



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0409IN-1 for Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township has set forth a comprehensive reform vision that covers the four core educational assurance areas as shown: adopting standards, increased use of data, increasing effective teachers and principals through professional development, evaluation and management teams and proposing to turn around the school through this overall use of a change model.</p> <p>A1- The applicant has provided a plan that denotes accelerating learning with increase learning time and providing accessibility to learning through technology. There will be deepening of learning through Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Equity for learning is addressed through 24 hours a day availability of technology and flexibility of learning through identified personalized plans based on the use of technology. The plan is built on pilot projects and school reform using magnet schools to help students identify their area of interest. Plans are articulated with work already accomplished or being completed. District is using innovative ideas for sustainability through own system development for wireless technology.</p> <p>Areas that are unconvincing that they are achievable is the amount of professional development that might be required to reach the goals for the first year. Goals established for elementary are unrealistic when there is no intervention in the first year. Sparse information on the wireless network development for the complexity and dependence on this system for the whole project.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a-MSDLT has described how they have selected all schools to receive support which meet the criteria for low income eligibility and high need.</p> <p>b-A complete list of schools with grade levels is included.</p> <p>c-Participating number of students meets the threshold for the funding requested.</p> <p>Narrative indicates all schools will be served but also indicates that some schools were deemed A&B schools by the state. It has identified that some schools have achievement issues and need to be turn-around schools. All schools have been modified to be magnet schools but there is no discussion in how this has affected the high need students.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The vision supports a project that will create equity for all students to be college and career ready. In order to be successful, the project is divided into four project areas that build on technology as the key component that helps create this effective plan over a four year period with deliverables each year that support the final goal of increased student achievement. The plan is supported through the inclusion of key stakeholders and the inclusion of key personnel to manage and support the reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers, • union representatives, • parents, • business. <p>The scale up is supported with the use of a pilot program previously showing results of motivation and engagement and increased student achievement. This grant project is starting with the high school and junior high, then in the second year of</p>		

the grant request moving to the elementary schools.

The narrative supports the components of model of change.

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

Narrative lacking that references the differences between District and State targets and that they meet or exceed state goals.

a-The goals are ambitious yet achievable except for the SPED subpopulation. Language Arts goals are targeted for a higher % of achievement than the overall population, double in some cases, without adequate research or support to suggest that SPED students can improve at twice the rate of non SPED students based on the strategies chosen.

b-A plan for decreasing the achievement gaps is plain while at the same time continuing to expect an increase in the comparison population over time. The rate of achievement for ESL and SPEC Ed is not convincing that it is achievable.

c- Graduation rates are lacking for special populations including ESL and Spec Ed.

d- College enrollment does not seem to be an expectation for special ed population.

e- Systems to address the post secondary collection of data is included which strengthens the ability to collect data over time.

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:

MDLT provided comprehensive data.

a-provided adequate data to show an increase in achievement for black, hispanic and white populations and the increase in minority populations as well as an increase in ESL population. Documents an increase in achievement for high poverty schools through charts and graphs. Also details the decrease in gaps for achievement, by school, subject area and race. Provides data to document reducing the gap for graduation and college enrollment by race.

b-lowest performing

c- Evidence was provided that parents, students and teachers are provided data through data systems that parents and students have access to but did not address the equity of the systems for all parents.

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

Narrative supports moving toward transparencies with salary for instructional positions, administrative and classified positions with references to website and legislation. Refers to federal grants open to the public scrutiny. School budgets are not provided other than to say that budgets are reviewed at each board meeting and made public.

a-, b-,c- Met criteria

d- not provided as subject to availability. (school budgets).

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

MSDLT has :

- authority under the state teacher effectiveness system to utilize data to measure teacher effectiveness.
- authority to create a learning environment that is conducive to student achievement
- access to state data systems to enter and use data to inform teachers and parents.

Lacking is specific reference to autonomy under State legal, statutory regulations to implement personalized environments.

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

ai-Evidence is given that the process for the development of the proposal included the reasonable engagement of stakeholders including representatives from bargaining unit. Letter of support was absent.

