



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0515MN-1 for Higher Ground Academy

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant (four, independent charter schools) does not articulate a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that is clearly aligned with all four core assurance areas: 1) Standards and Assessments 2) Data Systems 3) Developing Teachers and Leaders and 4) Turnaround Schools. They do, briefly, state that their vision and plan includes: assistance to low performing schools, rigorous assessments, personalized and individualized instruction/learning environments, at-risk learners, preparing college/career ready graduates, comprehensive professional development. They do not articulate clear and credible goals related to the above topics.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Their implementation approach partially conforms to sub-criteria, as follows: 1) the four schools self-selected to participate. Schools are to be low-performing (as objectively defined by measures in the RFP). No such data measures are included; 2) a list of four charter schools is provided; and 3) numbers of students and educators are included. No information is provided to verify they comply with Race definitions of low-income families and high-need students.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They do not yet have a high quality plan describing how to scale up their reforms. They explain that the project will consist of two phases (I is planning and II is implementation). If funded, they will implement phase I and that will result in several pre-implementation project activities, including a high quality Action Plan to scale up their reforms. A Resource Center will be developed to assist other low performing charter schools. Since these four schools are independent and not part of any larger LEA, it is logical that their scaling up would be other charter schools.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>School tables with performance goals/targets are presented in the Appendix for each of the four required areas: state summative assessment, achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment. Some of the tables do not clearly identify which charter school they are related to. Global Academy (K-8) has completed tables for most areas. Friendship school (K-6) has two tables completed. Higher Ground Academy, HGA, (K-12) may be associated with one of the performance tables in the appendix, pages 07-08. Peace Academy (PA, K-12), pages 012+, has only included baseline achievement data; no goals are provided for future years and there are no tables for the other required areas from PA. One of the college enrollment tables (page 016) provides baseline and projected (5 years) goals and is disaggregated by only two of the ESEA sub-groups. The Graduation table for Global Academy (K-8) includes no data. It is unknown if any of the target goals equal or exceed state ESEA targets. Finding: The overall evidence is incomplete and only partially met.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents incomplete evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning/achievement. Data is provided primarily for just two years. Most show a record of modest growth and gains. Of the four partner schools, only four-year (2008-12) data is provided for HGA (Appendix 1) in math, reading and science. HGA Science shows a clear record of success, but reading and math present modest gains. As to sub-criteria b (ambitious and significant reforms), they provide well documented and strong examples, such as: technology, STEM, college readiness, parent involvement, character education and inquiry based education. They document some evidence of making performance data more transparent. This seems to be the case at HGA, but is still in the planning stages at the other partner schools. Overall, this criterion is weak for the above reasons.

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

5

0

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant says they are transparent with processes, practices and investments, including actual salaries and non-personnel expenditures. They state all such data is available at their web sites. According to the RACE FAQ, all such data must be reported in the proposal. These are not provided for any of the four schools. Therefore, the applicant does not meet the minimum requirements of this criterion.

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

10

5

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

They describe the state and local conditions, regulations and statutes that provide the applicant (four charter schools) to implement their proposed personalized learning environments. These include the fact that the state strongly supports the Race and related reform components, such as common core standards. Charter schools are expected to comply with these state expectations. The criterion is fully met.

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

10

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

They provide evidence and examples of some stakeholder engagement and support. These include: an advisory committee, four detailed MOUs, business involvement, and college participation. They describe two major phases of their grant development. They do not provide details about student and family engagement in the proposal. Phase 1 will occur after funding. Phase 1 will include more specific stakeholder involvement and an Action Plan will be developed (page 16). Phase II is implementation. Scheduling the Action Plan after submission of the grant proposal is a weakness because specific stakeholder support and recommendations are not included. As to teacher engagement, they say that survey of teachers revealed more that 70% support the creation of the application; there is no evidence that at least 70 percent of the teachers support the proposal. Only one stakeholder letter is included. Based on the above findings, the criterion is only partially met

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Much of the discussion in this section is about needs of minority families and communities. Limited information is presented about needs and gaps related to their plan are provided. This is all based on what they characterize as a preliminary needs assessment. This criterion is only partially met because none of this information constitutes a high quality plan that describes how they will carry out their Needs/Gaps analysis (which is proposed to occur in Phase 1, after the grant is funded).

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	9

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This criterion calls for a high quality plan that meets these specific Race components: goals, activities, rationale, timeline, deliverables, responsible parties and overall credibility. Again, they say that most of this will be done in Phase 1 (will take six

months and be conducted after the grant is funded). This section does include some evidence that relate to some plan components, such as: activities and rationale. These plan requirements are not found: goals, deliverables, and responsible parties. There is a heavy reliance on specific technologies (Ipads, MacBooks, Whiteboards and Creative Learning Smart Lab Systems). There is little rationale for these that include evidence of increased student achievement, academic growth or closing achievement gaps. There is little description about what other (non-technological) ways a variety of high quality instructional strategies will be carried out. This criterion also states that there is to be evidence that parent support these; there is little evidence of parents support this component. They do address each of the sub-criteria, but not in the context of a high quality plan. Overall, the criterion is partially met.

