Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0424WI-1 for Milwaukee Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly and comprehensively articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. For example, the applicant states the Milwaukee Public Schools' (MPS) vision is to personalize and deepen student learning throughout the school district by:

1. Turning data into actionable intelligence,
2. Turning intelligenence into action, and
3. Expanding the availability of personalized education delivery options currently availabe to students

The complete vision entails an number of initiatives such as: improving exisiting data systems , creating new linkages, and designing and launching user-friendly tools which will provide meaningful communications between the schools, stakeholders, and the community. This data will be available to educators, parents, and community partners which assist in providing valuable wraparound services that schools may not be able to provide. Other visions include: Students having more effective teachers through evaluations, feedback, and personalized professional development; Students will have access to a more variety of courses; and Having blended learning models that enhance the effectiveness of small group time by allowing students to learn at their own personalized pace. It appears the applicant has a take a number of steps to begin the wide-scale transformation of the school district to ensure students are college and career ready. The applicant currently has robust data system which is highly capable of measuring student growth. The applicant has already adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and has already begun taken action to on turning around the district's lowest-achieving schools. The applicant provides a comprehensive table illustrating the strides already take to reach their goals.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The Applicant has partially demonstrated their approach to implementing its reform proposal. For example, the applicant indicates the total number of the total number of students to be served by the project is 73,888 over the 5-year period, with incremental increases of the number of students being served annually. The applicant states they will serve 99 schools. The applicant provides signatures from staff from participating schools in the Appendices representing all eligible schools and principals. The applicant also notes in the school demographics table that 82.7% of the students in participating in the project are low-income, and 7,419 educators will participate in this opportunity. Finally, the applicant indicates that 71.2% of student population in the LEA Consortium are low-income.

Weaknesses: None noted.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant provides a plan describing how they will reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and assist them in reaching outcome goals. For example, the applicant indicates they will improve the current data systems and warehouse in order to provide better student growth and outcome information to educators, parents, students, and the community. The applicant will implement a common planning time, and introduce targeted coaching in order to assist educators to use findings from high quality assessments into high quality instructional strategies customized for each individual student's needs. The applicant plans to personalize learning for teachers and purchase online professional development resources in order to improve teacher's

instructional practices as well as to provide more highly-qualified, highly-effective teachers to students. School system-wide licenses for online learning solutions in Math and Literacy will allow students and parents to access high-quality content and assessments online anywhere, at anytime. A blended learning model will be implemented at a small number of schools allows students to learn at their own personalized paced using digital content. These models will provide immediate feedback on student progress and mastery, ensuring they are properly prepared to advance. Another advantage to the blended learning model is that students can benefit from a larger variety of courses as well as highly effective teachers.

Weaknesses: The applicant will only implement a small number of blened learning classrooms in Literacy and Math for grades 3-8, one per geographic region. Because the applicant notes there are nearly 74,000 students in the MPS, there is some concern that a large number of students that could benefit from this type of environment that won't have the opportunity to. The applicant notes parents as partners, but the only role they have it appears is to retrieve data. It does not appear there is very much interaction or engagement of parents within any of the iniatives or in the logic model.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant provides a plan that is likely to improve student learning for Caucasian and African American and a small subgroup of Hispanic students in the project. For example, the applicant proposes to increase the number of the number of students that enroll by 2% each school year. The annual overall graduation rate growth for the grant period for MPS is projected to be 2.25% per year. The applicant indicates the graduation rate has increased 14% over the past 10 years and is currently at a 15 year high, which commendable and illustrates improved student learning and performance. The largest increases by subgroup will be in the African American and Hispanic/Latino subgroups for the goal of high school graduation rates.