- students and parents provided feedback on the pilot project including the quality of the devices for student use.
- on every committee that was involved there was a member from the collective bargaining unit for teachers.

a ii- NA

b- Letters of support were included from key stakeholders. Unclear submission from the DOE on the intent of their approval or support. Lacking were letters from key stakeholders as mentioned in narrative/budget narrative when discussing wireless installation and usage by partnering agencies.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

MSDLT provided examples of how they analyze the quality of a program and make changes. They justified using a similar process to provide an analysis of the plan to provide a personalized learning environment with this grant.

A high quality plan is in place for analyzing the major components of the plan including level of professional development required for teachers to be successful

The project will address differences in reading levels of students, tranciency, and student connection to schools, all factors that were assessed during their reform planning and investigation.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a- The applicant has provided detailed planning to support a high quality plan that hits on all points.

i-Evidence is provided that families will have access to resources to understand and be able to plan ahead for their childs success toward college admission as planned through the technology access strategy.

ii- The applicant has linked pathway information and support to lead students to college and career readiness.

iii- There is evidence that students will have access to areas of their interest for deeper investigation with having 24/7 access to learning.

iv- There is an ambitious plan for teachers to engage and direct a students education toward a deeper context through technology in order to engage in more culture and individualized learning.

v- Through the use of the personalized learning plan, evidence is presented that students will be able to develop 21st Century learning skills.

b- Sequence of learner driven personalized instruction

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a-There is evidence that all teachers will participate in the professional development and that PD is a piece of the teacher evaluation as well as evidence that they are using the lessons learned to improve their instruction.

i-Extensive information is available about the current ways teachers are engaged in the assessment of learning process through research based best practices.

ii-Student data systems are specified that allow teachers to be responsive to the students needs and leads them to define learning opportunities based on individual needs.

iii-Again student data systems are specified that allow teachers to monitor student progress on goals to be college and career ready.

iv- Narrative supports the team approach to teacher support from peers, principal and through the evaluation mechanism.

b- The plan includes the approach that will be used to support teachers with their technology and the professional development to maximize their skills to support student learning toward goals.

i-Justification is provided that teachers have access to information to support an individualized plan to maximize student learning due to the multiple data systems that are supported by the District.

ii-Details of how teachers move students toward their goals through best practices are exhibited in the examples related to professional learning communities, response to intervention, peer to peer mentoring.

iii-A limited description of the progress monitoring was included as an example how teachers use it to garner feedback on effective resources for meeting students needs.

c- Provides information on the policies that allow leadership the flexibility to make decisions at the site level to enhance and maximize teacher resources to promote effective teacher leading and student learning.

i-Leaders are given the resources to assess teachers through the teacher evaluation system to match student needs with teacher strengths.

ii-Details of how teachers move students toward their goals through best practices are exhibited in the examples related to professional learning communities, response to intervention and peer to peer mentoring.

d-This criteria has not been addressed specifically in the application. The goal for improvement of teachers to become highly effective through this grant is 4% as determined in a chart.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA authority as provided by the State is lacking that gives structure to the accountability.</p> <p>a-Describes structure in place to support all schools with central office support. Attached resumes of chief administrators and supportive leadership staff.</p> <p>b-Described structured autonomy and flexibility allowed at the site level to be able to flex resources and structure to meet the needs of students.</p> <p>c-Describes opportunities for students to meet their own deadlines for mastery and the resources that have been assessed and redirected for student success through onsite enrollment rather than offsite education for some students.</p> <p>d-No evidence is given that mastery is self determined but that the secondary design team is assigned this responsibility.</p> <p>e-Presents that the technology is the equalizer that allows adaptability and accessibility for all students. Sparse information on how the needs of the ESL population and spec ed populations needs are being met through the strategy.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As a district wide project, the description is provided that the grant itself is the means to providing the district and school infrastructure to make personalized learning a reality.

a-Provides evidence of planning so that the technology access for all 24/7 will provide every student with the tools and support required for learning.

b-Examples of how teachers will receive the training to make this project work is provided through training blasts, embedded support, online learning, and face to face pd.

