data, which will help determine which models and approaches are likely to be successful in which schools.</p> <p>This combination of high goals for student achievement and college readiness, an expansive partnership, and openness to new ideas based on research, practice, and assessment, should produce good results.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A strength of this application is how it will support LEA-wide reform. All 99 schools in the CMSD are included in the proposal, and the proposed reforms build upon existing practices already begun. All schools will be targeted for Phase 1 approaches to personalized learning, while many (a target number is not specified), will be selected, based on assessment of their readiness, needs, and opportunities for change, for Phase 2 and Phase 3 levels of personalization. There are many support structures in place which make it likely for LEA-wide reform to be successful. For example, the state department of education has promoted standards and ideas that are supportive of this application, and the principles of the application are based on an already agreed upon Plan for Cleveland schools agreed upon and developed in collaboration with the teachers unions, parent organizations, community leaders, mayors office, and the school district. With this level of agreement and collaboration, the CMSD has good authority to enact its vision. The district has already reorganized itself as a supervisor of a portfolio of high performing schools, including charters, and has a record of closing failing schools and using its portfolio of successful schools as models for re-organization. By building upon those successful schools within the district, scale-up is more likely. The district has also negotiated autonomy for building-level leaders in staffing, training, and hiring teachers, as well as adjusting academic calendars to allow for different school models to be successful. This flexibility and autonomy should facilitate responsiveness to individual school needs. The district has also piloted innovated technological solutions to managing and tracking student academic and career data, and thus there is confidence that expansion of these systems will be effective.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has instituted or proposed several processes for increasing the scalability of the reforms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing technological infrastructures that can then be used district-wide. • Creating a portfolio of successful school models from within the district to use as models and options for reforming lower-performing schools. | | |

- Instituting data-tracking assessment tools for understanding which schools are in the best positions to benefit from reform attempts, as well as where the need is greatest.
- Providing incentives for high quality teachers to transfer as collaborative teams to struggling schools, so they can build reform efforts from within as they support each other in the attempt.
- Increasing transparency with funding, academic achievement, and district processes so that all stakeholders can have input on attempts to scale the reform efforts.

In regards to how the reforms will help the applicant reach its outcome goals, the district is proposing bold efforts to emphasize many different strategies for helping all CMSD students become college ready, including: three phases of intensity in regards to personalized learning, moving from giving students choices over schools and courses to having choices over projects, alternative options for earning credit for mastery-approaches to learning, to creating unique student learning plans and profiles available via technology to teachers and parents.

Despite these strong qualities of the CMSD plan, there are not many provided details about how the reforms will affect day to day interactions with teachers and students across the LEA and especially within different types of schools at different phases of personalization, along with what specific changes in the actual daily learning activities of the students will be. Discussions of personalizing the learning are provided, but the lack of specific details leaves a little doubt about what changes will actually happen at the curricular and student level, leading to a slight lowering of the score in this section.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has articulated ambitious goals to dramatically raise the rates of students graduating from high school on time, attending college, and scoring as proficient on a variety of exams. To set these goals, the applicant takes the deficit in proficiency and cuts it in half over six years. This creates achievable annual benchmarks. The applicant has also been attentive to achievement gaps and set separate goals specifically for closing a wide range of gaps by 50% over six years.

In defining college enrollment, the applicant uses the number of students completing FAFSA forms as well as national student clearinghouse data on graduation rates within 6 years post-high school. This triangulation of data is important.

Overall, the district uses a good mix of summative assessments as well as other data for measuring college readiness (e.g. ACT) and postsecondary degree attainment, and the goals are challenging, but should be achievable based on the collaborative partnerships described in the application.

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

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 13 |

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The CMSD faces incredible challenges, with only 52% of its students in 2010-2011 graduating from high school, less than 25% of students were proficient in math and reading. Most distressing is that it seemed that in the two years previous, performance on many of these measures actually decreased, and the gap between subgroups widened for many, except Hispanic students.

However, these dipping trends were not very significant, and are likely caused by the nature of the reforms being implemented, which cause temporary disruption. In addition, because the district is open to partnerships with Charter Schools, there have been many students transferring out of the district's schools, which might be impacting these numbers. In addition, the district has faced a difficult budget shortfall requiring a large reduction in its labor force, and an increase in the percentage of ELL learners and students with disabilities.

Finally, in regards to sub-criteria c, it is not clear to what extent the CMSD has been utilizing the options available in Naviance and Schoolnet. The application indicates that teachers can log in and get access, but it doesn't indicate to what extent they are currently doing this and using the data to inform instructional decisions.