Weakness: The applicant does not provide a full, robust plan that translates that the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup. For example, in the the applicant notes MPS achievement gaps are significantly higher for English Language Learners (ELL) in Reading and beginning from the 2008-09 school year up to the 2011-12 school year with increase in the achievement in every year during the four-year period. The applicant's reform plan does not provide any personalized learning discussion or initiatives regarding this subgroup. The achievement gap is noted as 39% for ELL students in the 2010-11 school year thru the 2011-12 school year, the highest achievement gap amongst all subgroups. The applicant notes they provide English as a Second Language for only 38 of the 172 schools across the school district, which is a small number of students receiving the service, and does not state whether or not these services will be deployed in all schools, or at least to all high-need students within the school system. With these limitations, there will not be an increase performance and equity at the same rate for ELL students as other subgroups. College enrollment numbers will increase by 10% for the duration of the grant period (only a 2% increase annually) for each subgroup which is certainly achievable, but is not ambitious. Finally, for improving proficiency and growth assessments, the applicant notes increases of 5% in Reading for each year of the grant period for the African American and Student with Disabilities subgroups, and 6% for Hispanic, ELL, and FRL subgroups for each year of the grant period. For Math, the increases are similar. The applicant's goals are very ambitious, but unlikely achievable with the prescribed approaches and plans noted throughout the narrative.

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	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant illustrates a very limited amount of success over the past four years in Grade 8 reading and Math. In Math, there was a 2% increase of a 4-year period, and a 4% overall increase in Math proficiency rates. The applicant has also demonstrates they have slightly improved the MPS graduation rate overall by 2%. The applicant indicates student performance data is available to students, parents, and educators through a variety of methods which includes: the MPS Portal-Student Toolbox located online and available at home and school, Parent Assistant via the internet located online, standards based report cards, Report Cards during Parent Teacher Conferences, and the MPS Data Warehouse where student data is stored for educator viewing available in school or at home.

Weakness: The applicant admits that they have not made much progress over the past four years, and currently don't have a track record, making it impossible to assess success. The applicant provides tables describing very small achievements in Reading and Math on the Wisconsin Concept Knowledge Examination (WCKE). The baseline for Grade 4 in the 2008-09 school year was 14%. The proficiency rate remained at 14% for 2 years, and only increased by 1% in the 2011-12 school year. The MPS system's overall proficiency rate ranges between 22%-23% lower than the state average for the 4-year period, with school system proficiency rates remaining stagnant for three straight years prior to the 2011-12 school year. Similar results were found for achievement gap rates among all subgroups vs the State Caucasian Subgroup, which is noted as the state's highest performing subgroup. The applicant has not showed evidence they have made ambitious and significant enough reforms that translates into success. When reviewing the graduation rate by subgroup, every group improved with the exception of the Hispanic and ELL subgroups, which further demonstrates more reforms are needed to improve achievement gaps among this subgroup significantly. The data provided by the applicant did not demonstrate progress over the past four years. The applicant's proposed approaches does not appear to provide the supports and infrastructure needed to improve learning outcomes, especially within the ELL subgroup that largest underperforming subgroup within the school system.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant clearly demonstrates a level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. For example, the applicant indicates the MPS system recently updated its website to increase transparency by placing all district contracts above $50,000, all non-payroll expenditures, they implemented the MPS Spending website to show how the district spends its money and where the money actually goes, makes public budget allocations, and all school statistical data. The applicant has plans to exapnd transparency by making available teachers salaries and non-school based personnel salaries.

Weakness: The applicant does not provide actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers and/or instructional staff only.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant illustrates there is autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant’s proposal. For example, the applicant indicates the State of Wisconsin has created conditions that enable the district to execute the Race to the Top such as developing a statewide longitudinal data system, state student information system, the state has adopted Common Core State Standards, and support high quality digital learning. The applicant also states there is a strong relationship between the State Department of Public Instruction and MPS. They have worked together previously to implement the district wide Comprehensive Literacy Plan and Comprehensive Math and Science Plan which provides a strong foundation for personalization. The applicant indicates there was substantial support in developing the RTT-D application by the Senior Policy Adviosr, Office of the State Superintendent at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, demonstrating sufficient autonmy relative to any State requirements.