c- Information is provided that the district executes a system that allows open data exchange

d-Having interoperable data systems is described as a reality and new products will be acquired that meet this definition.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Evidence is provided through an example that a process is in place to evaluate and make recommendations on program effectiveness based on each project.</p> <p>Narrative is focused on the improvement process and how it is effective to be responsive to the grant goals and the vision.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A strong mechanism is in place to provide feedback to stakeholders through multiple communications routes, such as web page, newsletters, reports, and information provided to the community and parents.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A comprehensive plan for performance measures is provided meeting all the criteria requested with adequate measurements and indicators.</p> <p>There is an unrealistic expectation that elementary students will improve the first year based on the premises provided that technology and individual learning will take place when they do not receive the technology and access to 24/7 learning until the second year.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Multiple evaluative efforts are described including dedicated staff, professional services, and community input as well as audits of ongoing strategies.</p> <p>Fund request for outside professional evaluator services are lacking and were not identified as a district expense to support the project.</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>		

- a-Feasible funds that are required to support the multiple projects in the grant.
- b-Request for funds is reasonable and sufficient to fund the project with minor exceptions as in the discrepancy in the request for netbooks in the budget but alluding to IPADs for the younger children in the narrative.
- c-Lacking reasonable explanation for the \$500,000 per year for potential parts failure in every year of the budget.
- i-Narrative provides the resources contributed by other funds from District resources and community resources.
- ii-One time investment and recurring costs identified effectively with the resources identified to continue the project beyond the life of the grant.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Quality sustainability plan is evident with rationale for projects chosen.
 Attention given to sustainability with the design and planning of the grant so as not to reach a funding cliff.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:
 Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township has met Absolute Priority 1 through a plan that allows students and families expanded access to learning through personalized learning platform using technology. The District has a track record of this type of intervention increasing academic outcomes for students in high needs schools.
 Realistic growth is shown for all sub pops but expectations for special education students are expected to increase disproportionately. No evidence of how Spec Ed students performed at the pilot school.
 MSDLT has show performance improvement consistently with graduation rates.
 The performance measures show an minimal expectations that this plan will increase the effectiveness of teachers and principals.

Total	210	171
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0409IN-2 for Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township

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 presented a clear and concise vision that will result in all students being career and college ready. It is predicated on a comprehensive needs assessment to meet the required criteria in a district with 61% students of color, 15% ESL and nearly 60% on Free or Reduced lunch. MSDLT addresses increasing student achievement by grasping that students need far more time on task (4,459 hours per year) than they currently have (1,274) and proposes to provide the extra time by closing the digital divide in the district and making technology equally available to all students. By doing so, the district will be able to move from the current state standards to the more rigorous Common Core standards being adopted. The planned infusion of technology will also allow the district to do careful data analysis to much better meet individual student needs including those of students coming into kindergarten more “school dependent” than in the past. By creating personalized learning environments, and more effectively engaging students not only in their learning, but in also tracking their own performance, time can be freed up for them to pursue their own areas of interest. It will also improve educator performance by providing access to student information for planning instruction and tracking progress, resulting in the district being able to attract and retain highly effective teachers. MSDLT states that what is being proposed will be the equivalent of turning their schools around.</p> <p>While the vision is implicit in the proposal, an actual vision statement would have been helpful.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In implementing the reform proposed, MSDLT will include <i>all</i> their schools, as there are high-need students in all of them and 100% of the students will participate. Included in a graph are the number and percentages for all required categories for each school.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>MSDLT has a well-thought-out, comprehensive plan based on an understanding that the transformative change the district will undergo requires all aspects of the process be given equal attention. Further, the district has a firm grip on what all those aspects are such as 24/7 connectivity, uniformity of devices for all and employing a team of technology integration trainers to provide job-embedded support to teachers so that they can make effective use of Promethean boards, laptops, netbooks and various educational software programs.</p> <p>The district will build on its current efforts wherein it not only experienced the excitement that comes with partial implementation of learning analytics, but also came to understand all that will be possible with full implementation of them. It has involved the community and business and regularly shares student information with the public, thus creating the collaborative atmosphere that will enhance support for the district’s plan. Included are graphs showing the planned timeline, actions, goals, deliverables, and persons or division responsible for carrying out four distinct, yet integrated projects. This plan is already a district-wide.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

While the LEA-wide goals for improving student outcomes in the required areas mostly meet the criteria, more detail could have been included. No goals for graduation rates for students with disabilities were included and the goal for Hispanic college enrollment is 21/2% less in 2012-13 than it was for 2010/2011.