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

20

6

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Their response to this criterion includes some evidence that address components of a high quality plan, such as: activities and rationale. These plan requirements are not found and/or are weak: goals, deliverables, and responsible parties. This criterion also specifies that all educators will engage in professional teams or communities. This concept is not clearly described in their plan. They do, briefly, state that they will incorporate training related to Robert Marzano and results from their teacher and principal evaluations. They do not provide any information whether their teacher evaluation systems meet the six criteria in the USDE/Race definition. Their four MOUs (Appendix) state that they will have personnel evaluation systems that meet Race definitions no later than 2014-15. There is a high reliance on technology and software with little rationale about why specific products are effective. In sub-criterion C.2.a.iv (measuring student progress), they state that technology will provide immediate feedback to teachers about quiz/test results and if results are low, the teacher would “offer a slightly different lesson style in next class”. Unfortunately, there is little discussion about how the teacher would select a more effective instruction style/strategy (based on the quality of their professional development). The proposal, briefly, mentions several structures and roles, such as: consortium school leadership teams, teacher team leaders, department heads, and school leadership teams that are composed of “stakeholders, such as, but not limited to, administrators, educators, counselors and parents” (later, page 38). This raises some question as to whether each of the four school teams meets the Race grant school leadership team definition. For criterion C.2.d, they do not provide a high quality plan. Overall, the evidence for criterion C.2 is weak and not met, based on the above findings.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Race has a detailed definition (with seven specific components) for consortium governing structure. Each MOU (Appendix) merely repeats the seven components, but does not address each of them. For example, they are to describe their methods for decision-making; this could not be found. The narrative section says the official consortium will be formed AFTER the grant award is issued. The narrative further states that private entity (not an LEA or charter school), Belz, Kes, Daring and Associates (BKDA) will be contracted with to serve as the Race grant financial manager. This is not noted in the MOUs and there is no detailed information provided about BKDA, their qualifications and eligibility to serve in such a capacity. They write that each school leadership team will be provided flexibility and autonomy over all items in the sub criterion D.1.b. A high quality plan is also required. A clear, thorough high quality plan (as per Race guidelines) is not included. A clear and complete description is provided for student mastery of topics and standards as well as adaptable and accessible learning resources. In summary, the overall criterion is weak.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the information and evidence provided are thorough, convincing and strong because they describe their planned infrastructures, digital and open sources, access plans, various specific technology uses, feedback loops, interoperable and open standards

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
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(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	1
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Criterion A.1 it was already concluded that the project does not have clear goals and in C.1, there was not a high quality implementation plan (with all the components, such as: goals, deliverables, timelines, etc.). Thus, it is difficult to find clear and rigorous strategies that describe how the project will be monitored and measured in relation to goals. They state that their Education Technologist consultant will spearhead this process with progress reports related to (unspecified) performance measures. On the other hand, the budget says, in part, the Project evaluator will evaluate progress being made toward goals. The narrative and budget sections, combined with the fact that the goals and high quality implementation plan were not located, results in a weak criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Several, varied communication strategies are, briefly, cited. Most are one-way, that is, from the grantee to various audiences. The second part of this criterion is engagement which is intended to allow and encourage internal and external stakeholders to interact with the grantee. There were few engagement activities described. Therefore, this criterion is considered medium.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Over a dozen tables include performance measures, overall and by sub-group with annual targets. Tables are organized by grade band (i.e., 9-12, 4-8, P-3). Some tables include several (i.e., Black, LEP, low income) sub-groups, but other tables have only one sub-group (i.e., effective teacher/principal-all students). The table for 9-12 math has only one sub-group (LEP). These are confusing. Most tables have academic measures (math, reading, etc.), but at least two have something called the HOPE survey (a survey of non-academic measures, such as autonomy, belongingness and engagement, according to the Appendix). The HOPE data are not directly relevant. The Race measures are to be ones related to student learning/achievement. The performance measure for career readiness is that students participate in a career readiness course at least once in grades 9-12; this is not a very rigorous measure. They also present a brief description of the following: rationale, how measures will provide rigorous information, and how they will review measures over time. In summary, the section is partially met, with weaknesses, as identified above.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They, briefly, describe plans to have an evaluator be responsible for conducting formative and summative evaluations, data gathering, continuous improvement strategies, progress reports, and annual reports. They address each of the proposed funded activities to be implemented in their plan. Overall, this criterion is considered met to a medium degree.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A detailed itemization of each major expenditure is provided for Race grant funds. There does not appear to be any external funds. A clear, concise rationale for each cost item is included by explaining the purpose throughout the budget items. The budget will not be directly managed by one of the four charter school applicants in the partnership. It will be managed by Belz, Kes, Daring and Associates (BKDA) for about \$200,000 (4 year total). Another consulting firm, Center for School Change, is proposed to receive a contract for \$700,000 (four year total) to manage the Race grant. In addition, an unnamed project evaluator will receive \$260,000 over 4 years. Together, these represent about 20 percent of the budget. The need for BKDA and Center for School Change is not well explained and may not be reasonable. Little information is provided about BKDA qualifications and why one of the charter schools cannot assume these responsibilities including usual indirect costs. Overall: the project budget minimally adequate because of the above strengths and weaknesses.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan is required for this section. Such a plan is not included. They do intend to contact a variety of other outside sources (foundations, state, corporate) for funds to support and sustain the project after the Race grant ends. No post-grant budget is included. For these reasons, the overall criterion is insufficient and weak.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The intent of this priority is to support applicants seeking to provide additional student and family supports that address “social, emotional or behavioral needs” in partnership with a public or private resource. The responses are about the academic and achievement outcomes in their main Race grant. They do not discuss the social, emotional and behavioral emphasis of this competitive priority. Therefore, the response does not address the sub-criteria.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

These criteria were particularly weak in coherently and comprehensively addressing how personalized learning environments would be created for high need students and schools: vision, transparency, record of success and conditions for reforms; preparing for college and careers; continuous improvement, budget and sustainable; and the competitive preference priority.