Weakness: None noted.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant demonstrates meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. For example, the applicant states they hosted several focus groups of teachers from various grade levels seeking input for this application, and sent surveys to teachers seeking feedback regarding personalized learning at MPS. The applicant indicates union leadership provide substantiative feedback throughout the design process through bi-weekly meetings. The RTT-D Strategy Team consisted of key MPS administrators. The applicant also indicates the Mayor of the City of Milwaukee, and the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council were engaged as they explored RTT-D initiatives.

Weakness: The applicant appears to have somewhat circumvented certain stakeholders by not engaging all parents and families of students within the school district. The applicant used a forum provided by the Advisory Council Executive Committee, that may be representative of the student population. The applicant noted they took 8 weeks to prepare the application, but did not take the time to host public meetings to solicit feedback from a larger portion of the 73,000 they are proposing to serve. This is a real problem and illustrates a broader problem of little regard for one of the core partners needed

to improve achievement gaps within MPS. The lack of communication with all stakeholders is a huge problem. The applicant also notes a poor response rate (12%) to surveys sent out in October 2012 to nearly 600 teachers related to personalized learning, which shows a serious lack of support or time for such instruction. The applicant also indicates they are proposing to reform 99 schools, but only received support from 89 principals. It also does not appear that principals provided any input into the preparation of the application, and the applicant does not say whether or not any feedback was solicited or provided by the principals which leaves one to question school and district climate. The project will not be transformative if the key agents of change are not at the table to provide adequate feedback.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant provides a plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the applicant's proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address. For example, the applicant indicates gaps include: students lack access to courses, Math and Literacy Achievement is still low and achievement gaps continue, and data needs to be consolidated and placed in a centralized location for extraction. Most importantly, the applicant indicates the new teacher evaluation system indicates 27 of teachers at 9 schools were rates as unsatisfactory or basic/needs improvement. The applicant provides a very detailed illustration of the challenges of MPS system,. the progress made to date, the remaining gaps, and the actual link to the RTT-D indicators. The applicant's logic for addressing the noted gaps for reform is clear, and all of these gaps are directly linked to student achievement as well as RTT-D's priority to ensuring students are college and career ready.

Weakness: The applicant indicates that the new evaluation system has been rolled out in only 9 of its schools, and has not been subjected to the all of the schools within the district. There is some concern that there may be a very large number of students within affected by unsatisfactory educators in the currently, and they will only be discovered after the grant is awarded. Furthermore, it means that the applicant really doesn't know how many resources it will really need, doesn't know all the types of personalized support that is necessary, and it is unclear what factors (employment, behavior, etc.) are tied the unsatisfactory or needs improvement categories to determine whether personalized supports or simple replacement is even necessary. The fact that they new evaluation system has not been rolled out district-wide, or at least to all participating schools is of some concern.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	11

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant's provides a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. For example, the applicant indicates they plan to use e2020 online content in their blended learning initiative that will allow students in need of additional rigorous content for college-career readiness to be available online. The applicant will make available high-quality MPS teachers remotely, should students not have access to them onsite. RTT-D schools will have the opportunity to pursue one of two blended model options. The applicant will expose students to career awareness workshops. The applicant indicates they have a partnership with Time Warner Cable to offer internet access at a reduced rate for school system students so that students and parents can have access to internet services in their homes after school hours.

Weakness: The applicant notes they plan to monitor teacher shortages, but fails to note what will be done to prevent shortages or provide a solution beyond the monitoring. The applicant appears to use online content as more of a solution for teacher shortage rather than a benefit for students desiring more rigorous course offerings that are not available within the school district. The applicant indicates that internet service will be offered through Time Warner Cable for $9.95 pilot program for low-income families, but does not indicate how students it will assist students whose parents cannot afford the $9.95 monthly, or are simply unwilling to purchase internet service. The applicant fails to address how they will provide exposure for students and educators to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that may motivate and deepen individual student learning. Some of the applicant's plan for learning in this section appears to be quick fixes to existing problems, and do not translate into into deeper learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The applicant indicates students with the highest needs will be identified early, but the applicant fails to detail how they will identify high need students, or what exactly will be entailed in each child's personalized learning solutions. The applicant simply states the student will receive more individualized attention from teachers. The applicant fails to mention the mastery of critical academic content and developing very important life-long skills and traits in their students. Finally, the applicant's plan mentions no support from parents. There is no physical