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	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

While MSDLT's track record of success is not uniformly consistent and reveals some setbacks, especially in elementary math scores between 2010 and 2011, overall, in both language arts and math, students at all grade levels are scoring higher in 2012 than they did in 2009 and in some cases such as 8th –grade language arts and 6th, 7th and 8th –grade math, substantially higher.

MSDLT provides ample and specific evidence that despite increasing numbers of students in racial, ethnic and economic demographics in its lowest achieving schools, it has been able meet these students' needs and uniformly increase achievement. Just one example: in one school with a 67% poverty rate and a 41% ESL population, teachers achieved a 20% increase in 3rd-grade math scores.

These results are attributable to the reforms that the district has put into place such as all educators being members of multiple profession learning communities (PLC's) that review and analyze student data, identify individual student's skill deficiencies and collaborate on appropriate interventions; pre-assessments; providing some students with netbooks and 24/7 internet access. Also, over the last five years, every employee has been trained in learning more about equity, culturally responsive practices and building relationships with students and families.

In addition, the district has investigated the myriad possibilities of individualizing instruction even more as it incorporates technology into the schools such as high- need students being able to have text read aloud, get immediate help with vocabulary, adjust texts and be provided more visually compatible content.

The district also offers online courses for credit recovery and is connected to a clearinghouse that tracks their students after they graduate. Large percentages of their graduates enroll in post-secondary institutions; 3/4ths in 4-year institutions and with the exception of Hispanics, two-thirds to three-fourths of all races are enrolled.

While the district is certainly amenable to making student performance data available to all, it has a track record of providing it only to educators, not to students and parents although it has plans to do so. For example, it will take advantage of the Indiana Department of Education's plan to offer free to districts systems that will not only allow teachers to give personalized verbal feedback to students but also will enable families to actually hear a teacher's analysis of their child's work.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant currently makes information on some salaries available to the public such as administrators' salaries, and some other information is available on the Indiana State Department of Education's web site, the district does not currently

easily make available to its residents information on other salaries or instructional costs and therefore does not meet fully the criteria for transparency.

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

10

0

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This reviewer was unable to find any evidence of the State's legal, statutory and regulatory requirements that permit implementation of the applicant's proposed personalized learning environments as called for in the criteria.

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

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

MSDLT provides some examples of meaningful stakeholder engagement and has a history of gathering stakeholder input before making major changes. Also, there were a few letters of support and indications that city leaders believe the project would benefit the community. However, this reviewer could find no evidence that there had been meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal being submitted as required.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has addressed the elements of a high-quality plan in this instance. For example, beginning In 2011, the administration began a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the many programs the district has in place to support students. In this process, a thorough analysis of its support programs for high-need students was conducted and it was discovered that several important areas were not being addressed, e.g., a low level of reading ability. The findings – especially the finding that “one size does not fit all” - formed the basis for the reform proposal being submitted in that the district will now create an internet infrastructure that will give all students equal access and all educators the ability to track progress or lack thereof and adjust instruction accordingly. Thus district educators will be able to provide the individualized instruction and monitoring necessary to improve achievement results for all students.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a combination of observations, needs, accomplishments, intentions and possibilities interspersed with an explanation of what the district is currently doing along with elements of what it intends in the future, but has not provided a high-quality plan with timelines, deliverables and parties responsible. The district has a thorough understanding of what is needed to engage and empower all learners and has already taken commendable actions to address crucial areas. For example, it transformed all of its elementary schools into magnet schools to better offer curriculum related to students' areas of interest; kindergarten teachers have begun implementing the new common core standards; all ninth graders are required to schedule classes that will enable them to complete a rigorous course of study and acquire a high-quality diploma. Also, the district has in place an Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program that it wisely evaluated and discovered that while the program has many positives, it still is not producing data on what kids do after high school.