Despite these data and concerns, there are strong indications that CMSD is poised to have good success in improving academic achievement in its students. In light of these challenges, the CMSD reduced from 50% to 34% the number of "academic emergency" schools (as identified by the state) and had the following successes:

- Increased graduation rate from 29.5% in 1998-1999 to 56% in 2011-2012

- Overall Ohio Performance Index improved 16 points since 2001 (on a scale up to 120).
- A drop in disciplinary actions from 34.6 per 100 in 2007-2008 to 20.2.
- Doubling of schools earning a rating of at least Effective to 20%

There is thus evidence to assume that the district can continue to make significant improvements if granted RTT-D monies.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant admits struggling with some aspects of transparency (not explained) in the past and has thus contracted services to help it improve, and is at present a motivated LEA for increasing its transparencies. The applicant provided useful screenshots of the district website, where users can easily download personnel salaries and other financial information. The district also has a record of transparency with academic achievement data through media press conferences, frequent reports to stakeholders, and information disseminated on its website. Impressively, the district has worked with community and government stakeholders on a comprehensive examination of the district's budget where they located ways of working more efficiently with district funds. Those materials have also been made public, allowing the public a great window into the district's finances.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This area is a strength of this particular application. The passage of House Bill 525, signed into law on July 2, 2012, gives the CMSD great autonomy in regards to decisions about staffing, hiring, training teachers, school models, pedagogical innovations, etc. In addition, there was evidence that the public would grant a levy to increase funding for the district, and the Cleveland Teachers Union has negotiated with the CMSD to grant authority to make changes to staffing practices and the academic calendar, leaving the CTU to then only negotiate for compensation for any increased teaching time. This level of autonomy is a strong vote of support. In addition the mayor's office has a staff member working closely with CMSD to develop its initiatives.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The CMSD has negotiated a strong coalition of stakeholders to unite with its vision for reform. The application contains many letters of support from key stakeholders such as legislative and executive office leaders, businesses, social service agencies, and philanthropic entities. As mentioned previously, they have the support of the Cleveland Teachers Union as well, particularly in the development of Section C. The union read drafts of the application and offered suggestions for improvement. The CMSD met with stakeholder committees in drafting the application and received insights from many diverse voices.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Recognizing that many of its past successes have been in its portfolio of New and Innovative Schools, the CMSD is engaged in a continual process of understanding any gaps in its ability to scale innovative reforms to all of its schools. This process includes:

- a no-stakes self-assessment tool for all schools to use to identify which schools would best adopt and benefit from increased efforts at personalized learning.
- Annual and semi-annual reviews with schools.
- Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of schools and their student populations in order to make targeted prescriptions for improvement.

Based on its self assessment, the district has identified gaps in an aging technological infrastructure, in teacher and administrator capacity for reform, business partnerships for supporting personalized, industry-focused initiatives, flexibility in school scheduling, and support of students and teachers. They have begun to establish partnerships for overcoming many of these gaps, and the passage of HB 525 grants the CMSD greater ability to overcome some of these gaps (such as school calendaring). The district understands where it is lacking, and how it can move forward its reform attempts with greater financial support.

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

| | Available | Score |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 18 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The CMSD has a foundational view that personalized learning is important for both students and educators, and is critical for transformative reform. A strength of the application is the adoption of a 3-phase model of personalized learning, allowing the district flexibility in targeting some schools for more expansive reforms that will yield better impacts in those areas. A weakness, however, is that the district has not articulated what the third phase of personalized learning would be, nor how or why some schools may be selected for Phase 2 or Phase 3. Regardless, they have adopted many proposals that should allow greater choice and accountability for all students, parents, teachers, and administrators, including:

- A portfolio approach to schooling where individual schools have unique missions and processes, which are described in the district's portfolio, allowing parents the ability to choose which school a student should attend as well as information to make a more informed choice.
- College and career-ready standards, emphasizing to each student the goal of graduating from college. This is done with the use of a technological tool (Naviance) that provides career assessments to help students identify potential career options, create a profile of their own interests, needs, and hopes, and combines this with academic information for making choices that will help the student achieve his/her goals.
- Adoption of Common Core standards and assessments, which has already begun.
- School-based capacity assessments to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each school for supporting various personalized learning initiatives
- An emphasis on project-based and mastery-focused learning, although these are not described with many specific details.
- Regular feedback loops through the Schoolnet technology, which will provide information to parents, teachers, and students on attendance, behavior, and learning on each child. Schoolnet will be connected to Naviance to create greater student profile portability.
- Greater involvement by students in school leadership through student-led parent/teacher conferences, and student advisory groups.
- An emphasis on college readiness in the curriculum, including 13 "virtual visits" to 13 different colleges and universities before graduation.
- alternative credit earning options, where students can earn high school credit by testing out of a course or completing alternative educational options, such as internships.