Total	210	83
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

They reference the existence of an optional budget supplement on page 131 of the application. However, no such budget was located. Thus, they do not meet this criterion.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0515MN-2 for Higher Ground Academy

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants' ambitious goal includes a vision to extend their existing plan of creating college ready and/or career ready learners. • With an innovative vision, the applicant has previously listed as one of the nations leading high schools. • HGA has demonstrated a successful, unique opportunity for high at-risk learners, providing students with their three-part vision listed. • HGA's vision and ambitious goal of preparing at-risk learners in becoming college and/or career ready is unique and reasonable but adds an added burden and more academic challenges to student in their senior year of high school, resulting in some students to transfer to a traditional high school. • The vision as presented inadequately addresses the extensive use of data as required in a high quality plan. • The applicants' reformation plan and vision clearly addresses two of the four core educational assurance areas, however it is unclear as presented in this section, the retention of high value employee retention and the effective use of data presented would play a significant role in effecting or carrying out the applicants' reform vision. • As such, the applicant receives a low range of the high score category. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented list of participating schools was presented with detailed information that included the target schools, number of students from low-income families, number of high-need students and number of participating educators. • Applicant lists the diverse immigrant population, minority student constituency, and economically disadvantaged subgroups. • The applicant limits this effort to four schools. • The applicant will continue its work on schools that meet the qualification of the grant proposal. • The detailed and thorough information presented on on the targeted schools warrants the applicant receiving a high score. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant listed three phases of action plans featuring continuous improvement with individualized learning environments that would personalize instruction, the development of the RTTT Charter Resource Center, along with Personalized Assistance for Teaching High Achieving Students - PATHS. • Included in the phases of their action plans are clear plans of how to improve student-learning outcomes of all students, by creating personalized instruction in an individualized learning environment. • HGA's reform and change focuses on continuing what they are doing, but adding an extensive charter resource center to include PATH to facilitate their ambitious plan of creating an individualized learning environment to personalize instruction. • A high quality plan in this section was not fully met according to the RTTT-D definition. • Applicant make a strong case for allowing experience and time to drive their plan assessment. • After which, hindsight review will be used to develop best application of program superlatives. • Applicant will rely on a robust continuous improvement strategy within their reformation process to identify opportunities for knowledge transfer to other, outside learning institutions. • Given, the lack of adherence to section requirements, yet countered with a sensible alternative approach, a medium/low score is given. 		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:		

- The applicants' academic achievement goals are clearly listed with details displaying the academic success over the years.
- The set goals are achievable and reasonably set for success of the students.
- Applicant displays clear and sufficient data.
- However, brief summation is given to vision of ambitious goals of improved student learning.
- Needed were, enhanced discussion of how achievement gaps would close; expanded interpretation of summative assessment scores and plans to utilize it in achieving goals of the grant proposal. As such, a low/medium score was given.

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
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has documented success for the past few years with tables comparing academic achievement measures by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments - Series (MCA-11), however four years is requested. • Math and Reading scores showed improvement gains rising from the school year 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 by all subgroups. • The applicants' documentation is comprehensive and convincing showing improvements, accolades and recognition, along with awards for their succession the school years 2010-2012, but four years of documentation is requested. • Great success and improvement gains were evident, but RTTT-D competition request a clear record of success in the past four years, therefore the applicants receive a medium score, because evidence of four years was not present. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of face to face meetings or disseminating information in or during a public forum was lacking. • Information pertaining to salaries of personnel, the applicant refers stakeholders and public, to the school's website. • A detailed description of the budget is not presented. • Lacking is a breakdown of how funds are disseminated for personnel salaries at the school level. • The lack of the applicant offering public access to the source and use of public monies expended in public education was not present, resulting in a low score. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant is in the state of Minnesota and adopting the common core standards and the new accountability measure for schools, the applicant provides inadequate information justifying state codes as a governance of a public school. • Applicant did not provide evidence of statutory code and legal authority permitting LEA to engage in proposed personalized learning environments. • The applicant fails to name and specify state code authorizing governance of public schools within its jurisdiction, therefore the applicant receives a low score. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the early planning process, the applicant presents numerous stakeholders. • These stakeholders includes administrators, educators, the union, parents, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, elected and appointed officials, parents, and learners, but there is no documentation or official sign in documentation to validate. • The applicant list the process of creating the document, with no evidence of the selection process of the stakeholders. 		