engagement with parents. All interactions are centered around present and planned data system infrastructure, which is not helpful for parents that are technology challenged or overwhelmed with the information presented to them. All parental engagement is predicated upon the parents coming to them. MPS does very little outreach with this population. Additional face-to-face, culturally-sensitive outreach and engagement is needed for those families that may be hesitant or resistant to the school system's transition to be more technologically advanced to ensure parents, students, and educators are all on the same page, and possibly to identify barriers that may cause the proposed approaches and plans to be modified.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant clearly provides a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalized learning environments. For example, some of the applicant's approaches includes: providing professional development supports and structures in place to build capacity using Peer Observers to provide coaching and feedback, providing targeted professional development tailored to meet the needs of the individuals educator, and having regional teams to monitor and track reports ensuring the proper resources and supports are provided to each participating school. School leaders will receive coaching using the Danielson rubric, providing the necessary tools for them to recruit peer observers who will assist in teacher growth. The applicant notes they will improve support for school leaders by providing central office staff to model sessions live and videos of model sessions of collaborative planning time use. The applicant states they will provide teachers with access to highly effective colleagues who will offer coaching and feedback in order to increase the number of students who receive high-quality instruction. The Teacher Learning Community is a virtual space that will be used by educators to interact as well as share content on how to adapt content of high need students.

Weakness: It is unclear whether all 7,419 teachers will be participating in some of the activities. For many of the personalized learning strategies in the Mapping MPS Initiatives table the applicant states what will be done, but fails to detail how many educators will participate for each activity. It also appears that many of the strategies and at leisure or by choice, which is a huge concern. The applicant does not specifically indicate that all participating educators will engage in training, and in teams or communities that support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments that meets each student's academic needs and helps ensure all students can graduate on-time and are college-career ready. The applicant also indicates there will be a minimum of one Peer Observer charged with coaching and providing feedback to teachers. This person will be a colleague and one has to question how will this person be able to complete their job if they are also charged with observing co-workers. The applicant's plan for teaching students does not include innovative, frequent enough plans to collect and assess students on a more frequent basis which would allow modifications and new adapt ions of content and instruction which would allow teachers to more appropriate instruction as it relates to each child's academic needs, interests, and optimal learning approaches. For example the applicant's approach includes teachers and leaders using formative data assessments of MAP which is available only every 12-16 weeks, as well as more frequent common assessments (the only example notes every 6-weeks) to allow educators to identify potential academic problems sooner before students fall too far behind. The applicant fails to note the specific proposed assessments to be used and the frequency of those proposed assessments, making it impossible for the reviewer to determine whether they are appropriate or if the assessments would have the potential to make a difference. The applicant simply states more common assessments would allow educators to identify poorly performing students sooner. The applicant indicates school leadership will meet every 6-8 weeks to assess student needs across classrooms, which is not appropriate considering the huge increases proposed in student proficiency and growth annually of 5%-6% annually. The frequency of measuring student progress is inappropriate considering the challenges noted in previous and current growth patterns. The applicant indicates that provisions of professional development supports will be made, but there is no assurance that all educators will be required to participate in order to assure they have the best possible resources to achieve the applicant's stated goals. The applicant does not address their high-quality plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals in hard-to-staff schools.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant clearly demonstrates a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. For example, the applicant indicates the large school district has been divided into four-regions to ensure all schools and regions have the structure and leadership models necessary which will