They have also created some changes in academic calendaring to support deeper learning by extending the school day and going to year-round school options that grant teachers a week after every break to collaborate as teacher teams, review student progress data, and prepare instruction.

In order to ensure these reforms are successful, the district has proposed a series of video and in-person trainings for parents, students, and the community to inform them about the reform process and the new educational paradigms. In addition, they will build Parent University, a suite of resources and trainings for parents about how they can support their student in successfully preparing for college and career.

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

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The CMSD has adopted the Teacher Development and Evaluation System, which was piloted in 23 schools last year and is now standard in all schools in the district. This system supports teachers through formative assessment and providing resources and personalized learning options. Based on data about teacher performance, the teachers can participate in professional development directly targeted to what they need.

Similarly, the CMSD has adopted the Ohio Principal Evaluation System. Both of these systems rely on student performance data, among other data sources. The CMSD has proposed extensive training to support teachers and principals in understanding how to use these systems, and in the move to year-round calendaring, there will be built-in time (1 week every three months) for educator collaboration and professional development that will occur throughout the school year, instead of just in the summer. Taking a similar personalization and mastery approach as that being developed for the students, the teachers will complete assessments on their level of professional development, tied to Guskey's 5 Levels, and then opt-out of professional development modules they don't need while focusing on others that they do. The district will also contract with an

agency to create and train teachers on the development of professional learning communities. The district will also combine Schoolnet, Naviance, and other data tools together in one interface and login, making it easier for teachers to receive just-in-time information on their students.

The CMSD indicates a high level of concern for ensuring all students have good teachers, and will use the evaluation systems for retaining teachers. In addition, the district is developing with the teacher's union a differentiated compensation system with the support of an external facilitator. However, less clear is how the CMSD will evaluate and hold to a higher standard the rehiring of teachers laid off from failing schools as well as some of the specifics about how daily teaching will be different for schools and teachers in the various levels of personalization.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 14 |
| <p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The central office of the CMSD has reinvented itself and adopted a portfolio approach to managing and foster adoption of innovative school models and choices. To gauge the effectiveness of this and other organizational changes, they have surveyed principals, who were typically positive about the support from the central office, while recommending some areas of concern. The human resource division was also reorganized to use more technology to provide objective and rapid pre-screening of candidates, and a Performance Manager and Talent Recruiter were hired to increase accountability.</p> <p>A strength of the alliance fostered by the CMSD is the level of autonomy given to school leadership teams, including autonomy over decision regarding budgets, staffing, instructional approaches, calendaring, etc. Each building creates an Academic Achievement Plan that must be ratified by 70% of the teachers, and which then guides school improvement efforts, including movement into one of the three levels of personalization. The district has proposed training to prepare building supervisors to better handle this level of autonomy.</p> <p>In addition, the district has highlighted in its portfolio as exemplary schools, those schools that have adopted mastery-level assessments and learning experiences. The CMSD allows students to earn graduation credit through mastery and performance ways. However, the CMSD acknowledges these are not widespread, and it is not always clear how these mastery and performance-based experiences work and how they will be spread through the district.</p> <p>Adaptability of instruction is a core strategy of this plan, and the CMSD has structures in place to ensure the proposed reforms are accessible to students with various disabilities or support needs.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has a strong proposal for creating infrastructure for supporting its reforms, including training for parents, educators, and students on the new school models and technologies. In addition the district is merging its two main systems for managing personalized learning (Schoolnet and Naviance) together into one portal, and training parents on how to use this. The Parent University, which provides instruction to parents on how to support their children in school, is a good contribution. However, there is no discussion about whether these technological systems will allow for exporting the information in an open data format or be inter-operable with future systems, nor is it clear how strongly technological staff are being utilized in crafting the visions of this reform, which is important since technology will provide the infrastructures to make the reforms possible.</p> | | |