- Applicant has developed an ample proposal shell that outlines the intended engagement of as yet unidentified stakeholders that will and should be intimately involved in the development and ongoing assessment of the program.
- Expectations of this top-tier program would involve a more robust, detailed, multifaceted approach to previously well run stakeholder identification, solicitation and input, resulting in documented program demonstration, not only for participation in this grant application.
- However, given that a wide-array of stakeholders were mentioned as participants in preparing this proposal, it gives encouragement that with such detailed stakeholder involvement will elicit guidance which produces the outcomes expected in this grant.
- Stakeholders support for the proposal was indeed provided, the outcome of which is interesting.
- There was no evidence of letters of support included.
- The totality of the evidence presented herein resulted in a low-medium score.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant presents inadequate identification of gaps and similarly little explanation of corresponding support to substantiate their generalized assessment.
- Inadequate data is presented related to documented academic needs and gaps of targeted students.
- The group as described assumed to be academically deficient and named so without supporting data to verify the assumption.
- Various demographic data is presented that depicts a student group in dire need of multiple intervention points.
- However, the required identification of needs and gaps for purpose of this grant proposal are insufficient; hence a low score is earned.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant presents an innovative, thorough and lengthy plan to implement with the participating learners to prepare students for college and careers. • Other than the applicants' employees, the plan lacks involvement with parents and other outside stakeholders in the development and continuation of the plan. • Applicant includes educators in facilitating the personal learning environments of the learners with a plan to continue and develop existing programs and implementation of newer ones, which includes individual personal learning environments geared to improved student achievement. • Applicant covers all requirements either directly or indirectly and in abundant detail regarding this segment as noted above, resulting in a high score. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has outlined a plethora of unique methodologies in providing improved student achievement using personal learning environments. • For the last four years, the applicant has provided leadership academies for teachers. • The array of leadership development opportunities and academies presented to the applicant's teacher educators have been recognized with supporting articles in the New York Times, Washington Post and Education Week. • The applicant outlines professional development plans of educators that are part of their continuous improvement process that is connected to the success of the implementation of their program, PATHS. • The applicant demonstrates an extensive plan to develop and retain qualified effective teachers. • Teacher efficiency and leadership development has been a major priority for the past four years. • The applicant includes a monitoring system that oversees the students' achievement from baseline mastery of standards to current improvements. • The applicant's PATH program includes various programs to ensure teacher and administrator development. 		

- Although not fully implemented, the proposal offers attention to extensive details of compliance, which lends itself to a high score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The described LEA is formed with a consensus-building methodology that is a Consortium initiative, PATHS. • Although stakeholders are listed, it is a confusing concept of how and who will provide what services. • The plan is confusing and contains broad, unique and vague goals. • The process to be used to create success for learners with disabilities and other languages are not clear and presented in an inconsistent fashion. • The applicant mentions their adaptive software that will ensure learners master each subject prior to moving onto the next subject, but lacking are the names of the software and resources and supplies to be used. • The undocumented software material, the numerous programs and the time spent on each learner, make it an unclear plan to get recorded data. • Applicant is less forthcoming with actual details of the required practices, policies and rules as expected. • As such the applicant receives a low score. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant lists numerous programs, but the plan lacks policies and practices to used for success. • Applicant fails to provide a plan for students from year to year. • An individualize learning plan for the learners are designed for students to reach their full potential, but it lacks programs criteria requirements and is not detailed. • The school infrastructure is insufficient, inadequate and unclear. • The applicant provides dubious capability of purpose in this category. • Their PATH program serves as their all-encompassing tool. • Outlines of the expectations are in fact provided in the narrative, however the goals expected are stated without supporting details for delivery. This results in a low score. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant will rely on an Educational Technologist consultant to spearhead the continuous improvement effort after receiving the grant. • Applicant will develop a plan to monitor and measure after receiving the grant. • Applicant list no performance measures that are tractable and computable, which lends itself to a lower medium score. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provides a comprehensive list of tools to disseminate information to stakeholders. • A score of 5, high range was given because the applicant maintained ongoing communication and engagement, and used a wide array of digital and analog techniques, mailings, posters, flyers, radio talk shows and TV programming, web sites, blogs and social media, community workshops, and take home materials to parents of students. 		