enable the district to provide better oversight to-low-performing schools. The structure consist of the Chief of Staff, the Chief Academic Officer, the Chief Information Officer, Chief of School Administration, Chief of Human Resources, Chief Operations Officer, and Chief Financial Officer, all of which report directly to the Superindent. The applicant also notes they have strengthened Regional Leadership Teams so they are more effective in supporting schools in their region. All of the lowest performing schools have been placed in one region, and overseen by a newly hired Chief of Innovation (CIO) during the 2011-12 school year. The Superintendent meets bi-weekly with the CIO along with representatives from the Regional Leadership Teams to review school progress, discuss current school data, and provide solutions and supports for needs discussed during the meetings. The district has beefed up its infrastructure by adding additional support staff to each region. Additions include: Social Workers, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, Bilingual Representatives, and Research and Evaluation Staff. The applicant's plan for giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit basd on mastery and not the amount of time spent on the topic entails purchasing an enterprise-wide licenses for state of the art learning solutions for Math and Literacy in grades K-12, and illustrates diverse plans appropriate for all grade levels to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple ways. Another example entails requiring all high school seniors to complete and present a portfolio called the Defense of Graduation in order to graduate. The applicant will use Montessori test scores to determine mastery, and at one high school, students have the choice to determine how they earn credit either through classroom work, through community-based learning internships, Web-based classes, independent study, and college coursework. The applicant has provided a plan that illustrates the consortium governance structure which will consist of the school district demonstrating their proposed infrastructure, chain of command, as well as accountability for different initiatives of the project. The applicant indicates state law currently provides substantial flexibility to school districts which allows students to accelerate more quickly, leading to early graduation.

Weaknesses: The applicant does not provide resources and instructional appropriate practices that are adaptable and fully accessible for all English Language Learners. The applicant indicates that only 38 of the 172 schools across the district have access to bilingual accommodations. Therefore, these services are not available to all students throughout the school district.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant indicates a number infrastructure supports for personalized learning. For example, the applicant indicates students will have access to the Student Toolbox and the Virtual Library which are online resources available to students during and after school. The Student Learning Center is a web-based learning system that was designed by school staff for students. Student have access to laptops and desktop computers in school, and all schools are wireless. The Parent Assistant, a web-based data system that allows parents to update contact information as well as access student academic progress and growth, accessible 24 hours, 7 days a week. Parents are provided Standards-Based Report Cards which offers feedback on student progress. Educators monitor academic and non-academic information using the eSIS data warehouse system. Teachers provide assistance to students during school hours in conjunction with the School Technology Support Center Hotline. The applicant indicates the College Access Centers are open during weekends and evenings to assist students and families. The applicant indicates the school system provides a technology support hotline as well as self-service request online. The school district office has an on-site, full-time technician. The applicant has provided a comprehensive timeline illustrating the key proposed activities to bridge gaps, the expected timeframe, the proposed deliverables, and outcomes, and the responsible party or key staff person.

Weakness: The applicant indicates 99-100 schools will be participating in the project, but does not make available school resources after school for all schools. For example, the applicant indicates only 49 schools will have after hour computer labs for students attending Community Learning Centers. The applicant also notes that some parents will be able to use the College Access Centers on weekends and evenings, but does not indicate whether these centers are located and convenient to parents outside of the local area, and does not indicate whether the Centers are available to all participating schools since there won't be after hours access for all students and parents at every school. There is also some concern that there is not enough technology supports for students and teachers. The applicant plans to deploy a new data system and a number of other new technologies, but does not possess the manpower to manage such a large deployment. The applicant indicates that there are nine analyst that provide phone technical support, and another 26 that are assigned to work all 172 MPS schools.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant demonstrates an approach to continuously improve its plan. For example the applicant indicates

the Steering Committee, comprised of the Superintendent, the Director of Communications, RTT-D Project Coordinator, and the Executive Sponsors of each initiative will review progress quarterly and address any issues. The Superintendent will establish an external RTT-D Advisory Board to engage external partners, who will meet twice per year. Principals will meet monthly with key leaders monthly to address issues. The applicant's plans for sharing information with the public includes having created the MPS Spending website to allow the public to view every non-payroll expense and to provide transparency related to how RTT-D and other public funding is spent. Budget allocations to schools are also available to the public in line item detail at the school level on the District's website.