The district fully intends to make optimal use of technology to individualize instruction and move to mastery learning, but statements indicating that an effort will be undertaken or that an approach will provide opportunities do not constitute a plan

with the required specifics.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

MSDLT has a solid, comprehensive, well thought-out approach to improving instruction with myriad checks and balances to ensure that teachers are effective and amply supported and that no student “falls through the cracks.” The district provides the resources, training, time, data and flexibility necessary to personalize instruction and support student progress. Particularly impressive:

- the employment of Data Intervention Specialists to help teachers look for trends, discover the root cause of problems and isolate skill deficiencies;
- the district’s move to a unified student support services (USSS) model;
- the creation of a Curriculum and Technology Review Committee; and
- the formation of a team consisting of the Assistant Superintendent, the College and Career Readiness Director, the Literacy Coach and the Director of Exceptional Learners that meets monthly with each principal for a progress report that includes not only assessments of the status of the bottom 25% but also evidence of growth for the top 75% of students.

However, increasing the number of highly effective teachers and principals was not addressed at all and no high-quality plan was included in the proposal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

MSLDT provides evidence that the district has most of the requisite policies and practices in place to facilitate personalized learning. Examples given include support to free up principals from constantly dealing with discipline issues and the amount of flexibility afforded them, but not addressed is their autonomy in personnel decisions.

Students will have flexibility in demonstrating mastery and be offered a variety of opportunities their senior year to more easily transition to a career or college.

No high-quality plan was included.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

District organization will provide the necessary support for its planned wireless infrastructure, realizing that individualizing instruction in order to improve student achievement would not be doable without it.

Appropriate levels of technology support will be available, even family technology trainers. Parents can already access their child’s grades and bus routes and the system interoperability frameworks that will be adopted will provide far more information such as a child’s reading level and also much detail regarding it. The goal is to provide learner-specific supports so that all – parents, students, educators – will be able to easily navigate the system.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The process to ensure continuous improvement as presented does not seem all that rigorous, but rather vague. The elements included cover more <i>what</i> should be collected and analyzed than <i>how</i> the information would be collected or specifically <i>at what intervals</i> determinations would be made. A reference is made to “progress on project goals” but they are not clearly stated. A project manager will hold monthly meetings, but that is the only reference to this position. The process described no doubt suffers from the fact that the required high-quality plan was not laid out with clear goals to measure</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant fully understands the need to provide for ongoing communication and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders and presents a comprehensive approach for doing so, listing several strategies such as making information available online, conducting surveys, using the district’s website and making presentations at school functions and off site community town meetings, always providing a translator.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Nearly all of the required performance measures are provided with the exception of ones for pre-K. Also missing was how measures would be reviewed and improved if found insufficient. Rationale for setting conservative increments of improvement included a realistic understanding that many of these students have not performed at grade level for years so the task will not be easy as well as the fact that entering students are even further behind. Also it will take some time for the proposed infrastructure to be fully operational.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district conducts audits of their professional development on a regular basis. PLC’s evaluate interventions; the district’s Director of Program Analysis continually evaluates initiatives and a large team of stakeholders has been formed and charged with analyzing current practices and programs.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>With the exception of funding sources and details about funding for the one-time expense for Wireless Connectivity in 2013-2014, the applicant identifies the funds that will support the proposed project, which seem reasonable and sufficient and the applicant provides rationale for expenditures.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

MSDLT presents a cogent explanation of how it plans to sustain the proposed project. It will reallocate some ongoing funds it currently receives that are be expended elsewhere and notes that some of the funding requested is for items that will not require sustainability for many years. Details of cooperation with state and local government officials and the local community center are included, but once again not in a high-quality plan format.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: None was submitted.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: While the proposal does not explicitly address the assurance regarding increasing student access to the most effective educators, overall, the applicant does build on the core educational assurance areas and certainly addresses how learning and teaching will be significantly improved, especially by increasing technology use to personalize learning, use data to track progress, provide interventions where needed and better communicate with parents/guardians. The applicant meets the Absolute Priority.		

Total	210	151
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0409IN-3 for Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township

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 district articulates its vision. It provides background information on its student demographics and student achievement needs and the specific percentages of its demographic breakdown provide further clarity. The district explains that it has an achievement gap based on race and socio-economic status. It attempts to provide a context for what is expected of students today through providing examples; however, it missed the opportunity to coherently articulate its overall goals for students		

through the support of RTT district funds; provide an explanation of why it is seeking funding; and explain how the grant will help the district make progress toward its vision. As a result, it evident that the district is focused on student achievement, but the plan lacks a coherent vision that builds on its existing work.