- Applicant proposes a host of communication avenues to ensure ongoing communication and engagement.
- The applicants' detailed description in this section equates to a high score.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant provided a clear list performance measures.
- Various subgroups are listed.
- Applicant presents mandatory performance measures combined with performance measures suggested by the LEA.
- However, there is an unclear association and/or relationship between the proposals.
- Applicant's proposed performance measures categories are ambitious.
- LEA indicates proposed Performance Measures were selected because they are complimentary to mandatory state sanctioned assessment tools.
- The achievability of the applicant's stated performance measures are based on ISES Technology Standards, Hope Survey, percentage of highly effective Teachers/Principals and state standardized tests.
- The achievability of stated target improvements are questionable due to the rapid rise in expected proficiencies among historically low achievers (i.e., low income and limited English proficient).
- Performance measure achievement category assigned to Black/African-American students was limited to the Hope Survey as part of the performance measure program. It was not readily apparent how the performance measures would directly impact the success of the PATHS project, which is the main tool charged with program success.
- Additionally, applicant provides an unclear proposal to enact and evaluate performance measures as required, as such a low score is given.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant will rely on an experienced evaluation consultant to highlight and evaluate the effectiveness of their proposal.
- In another section of the proposal, the applicant shows a commitment to programs, to be evaluated by a consultant, which shows programs for quality improvement.
- Applicant will provide staff professional development opportunities.
- Applicant provided information of performance measures from the start of their program and continuation.
- Applicant provided a process of providing efficacy of their program that is not clearly outlined and is vague.
- The effectiveness of investment is lacking a solid plan for the students' success.
- The information presented by applicant addresses the components of the criteria, but components are unclear and inconsistent.
- This task is outsourced to an Evaluative Consultant.
- Sparse details are provided, but overall end-point expectations are indicated.
- Again, the applicant describes their future intent within their PATH program.
- This evaluation seems logical and achievable, but lacks more specificity. This results in a medium score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant did not provide a detailed, comprehensive budget analysis of funding to implement the proposal in section (F)(1).
- The budget for the project was found in Appendix 7.
- The budget analysis is without names of programs, names of equipment, purposes of equipment and is sparse.
- The applicant lack of a clear roadmap of the funds to be used is not presented detailing use.
- Applicant provides budget narrative describing detailed use of grant monies as requested. The budget displays numeric allocation of funding, missing however, is evidence of complimentary funding sources, necessary to qualify as top-tier proposal. As such, a mid-range score is given.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear if applicant has a cohesive plan for proposal continuance for the long-term. • The applicant basically asserts their inability to confirm commitment of financial support from external funding sources, relying solely on the anticipated one-time allocation of grant monies, with no plan of sustainability. • As such applicant is given a low score. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The required details of this criterion are met with a narrative that is not consistent with the need to integrate public and private funding. • Narrative misses the requirement to address the emotional, social and behavioral needs of student participants. • Enormous future faith placed in the applicant's PATH program, which may deliver as promised, however, lacking was details addressing the nuances and requirements of this criterion, thereby resulting in a low score. 		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has developed an ample proposal shell that outlines the intended engagement, but lacks development and ongoing development of the program. • Inadequate data is presented, justifying academic needs and gaps of targeted student groups. • Opportunities of data chats and talks would be beneficial. • The task of evaluating effectiveness of the program and investments will be outsourced to an Evaluative Consultant, rather than giving ownership of success to the immediate stakeholders such as the students, parents, educators, and administrators. • The applicants' PATH program serves as their all-encompassing tool. • The goals are without supporting details for delivery, placing enormous future faith in the program which may deliver as promised, however, lacking details addressing the requirements of the criteria for this grant. 		

Total	210	115
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0515MN-3 for Higher Ground Academy



A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of a coherent reform vision but lacks comprehensiveness in that they are still in the process of evaluating to determine best approaches and lack vision in all four core assurance areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a three part vision: use the best available research and information to build on their past successes; use the best ideas the schools have developed; and, provide technical assistance to low performing district and charter schools. • The applicant will partner with the Center for School Change (subcontract), the Minnesota Business Partnership, and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to support the proposal. • The consortium members are working to transition from traditional pedagogy towards a networked, learner-centered environment. • Information provided on one of the four core assurances, recruitment, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals is vague. • Descriptions are given of goals to accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, and increase equity through personalized learning. • The approach to the goals includes delaying implementation during the first year to evaluate and choose best resources available which does not indicate a clear and credible approach. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range due to lack of clarity on all four assurances and lack of a credible approach by delaying evaluation of and choice of resources which inhibits their ability to provide clear information on budgeting and training.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's approach to serving all students in the four schools could produce quality school level implementation but is weakened by a lack of clear budget and resource information due to delaying the evaluation of and resource choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consortium schools were chosen because they are four public charter schools with a common goal to provide individualized learning environments. Each school enrolls at-risk students and have the flexibility necessary to engage in rapid, bottom-up change. • A list of the four charter schools is provided. • Metrics of participating students by school is provided. • The applicant proposes to serve all students in the four schools. • Implementation will begin in the 7th month after evaluating resources and then choosing the resources and activities. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range due to a lack of clarity and delay in the implementation of the proposal activities and resources.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant fails to provide evidence of a high-quality plan with clear activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant will delay implementation of grant activities while they undergo a comprehensive assessment and detailed planning process during a six month Phase I. 		

- A detailed Action Plan will not be in place until month 7 of the proposal (Phase II).
- Phase II will involve a Charter Resource Center to assist low performing charter schools beginning in year 3 of the proposal.
- Due to Phase I of the implementation process, there is no clear plan with activities, timelines, deliverables, or responsible parties.
- The Phase II implementation process will distribute the best practices and ideas that have been discovered during Phase I.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low end of the medium range due to insufficient evidence to support a high-quality plan.

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

The applicant has previous success in improved student learning but lacks clarity in how they will address subgroups and if the goals are equal to or above state ESEA targets.

- The project will create a Learner Knowledge System to track progress of individual students including strengths, interests, areas for improvement, and other needs.
- The project identifies goals set for the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment but does not provide growth information on the goals or whether the goals equal or exceed the state ESEA targets for LEAs.
- The Hope Survey will be used to measure whether students have hope which reliably predicts higher college graduation rates. Achievable goals were set.
- Past success in decreasing achievement gaps is described while insufficient evidence is provided on how gaps will be decreased between all subgroups. Performance measures listed only identified low-income and ELL.
- With the lack of a high-quality plan, it is unlikely that the goal of 100% graduation rate for all students is achievable.
- No information is provided on outcomes for college enrollment other than baseline measures from a previous year.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range due to lack of clarity on subgroups, the ambitiousness of the goals in relation to state targets, and lack of a clear plan for decreasing achievement gaps.