Weaknesses: The applicant's plan for the executive committee is quite relaxed, and does not allow the varies committee members to come back to the table for a 3 -4 month period in order to discuss issues as they relate to RTT-D approaches and initiatives. This is a long-period of time to wait should there be serious issues that need to be discussed or revisions that need to be made. The applicant does not state how often the Regional Support Teams will provide feedback. The applicant fails to note district office and superintendent continuous improvements in the timeline, as these activities are vital to the support and success of the project. The applicant's approach for providing feedback to educators regarding measuring student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards is very infrequent is not provided in a timely manner which could benefit the students and educators. The applicant also fails to provide feedback timelines for any newly implemented feedback tools, making it impossible for the reviewer to completely assess quality and effectiveness. The applicant notes a RTT-D Advisory Board will be established to engage external stakeholders and partners, but fails to provide how often engagement activities will take place, and whether feedback will be collected during those times. The applicant notes each Project Team will establish an Advisory Committee, but fails to detail how often they will convene, and what if any feedback will be collected and assessed, nor was the frequency was not provided either. The applicant's plan does not discuss improvements and feedback that will take place after the grant period.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant clearly demonstrates a high-quality plan which represents the best thinking at a point in time, and that is vital to continuous improvement of its plan. For example, the applicant indicates monthly meetings are held with the Regional Leadership Teams and principals of each region. The district's Academic team will meet bi-weekly, and the RTT-D Advisory Board, which will be established by the Superintendent, will meet twice per year. Teachers will receive communications regarding student progress any time via the data warehouse, and will receive 6 week progress reports on student academic growth and achievement. The applicant will partner with local media outlets to print press releases, website updates, and a press conference for the Annual State of the District Address to the community. The media will also print RTT-D updates.

Weaknesses: The applicant's plan for external engagement entails creating an advisory committee of external stakeholders to communicate externally with all stakeholders within the community. It doesn't appear the applicant has plans to personally engage the public and the community. Although an abundance of information is available via web portals and data systems for parents and other external stakeholders, those methods should not completely allowed to eliminate the chances for face-to-face engagement. Stakeholders can ask questions, and feel included in this new, innovative approach that will transform the school system. The applicant's plan to speak with the ELL parent's consist of developing print material to distribute to those families, and again does not provide verbal communications that will engage parents and perhaps provide a clearer understanding for the importance of academic achievement at all stages of learning. Effective communication will be a vital component in the building and maintaining relationships, and is essential for maintaining support and commitment of all stakeholders. The RTT-D's success will be linked to the strength of the relationships which can only be created by effective, regular planned communication with all members, within all depths of the stakeholder community, which the applicant provides limited evidence of.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant provides 7 performance measures which will enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of its RTT-D initiatives.

Weaknesses: The applicant fails to note which five RTT-D performance measures they selected that are required by RTT-D. The applicant provides seven performance measures for review. The applicant indicates that their goal for career readiness is for 100% of students to be on track by the end of 2016-17, which is certainly ambitious, but not achievable. Finally, all of the applicant's performance measures are not measurable.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strength: The applicant describes plans for evaluating the effectiveness of investments. For example, the applicant states they will work with any national evaluator selected to assess the impact of RTT-D. The Research and Evaluation Division will assess how many users accessed the dashboards as well as the number of times. The applicant will assess the investment of their Blended Learning imitative by assessing enrollment, student satisfaction surveys, and by comparing virtual courses to a common benchmark. The applicant will also assess the implementation of blended learning in new schools to determine if they are undersubsribed or oversubscribed.