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

10

6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district describes its approach to implementing its reform proposal; however, it does not articulate the goals of the plan to help explain why schools and/or specific students were selected. It explains that the RTT district grant will focus on all students since there are high needs students in all of its schools and makes reference to a chart that provides details of the participants. Its description does reference the need to provide targeted support to students along with referencing national trends in education. However, it missed the opportunity to provide a detailed description on how the district will support high-quality implementation.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district's plan explains how the reform will be translated across the district beyond its current capacity; however, it misses the opportunity to clearly articulate how its plan will specifically improve student learning outcomes. Its goal is to provide an enhanced technology infrastructure so that all students within the schools boundary has access to wireless service. The plan is to develop and create its own infrastructure to reduce costs. The ability for students to access wireless internet is stated as the means for providing equatable access for families in poverty. A current partnership provides netbooks to 7th and 8th grade students, so the plan is to provide netbooks to all students and 24/7 wireless technology. Another goal is to increase the level of student engagement through technology integration practices. Charts that include timelines are included that also list the districts actions, goals, deliverables, a d person(s) responsible for the proposal and individual projects. It is stated that the charts articulate the starting point for person(s) responsible and that each person will develop a detailed work plan before beginning their assignment. An explanation of the plan will specifically improve student performance would have enhanced this section of the grant.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides charts that include its goals for improving student outcomes; however, it failed to include an explanation of how its vision would result in improving student performance; and missed the opportunity to provide a more extensive explanation of how it determined its targets and their alignment to the State's targets. Percentages for baseline data are included in the charts along with expected improvement over time during the grant period; however, the lack of an explanation of the information contained in the charts does not support the districts ability to show that it has set ambitious yet achievable 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	10
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district provides an explanation of its record of success. Charts with detailed information of each schools performance from 2009-2012 provide a good overview of student growth and gaps based on the districts local assessment given in the spring of each year. Data trends are explained using specific percentages and an explanation of achievement needs of its lowest performing schools is provided; however, the district missed the opportunity to discuss how it planed to increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment and provide ambitious reforms in its lowest performing schools. Finally, the district provides an explanation of the importance of sharing data with students, educators, and parents, but missed the opportunity to explain the practices that are currently in place or how it will use funds from the RTT grant to improve its ability to share information. As a result, the districts plan provides some evidence on its focus on reform based on its prior record of success.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5	5	5

points)		
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has a high level of transparency. It posts personnel salaries, school level expenditures and district level budgeting on its website. The superintendent's, administrators', and certified teachers who do not belong to a bargaining unit salaries and contracts are posted on the district's website, as well as the bargaining agreements for the school board and teachers. Monthly board meetings are used as a means for providing updates on the district's financial reports. A chart of the salaries for staff at each school is provided. As a result, the district has been transparent with personnel information as appropriate.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district articulates evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy. It provides an explanation of new accountability measures that have been instituted as a result of its state's flexibility waiver with the United States Department of Education. It explains how the states accountability system is aligned to the district's expectations. An explanation of a creative initiative instituted in all of its elementary schools is described. Two years ago, all of its elementary schools became magnet schools with a unique area of focus. The goal was to promote equity and level the playing field for all students. It also explains how its state department of education has begun to take over persistently low performing schools and the types of support that is provided to these schools. The district provides background information on its philosophy of the importance of personalizing learning and closing the achievement gap; however, more explicit examples about how it will use RTT funds that align to the state's focus on these two areas would have made this section stronger. Further clarity on the support that will be provided to persistently low performing schools using RTT funding would be useful too.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: The district provides evidence of stakeholder engagement for the RTT application. Officials gathered input from teachers, principals, students and parents through meetings, round-table forums, and use of on-line tools on its current wireless pilot and use of netbooks for 7th and 8th grade students. Committee meetings that included principals and teachers were also held to gather input, along with the consultation of school board members. Recommendations were utilized from T-Mobile representatives and the feedback from students, staff, and parents was used to improve the wireless system. Challenges with the system are clearly explained. A steering committee comprised of district representatives is stated as the group who will be responsible for preparing research and other information to share with stakeholders. The district states that it has received support from different community organizations; however, the only letters that state that they support the project are from the McKenzie Center, Rolls Royce, and the Mayor; the letter from Community Hospital and Lawrence foundation speak to the partnership with the district. Letters from other organizations such as student groups, and higher education institutions could have enhanced the district's application.		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: It provides a clear and comprehensive analysis of its student performance data and areas for improvement. Its explanations provided a detailed list of the district's challenges in meeting student's needs. It articulates trends and the results of drilling down to root causes. A detailed explanation is provided on how it evaluated some of its programs and determined next steps.		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district provides a plan for ensuring that students are college and career ready through the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing parents with a digital profile of their child's performance; • Providing students in 9-12 grade with schedules created around the Indiana Core 40 diploma requirements; • Student meetings with their counselor before their ninth grade year to lay out their pathway towards a diploma; 		