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	3

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to provide evidence of success over a four year period, does not show evidence of turning around low-performing schools, and lacks evidence of success with transparent and effective use of data.

- The applicant provides a clear record of success in advancing student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and increased graduation rates and college enrollment rates for one year while failing to prove a record of success for four years as required in the criteria.
- Three of the four schools received accolades for 2011-2012 such as: Silver and Bronze Medal School, Beating the Odds School, and Rewards School.
- An appendix item was to prove significant improved outcomes over several years but the earliest date noted was 2010 which does not meet the four year criteria.
- The schools enroll primarily low-income and minority students but show no information of a history of work with persistently or low achieving schools.
- The school have implemented reforms such as: technology deployment; parental involvement; cultural learning series; STEM; college readiness; post-secondary enrollment option program; character education; and inquiry-based education.
- Achievement data is available online. The schools plan to put systems in place for real-time basis data. This information fails to provide strong evidence of making data available to parents, students, and teachers to improve instruction and services.

Although the applicant has won some awards, there is insufficient evidence of success over four years, low-achieving school turn-around, or effective use of data, which places this criteria in the low score range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5	5	2
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points)		
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates evidence of transparency in expenditures but fails to provide evidence of transparency in processes or practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant makes school-level expenditures available online for personnel salaries by instructional staff only, teachers only, and non-personnel expenditures. • The applicant references the High School Achievement Matrix in the appendix which does not provide adequate information of a high level of transparency but rather the achievements of each school. • No evidence is provided regarding the transparency of processes and practices. • Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range for this area. Evidence is provided for transparency of expenditures with no evidence of transparency in processes or practices. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides strong evidence of the autonomy and authority to implement the personalized learning environments proposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state has adopted Common Core which supports the college readiness portion of the RTTT-D. • Minnesota is using its RTTT funding and encouraging LEAs on their own to use a bottom-up approach to educational reform at the district level. • The applicant has legal and statutory authority under 2012 Minnesota Education Code (Ch. 120A to 129C). • Regulatory requirements are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the high range with strong evidence of autonomy and the authority to implement the proposal.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	1
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant fails to provide evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the support or development of the proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial planning for the project was an informal stakeholders meeting with the four schools and the director of the Center for School Change. No information is provided on student, family, teacher, or principal engagement. • The Minnesota Business Partnership and Minnesota Chamber of Commerce are named as the key partners but no evidence is given to show engagement in the planning process. • The original planning group (members unknown) will eventually become the Project Advisory Committee upon notice of funding. • The planning group conducted an assessment of each school's needs and gaps with respect to fostering personalized learning environments. The specifics of an Action Plan were left to take place during Phase I after the grant is funded. • It is unclear who was involved in the development of the proposal, or, if necessary, revisions were made with their feedback. • Immediately following notice of grant funding, the informal planning group that met to prepare the application will meet and invite new stakeholders to finalize activities and plans for the grant. • The applicant state that more than 70% of the teachers supported the creation of the application. • The applicant reports letters of support are in the appendix but none are attached. <p>The applicant scores in the low range for this criteria. There is no evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement and stakeholder engagement has been delayed until after the grant is awarded.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides sufficient evidence of identifying needs and gaps in implementing personalized learning environments but fails to provide the logic behind the reform proposal and will not do in-depth analysis of specific activities to meet needs until the grant is funded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "informal group" conducted an analysis of needs and gaps for each school with respect to personalized learning environments. 		

- Identified needs outside the current funding capacity of the schools are: too few technology resources for personalized learning; an inadequate grasp of what should be deployed and how it should be deployed across all learners and grade levels; a need for increased understanding of the learning process; technology and technology training to be deployed by teachers; software; IT staff; increased Wi-fi capacity; and understanding of the link between technology and learning.

The applicant scores in the low-medium for this criteria. Needs and gaps were identified but there is no logic or plan of how to address the needs until after the grant is funded.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a weak plan for improving teaching and learning. The vagueness of actual strategies and activities to be used, delay in implementation, and lack of components in a high quality plan detract from any possible quality components of the plan.

- The applicant proposes a two phase approach: Phase I, a six month assessment process to evaluate best practices and how to implement them and; Phase 2, implementation of a wide array of strategies and technologies which weakens the effective use of the funding during the grant period.
- The applicant states that students will understand that what they are learning is key to their success through context clues and discussion and gave examples which did not substantiate that learners would actually understand with these activities.
- Several strategies such as STEM labs and Virtual and shareable lesson plans are described which fails to link to supporting students' understanding that what they are learning is key to their success.
- Learner Knowledge Systems will monitor that participating learners understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals.
- The applicant notes that the two high schools will focus on career and college readiness while not addressing it for the K-6 and K-8 schools which also must address college and career readiness.
- Deep learning experiences will be evidenced by developing personalized learning environments based on learning interests and experiences.
- The applicant schools consist of diverse cultures. The proposal will respect and enhance diversity and their culture will be used to enhance their won interests.
- Tenacity and Character Education will foster traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem solving.
- The personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development will be delivered through the customized learning environment software yet to be determined.
- The project will utilize a wide array of instructional approaches and environments yet to be determined. Learners will have access to self-paced learning software and iPads.
- Learners will have access to digital learning content, incorporating iPads and whiteboards. Content will be closely aligned with college and career readiness standards.
- Content will be drawn from conventional textbooks, teacher knowledge, learner-led research projects, and online materials from professors in which all of the aforementioned does not assure high quality content.
- The Learner Knowledge System will be monitored by software (unknown) and teachers on a continuous basis. Periodic progress reports will be sent to parents. This does not provide quality information about how it will be used and how often it will be monitored.
- Customizable software (unknown) will offer personalized learning recommendations based on students' current knowledge skills. This does not assure high quality strategies and accommodations without more specific information on the software and process.
- The applicant states students will incorporate software and teacher-delivered mechanisms to provide support to learners including maximizing the use of the iPads and other technology. This is vague and does not provide enough specific information to assure students will understand and be able to manage their learning.
- The applicant fails to provide components of a high-quality plan such as timelines, deliverables, and responsibilities.