Weakness: The applicant's plan for evaluating effectiveness of resources does not include a high-quality plan to assess the wide-spread deployment and usage of all technologies and minimal amount of human supports they plan to employ. There is no plan to assess the enhancement of the Parent Assistant to ensure parents are accessing the information as it supposed to be. The applicant does not provide a timeline which clearly describes when the proposed assessments will take place. For example, the applicant indicates the State Educator Effectiveness system will likely provide much of the evaluation support necessary to implement and monitor the Personalized Teacher Supports tied to rigorous evaluations. There is no indication if this will be this office's responsibility of who exactly will be responsible for the activity, or when it will take place. It appears the applicant's plan for assessing effectiveness will be business as usual. There are no indications that there will be a strong emphasis of truly determining the overall impact of the project, as it may be replicated throughout the school system as well as the nation. Furthermore, the applicant indicates MPS will partner with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Wisconsin Center for Education Research only if needed. It appears that applicant's plan for evaluation will only begin after being awarded, and finding out what the national evaluator will assess before bringing in the experienced university evaluator as partner. The applicant's plan is not of high-quality, and leaves much planning to assess the effectiveness of investments up to the funder.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant clearly identifies all funds that will support the project. For example, the applicant indicates $38,511,547 is requested in federal funding, $20,798,473 contributed to the project will be State state funding, and $3,136,206 contributed to the project will come from businesses and philanthropy. The applicant's project budget table details each budget category (personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, training stipends, and indirect costs) along with the project amount dedicated to each category for each project year. The applicant's budget appears to be reasonable, and is complimented with a budget narrative in the Appendices detailing each budget category justifying budget expenditures. The applicant provides a detailed analysis of one-time and ongoing investments. The amount of funds that will be used one time totals $10,860,272, while on-going funds to be used for the project total $51,585,955, and includes the in-kind contributions to the project. The applicant provides rationale throughout the application for most of the investments.

Weaknesses: The applicant's rationale doesn't completely evolve into ensuring equity for all students, and doesn't clearly substantiate evidence of their priorities reducing barriers to good teaching and creating better conditions for learning. Finally, because of the variances between the old and new educator evaluation systems, the applicant may not have enough resources and remedies to deal with the current and future educators that will need additional assistance. The applicant's budget for educator professional development in insufficient because of the additional resources that may be required to improve ineffective educator performance.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant that includes support from State and local government leaders and financial support. For example, the applicant indicates they will sustain works beyond the funding period that total $19 million dollars annually for school years 2017-2019. The applicant provides a table illustrating the specific initiative for which they will sustain, the school year, and the dollar figure for each category. The applicant also noted that the Children's Hospital commits $3 million dollars annually to the project for bullying prevention and health resources for students and parents. The applicant indicates they have a successful tracking record in

finding and securing funding and in-kind resources from state, local, and national funders, which will enable them to sustain and perhaps expand proposed initiatives. The applicant has also noted the district has taken steps before the application's submission to address budget deficits within the school system to financially adjust for the foreseeable future.

Weakness: None noted.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Strengths: The applicant effectively demonstrates a coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organization which will provide additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. For example, the applicant partner with the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin has been a partner for over 20 years, and provides a variety of services to include: a full continuum of services including primary care, specialty care, urgent care, emergency care, community health services, foster and adoption services, child and family counseling, child advocacy services, and family resource centers. The hospital provides over $1 million dollars of full-time nursing services and additional support staff to the school system. They also provide clinical services to address bullying and aggressive behavior prevention. The partner also facilitates Coordinated School Health in eight elementary schools and health education curriculum outreach across the entire school system titled "*Act Now!*" The program was rolled out in 2010 and reached nearly 15,000 students. The program is an interactive bullying prevention program for middle school students. The applicant promotes e-learning physical, social, and emotional programs by offering evidence-based programs free of charge to students. The applicant will use a 42-question pre-post test survey to compare attitudes towards bullying, to measure how students report bullying, and to measure how the school staff responds to bullying. The applicant provides metrics from a Spring 2012 program offered at a MPS middle school. The applicant indicates Regional Coordinators will be hired once the grant is awarded to oversee the ActNow program and will be responsible for tracking student progress 3 times a semester at each school site where the program has been implemented. The hiring of these individuals will allow the program to expand the program beyond the participating schools after the grant period, expanding into a total of 100 schools.The applicant notes new Regional Program Coordinators will be hired to oversee Act Now!, the program offered by the partner. These coordinators will be responsible for collecting and tracking data and selected indicators as they relate to the solicitation's purpose. Data will be analyzed by subgroup to determine the levels of improvement. Health teams will provide additional training as needed. Teachers can sue the data to target and assist students that are showing the least improvement. The applicant project partners and the applicant will assess performance results to modify strategies and supports as well as to share best practices across the district. The applicant's overall plan will clearly build capacity by increasing staff for regional oversight of ActNow!, provides health care and mental health services and referrals to educators, students, and their families, and provide additional evaluation support as it relates to tracking indicators for RTT-D. The applicant clearly demonstrates ambitious, yet achievable nine performance measures and desired results for students.