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 14 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The CMSD uses the Model for Improving Academic Achievement at the district and building levels, and will expand this with the RTT-D grant monies to make it sustainable for the future. This continuous improvement effort will include state summative assessments, the state performance index (a composite index of overall academic achievement), AYP, graduation rates, and value-added assessment scores. They also administer surveys to students to receive feedback on the climate of the school,</p> | | |

how well the students feel they are being challenged, the support they feel they have for learning, and their perceptions about social/emotional learning at the school. This data is used, by subgroup, to assess progress made in the district. Progress is reported to the community and other stakeholders through public addresses, reports, the district's website, and media briefings. The district also emphasizes a "My Story" approach to giving meaning to continuous improvement, but it wasn't clear how this is implemented and what role it plays in continuous improvement.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district is working with a facilitator to continue innovative reform discussions with the teachers union, and has a close relationship with the mayor's office and community leaders, along with a plan for making improvements to its processes in the future.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has proposed a wide variety of performance and behavioral measurements, along with goals for successive improvement. Significantly, the goals will require more improvement by subgroups with the greatest gaps to cover. These proposed measures include number of students being taught by effective and highly effective teachers and principals; number of students submitting FAFSAs (to indicate intention to attend college); and the district's performance index (a composite of all state-administered assessments).; along with data from specific standardized tests. To measure socioemotional factors, the LEA proposes items from a survey where students indicate feeling "adequate" about the item.

Because the state is adjusting some of these measures, the LEA will monitor the effectiveness of these measures for assessing growth, and may alter the targeted goals as needed.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district proposes contracting an external evaluator, and has already articulated strong evaluation questions and a vision for mixed methods data collection and analysis that should yield a strong evaluation that can feed into future adjustments to their plan.

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 district has clearly divided the budget into separate initiatives tied to the various RTT-D selection criteria. The district identifies which are one-time, and which are ongoing costs, and have focused on building infrastructure that can persist after the grant is over. By dividing the project into sub-projects, it is clear how the LEA proposes to use the money, and for what purposes. The budget is well delineated, accounting for many things other LEAs might not consider. For example, the applicant proposes \$7,500 over four years for supporting parents in traveling. This is good planning for increasing access to the training the LEA will provide for parents, and is a reasonable expense. Overall, the budget is well thought out and accounts for careful use of the money to ensure successful implementation.</p> | | |
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| (F)(2) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>The CMSD has placed an emphasis on building human capacity through training and technological capacity by replacing key infrastructure and developing a data warehouse, which should yield benefits long after the grant has expired. A strength of the document is the emphasis on reforming processes and school models, rather than simply relying on a technology (such as 1:1 laptops) to solve the problems, which would be harder to maintain once the technology aged. However, the district did not articulate very clearly proposals for supporting the budget post-RTT except to indicate that the ongoing costs in the final year is only 1% of the total budget and could then be absorbed. The district believes the reforms will yield efficiency and cost-reductions, but this is not clear. Still, the district is seeking more financial support from the community through an increased</p> | | |

tax that early indications are has great support and will likely pass. This is a high vote of confidence from the community, and will be an additional source of revenue for sustaining the goals of the project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 9 |

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The district seeks to expand two initiatives for improving social and emotional learning (HumanWare and Community Wrap Around Schools), and has an impressive list of community partners including the American Institutes for Research, NoVo Foundation, and others. These partnerships have already produced many important outcomes, including socioemotional lessons for all grades and professional learning on socioemotional education for educators. The Community Wrap Around Schools will focus on integrating academics with health and social services to develop stronger families and communities. Previous measurements have found this to increase significantly gains in the students' learning, although this specific data is not provided.

To support these programs, the LEA has proposed educational, family, and community goals for different subgroups, which shows a strong commitment to understanding the relationships of family and community with student learning. The LEA has proposed many indicators of success in these areas including attendance, achievement and graduation data, behavior data, and the use of a Conditions for Learning survey, which is a good approach to beginning a measurement of climate and social connectedness.

to increase the capacity of the schools to implement these programs, two consultants from the Humanware department will spend 40-60 days each collaborating with district leaders.

A criticism of the LEA's plan is that the application lacked specific details about these programs and what specific activities are used and data-based results. However, the district is developing with principals, teachers, and community partners another assessment for measuring the effectiveness of the Community Wrap Around Schools project, one of the initiatives, and has identified good indicators of success.

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This district has a strong emphasis on personalized learning, student and parent choices, mastery learning, and college readiness.

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Total | 210 | 198 |
|-------|-----|-----|