The applicant scores in the low end of the medium range due to a lack of evidence of a high-quality plan with specific timelines, activities, and responsibilities, a six month delay in beginning the program to evaluate and make decisions which should already be included in the proposal to clarify actual goals and learning activities.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has some processes in place for improving learning and teaching but fails to provide a high-quality plan to increase teacher or principal capacity to enable full implementation of the personalized learning environments.

- Professional Learning Communities will be established through peer-to-peer education but was not linked to learner improvements.
- Teachers will be trained on the use of technology in the classroom, technology-enabled lesson plan development to support individualized learning, and the assessment and monitoring process of the Learner Knowledge System.
- No information is provided on how teachers will be trained to adapt content and instruction other than the use of adaptive software.
- Teachers will receive training on the assessment and monitoring software for frequent measurements of student progress toward key goals.
- Software (unknown) will be used to provide immediate feedback on teacher effectiveness such as student success during a lesson, and the current teacher and principal evaluation systems will be added to the proposal's software system. Current evaluation systems provide for recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for support.
- Business mentors will be provided for all participating principals but no information is provided as to how this will improve principal skills in implementing the proposal.
- Software and hardware tools will be set up in easy formats like Google and Facebook to alleviate the need for extensive training. This fails to address if teachers will actually know how to use the tools in the proposal.
- The applicant states actionable information will be provided by software and teachers which does not provide enough evidence to assure educators can identify optimal learning approaches.
- The applicant states high-quality learning resources will be available but is vague in specific resources to be available as well as how teachers will be trained to use the resources.
- The applicant states the adaptive learning software will help match both learners and teachers to resources and approaches but fails to identify the software or how teachers will be trained.
- The applicant provides insufficient information on how the teacher evaluation system will be used for continuous improvement without providing a description of mentioned practices.
- The applicant has a plan for recruiting and maintaining effective teachers but fails to provide a high-quality plan with a description of the recruitment process and actions taken for ineffective or marginal teachers.

The applicant scored in the medium range. Some strategies are in place to improve teaching and learning but the information provided does not constitute a high-quality plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to provide evidence of practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning, the proposal lacks a high-quality plan to support the implementation with vague information on instructional practices and resources.

- A Project Advisory Council will be formed immediately following notice of grant award which will self-adopt rules of governance, make decisions as a group, and use consensus building methodology to ensure that the charter schools are operating together. Without a current high-quality plan with policies, practices, and rules, there is no there is a weaknesses in support for project implementation.
- There are school leadership teams at each school who are given flexible autonomy. The objective is to allow for experimentation that can eventually be codified into best practices and shared among schools. This weakens this area due to the fact that experimentation during the implementation of the proposal will decrease fidelity of implementation.
- The software-aided assessment process will ensure that students have the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not on time spent on topic.
- No information is provided as to how students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways.

- Adaptive software will provide the personalized learning. iPads and equivalent devices will be available in the smart classrooms and will enable individualized instruction and self-guided learning. The applicant states that adaptable and accessible resources and instructional practices will be provided but fails to give specific information on the resources or practices. Children with disabilities will be given adaptable methods of demonstrating mastery.

The applicant scores in the low range on this criteria due to the lack of a high-quality plan with policy and infrastructure to successfully implement personalized learning environments.

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

The applicant provides insufficient evidence that the school infrastructure supports personalized learning ensuring total access, technical support, and open systems that make recommendations for additional learning supports through a high-quality plan which includes timelines, deliverables, and responsibilities.

- Most of the content will be digital and provided on an open source basis and there will be outreach to encourage parents and other stakeholders to become involved to support personalized learning.
- Technical support will be provided through peer support, dedicated support staff, online support through the proposal website, use of social media, and local support. This information does not provide a quality plan with specific details to ensure stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support.
- The consortium will allow parents and students to export their information in an open XML data format and to use the data in other electronic systems to support personalized learning systems.
- Interoperable data systems will be available through exportable XML and other appropriate user-defined formats.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range for this criteria. There is some evidence of a school infrastructure to support personalized learning environments but lacks effectiveness without a high-quality plan.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to provide evidence of a high-quality plan and approach to monitor, correct, and continuously improve the plan since a plan will not be developed until after the grant is awarded.