- Developing digital performance plans starting in kindergarten;
- The transformation of its elementary schools to magnet schools with a unique focus and the ability for students to attend a program outside of their boundary;
- Establishment of a secondary redesign committee comprised of community representatives, higher education officials, families, and teachers to explore options for engaging secondary students
- Allowing students to take dual credit courses;
- The opportunity for students to job shadow, complete an internship or research during their senior year;
- Assessing 21st century skills and providing support to students that are not proficient in these skills;
- Implementing a personalized digital system to allow teachers to alter students' assignments based on their needs;
- Instituting a readers and writers workshop model;
- Implementing the AVID program in grades 7 to 12 that sets high expectations for students and provides them with support to be successful, along with the teachers' ability to create authentic learning experiences for students:
- Providing a balanced math program that is research based; and
- Provide 24/7 wireless internet access.

Ongoing updates and feedback on student progress will be provided to families via their child's personal profile. Data on local and state assessments will be included along with the student's progress of 21st century skills. Parents and teachers will be able to connect on-line through "office hours" and links to teacher videos that explain content will be included. Additional support will be provided through one-on-one tutoring and assistive technology. The plan also explains its training and support plan for students and teachers. However, the following information seems to be missing or is not clear in this section of the grant: evidence that families are having discussions about college and career since the district says that this is occurring; the role of the counselor once students enter high school since there is an explanation of the counselors role at the middle school level-an explanation of the transition of support to high school; information on support that is provided to students to help them keep on track and assess their own progress; and diversity of access for students. Also, there is insufficient information to determine if the internet infrastructure that the district will create is cheaper than what the cost would be from an independent contractor.

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

Annual teacher and principal evaluations will be used to provide feedback to school leaders and teachers. Constructive feedback focused on improving teachers' and principals' skills is the focus of the evaluations. A detailed description of the districts evaluation plan; how it supports and addresses underperforming teachers; and its recruitment efforts for selecting high quality teachers is explained. The district provides a detailed description for the use of RTT grants funds to support teaching and leading. The district makes connections to programs and initiatives mentioned throughout the grant. It explains the following methods as a means for focusing on teaching and leading:

- Offering a variety of professional development (PD) for teachers through job-embedded training, after school study groups, web-based training, and summer summits;
- Monthly PD sessions for first year teachers; and
- Extending the teacher workday three days a week to provide time for teachers to collaborate to plan lessons and create assessments.

The districts describes the use of a personalized learning system called My Big Campus for personalizing content and activities for students. Students can work on group projects or individual tasks using online resources. The roles and responsibilities of the Data Intervention Specialists are described and specific examples are provided on how they help teachers at all levels to organize and analyze student data. Annual teacher and principal evaluations using the RISE Evaluation System will be used to provide feedback to school leaders and teachers. A description of the system is provided in the appendix section. Constructive feedback focused on improving teachers' and principals' skills is the focus of the evaluations. A detailed description of the districts evaluation plan; how it supports and addresses underperforming teachers; and its recruitment efforts for selecting high quality teachers is explained. The Director of Grants conducts periodic audits of programs and provides feedback. Overall the district's plan addresses its focus on teaching and learning through different practices.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has described a high quality plan to support the implementation of the initiatives in the RTT grant through its school infrastructure. Most of the leadership positions are allocated to the schools rather than at the central office. The district describes the collaboration among executive leaders to ensure support to its schools. The focus of its central office is to serve schools. A clear explanation of how schools make adjustments to their instructional delivery is provided. The upgraded technology infrastructure proposed in the grant will allow students to take online courses and also hybrid courses so that they can learn at their own pace; students may complete coursework prior to their senior year. Increasing teachers ability to personalize assignments is a key component of the district's application; thus teachers' instructional practices will be geared toward students' needs based on their current and expected performance.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Equity of internet access will be provided through the 24/7 wireless network and an explanation of support for helping all stakeholders transition to this new phase of teaching and learning is provided. Parents will have immediate access to their child's performance. Electronic dashboards that can speak to one another will be used for compiling and organizing student data. Peer to peer support models will be established along with student experts that can support trouble-shooting glitches. Students will be expected to set individual performance goals, monitor their progress, and create a long-range plan for improvement. The district's application includes an explanation that demonstrates that its own infrastructure will provide support and information for families to access human resource, student, and instructional data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district identifies a clear approach toward continuous improvement. This is evident through the following:

- Teams of experts in wireless systems will meet frequently as they implement the districts 24/7 wireless network;
- Ongoing data will be collected and analyzed that includes information on connection strengths and challenges, speed of service, ease of access, level of usage, and the effectiveness of the filtering system;
- Establishing baseline technology knowledge of all staff through differentiated professional development and then ongoing discussion of teacher observations
- A district progress monitoring team comprised of executive and local leaders;
- Monthly RTT review meetings facilitated by the project manager; and
- The analysis of data for all students and subgroups.

The district will publicly share its progress on its RTT goals through monthly school board work sessions, its website, newsletters, union meetings, town hall meetings that are held in the community, and social media outlets. Translators are also made available at public meetings to translate the information for non-English speaking families.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides a detailed explanation of the strategies it will use to foster ongoing communication. These strategies include:

- Use of online tools;
- Personal meetings;
- District meetings;
- Town hall meetings; and
- Meetings at the districts welcome center.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides an overall perspective of the importance of identifying performance measures. It explains the thought that must go into selecting specific measures and how they provide informative information. This section includes charts that provide details of expected student performance for all students and grade bands; and expected performance from 2012-2017 is included along with baseline data. The plan articulates how it will review and improve the measures over time.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The districts plan explains how it will evaluate the effectiveness of its investments; however, there is some information that it makes reference to that is missing (notes to fill in information or "x"s are typed where information should be included). Audits, the Secondary Re-design Committee, and Director of Program Analysis will be the primary ways that the district will evaluate its effectiveness.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides detailed budget plan that address each component of its RTT grant application. It identifies specific funds to support the project, how funding will be allocated, and provides a rationale for funding each component of its initiatives. A budget table provides an overall summary of the allocation of grant funds followed by a narrative that clearly explains the table. For each project that will be funded through the RTT grant, a detailed allocation chart is provided along with a detailed explanation of how the funding will be used. The format is easy to read and understand, and one-time and ongoing funds are identified. Stakeholders will be able to use the document to help them clarify how the RTT funds will be used over the grant period.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides a description of how it will sustain the RTT initiative. A detailed chart identifies the funding sources that align to specific aspects of the initiative. Details on the use of the funding are also explained. A clear explanation of how the district will save funds is included which is helpful. An explanation of support from State and local government leaders and financial support are included, along with budget assumptions for three years after the term of the grant. However, there are statements in the grant that contradict the district's explanation. For example, they explain that the grant will provide an influx of dollars to build the internet infrastructure and that a large portion of the grant will be used to support one-time technology expenses that the district would not be able to fund without the grant. There is more explanation of buying the technology rather than enhancing the academic environment and using the budget to build teacher capacity to create personalized learning and close the achievement gap.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The districts RTT application is comprehensive. It provides a clear explanation of how the 24/7 wireless infrastructure will provide personal learning environments for students; and connections to supporting and sustaining this goal are referenced throughout the grant. The grant did a good job of responding to each of the required sections in the grant and explained how its initiative would support closing the achievement and equity gap. It explained how it would enhance its current structure and sustain it beyond the grant period. It also explains how the wireless infrastructure aligns to 21st century teaching and learning, and how the teachers ability to provide personalized learning will improve student performance.

Total	210	166
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