- An Educational Technologist consultant will spearhead the continuous improvement effort and adaptive learning software will assist in this effort.
- A detailed data collection and analysis system will be developed to monitor, measure, and publicly share information after the grant is funded. This fails to prove a high-quality plan for continuous improvement is already in place.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low range for failing to develop a high quality plan for continuous improvement prior to grant funding.

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

The applicant will use the Project Advisory Committee as the primary mechanism for ongoing communication but failed to link most of the communication to continuous improvement with referenced activities being geared more toward publicity.

- The Project Advisory Committee is the primary mechanism for ongoing communication and engagement. The primary activities mentioned are related to publicity and media relations rather than communicating information for continuous improvement.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range due to a lack of a high quality plan for communication that is linked to continuous improvement.

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

The applicant provides performance measures which do not provide information on meeting or exceeding state ESEA targets and fails to provide a sufficient breakdown of information on subgroup measures.

- The required Performance Measures were chosen because they are mandatory and the other measures were chosen to support the required measures and verify the project is effective.
- The measures will provide information about incremental success across the spectrum of student and institutional indicators while bringing the areas that need attention to the forefront. It is unclear what the institutional indicators are without a quality logic model to determine deliverables.
- No information is provided as to if the measures are equal to or above state ESEA targets.
- The performance measure related to effective teachers notes there are no effective teachers or principals in the schools as a baseline for the measure. With a record of success last year and the awards given, it is highly likely that some effective teachers and principals exist in the schools. With a zero base of effective teachers and principals there will be nothing to build on the first year for effective implementation.
- The Performance Measure for PreK - 3 fails to give a measurement instrument.
- Many Performance Measures are written for all students and do not provide a breakdown for subgroups to follow their progress.

Overall, the applicant scores within the medium range with Performance Measures available but a lack of clarity as to whether they are ambitious and are weak in providing subgroup information.

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

The applicant lacks a high-quality plan to evaluate effectiveness. First a high-quality plan of grant activities to be carried out is not available therefore deliverable targets such as professional development preclude the applicant being able to develop a high-quality plan including targets, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible.

- An Evaluation Consultant will work with the Project Advisory Committee.
- Evaluation will be formative and summative.
- Data will be analyzed quarterly and results will be used to make changes to the operating plan.

The applicant scores within the low range for this criteria based on a lack of a high-quality evaluation plan and the lack of a high-quality implementation plan linked to the evaluation plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies only RTTT-D funds to support the project, the budget is not reasonable in relation to implementing effective personalized learning environments, and key components such as adaptive software are not included in the budget.

- RTTT-D funds were the only funds identified to support the project. There was no information provided of already existing federal or state funds which could be used in coordination with the RTTT-D funds without reallocating already existing funds.
- Personnel includes funding for 25% of the salaries of the following STEM personnel: STEM Coordinator, Animation specialist, Architecture/Drafting specialist, and media specialist. This much funding for STEM programs provides more support for the STEM initiative instead of the personalized learning environments required in the application.
- All travel costs are related to STEM. This includes visits to successful STEM schools and conference related to STEM initiatives. This lacks a focus of funding on personalized learning environments required for this proposal.
- A large portion of the equipment funds will be used to supply all schools with fully equipped elementary, middle and high school STEM labs. This takes the focus of funding away from personalized learning environments and places it on STEM initiatives.
- No money was allocated for the software to provide adaptive learning systems.

Training funds are allocated for teacher training without specific information on what the training will be other than STEM and personalized learning environments.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low range. The budget fails to provide evidence of strong support for personalized learning environments and cannot be tied to specific activities since a high quality plan for implementation has not been developed in which to link the budget.

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

The applicant fails to provide a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant and provided no evidence of activities to transition into continuing without the grant funding.

- The consortium's members will provide individual reserves and operating revenues but specific information is not provided as to how this will be accomplished.
- The consortium will aggressively pursue grants to continue the programs beyond the end of the grant.
- The consortium will seek all available resources to continue to fund the proposal.
- All of the above do not constitute a high-quality plan with activities to transition into continuing the proposal without grant funding.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low range for this criteria. They lacked evidence of a high-quality plan for sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to provide evidence of strong or sustainable partnerships for the purpose of the proposal and addresses criteria in this section without evidence of meaningful partnership engagement.

- The applicant states they have a sustainable partnership with a range of public and partner organizations but fail to provide details of the various partners and their roles. Only two partners were mentioned from the original planning and the applicant states that they would work to bring in more external stakeholders and partners after the grant is awarded. This does not substantiate sustainable partnerships.
- The applicant provides population level desired results but fails to provide how partnerships will support the outcomes or strategies to meet the outcomes such as "Parents are fully involved in their child's education."
- Vague details were provided on tracking data, scaling, and using the data to improve results over time without indicating how partnerships will impact these areas.
- Specific information was not given on how partnerships will help to provide integration of services with external agencies.
- The applicant failed to provide information on how the partnerships will provide support to build the capacity of the staff in participating schools.
- There is no evidence as whether the achievement goals are ambitious by being equal to or above the state ESEA targets.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low range for this criteria due to a lack of evidence of strong, sustainable partnerships.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to have a high quality plan for the implementation of personalized learning environments. Plans for implementation and resources will be made after the grant is awarded. No funds were budgeted for the adaptive software which the applicant stated was key for the proposal and an unreasonable amount of the funding was budgeted for STEM initiatives and not personalized learning environments.

Total	210	81
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