Weaknesses: The applicant's plans do not address social-emotional, and acculturation services for immigrants and refugees participating in the program. The applicant notes at least two different ethnic groups within the target area, but does not appropriately references services to accommodate some of their needs as it relates to Act Now!, and bullying which may be sorely needed for the various immigrant and refugee populations.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan does not completely and comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. For example, the applicant will only implement a small number of blended learning classrooms in Literacy and Math for grades 3-8, one per geographic region. Because the applicant notes there are nearly 74,000 students in the MPS, there is some concern that a large number of students that could benefit from this type of environment that won't have the opportunity to. The applicant also indicates that the new evaluation system has been rolled out in only 9 of its schools, and has not been

subjected to the all of the schools within the district. There is some concern that there may be a very large number of students within affected by unsatisfactory educators in the currently, and they will only be discovered after the grant is awarded, which could delay student achievement within the first year or two. Especially in light of the relaxed meeting frequency to make modifications. The applicant fails to provide enough support throughout the application that it will significantly increase the number of ELL students rating proficient in Reading and Math on state standardized tests, and does not provide evidence of an ambitious plan to significantly increase the number of college enrollments. The initiatives proposed are missing key components that could work to decrease the significant achievement gaps in certain subgroups, and does attentively address exposure to diverse cultures, context, and perspectives that would motivate and deepen individual student learning, and which could possibly assist in decreasing the achievement gap among the ELL student subgroup. The combination of these things will drastically impact the applicant's ability to fully-comply and meet the RTT-D's core educational assurance areas.

Total	210	127

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0424WI-2 for Milwaukee Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Milwaukee Public School application describes its perspective on personalization. Its plan states that it is building on its current accomplishments. The application includes new blended learning schools although this initiative is not clearly described. Its vision is depicted in a graphic specifically identifying data, its use and delivery models. The graphic is not entirely consistent with the applicant's plan in that the top tier is designed for only 40 of its 172 schools. The graphic indicates that it is for all schools and all students. Tier 2 is for all schools and tier 3 is a mix of serving all schools and only a few (16 and four at the bottom).

The district identifies data as being a major need stating that it has a great deal of data that is not used. The applicant clearly depicts its proposal as follows:

- Current state
- RTT-D Plan
- Future Vision

Their three initiatives are built around the four core assurance areas describing the district's current state of alignment with these areas. These initiatives are:

1. Building data systems
2. Using data to inform teacher strategies, teacher evaluations, professional development

3. Education delivery models

The education delivery model initiative is focused on blended and virtual coursework, blended classrooms and whole school education. This area of the proposal is not particularly strong in that the number of schools to be served is limited. At the end of the grant period a total of 16 schools will be served for blended classrooms and only four schools for the whole school education model (year 1 - planning, year 2- schools, year 3- 1 school, year 4 1 school).

The major focus of this application is to build classroom technology infrastructures and use more on-line learning models. The applicant does not sufficiently describe how this approach will accelerate student learning. Additionally, the model does not clearly address student academic interests.

Based upon the information provided by the applicant, the score for this section is in the medium range.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a description of the selection process for each of the three tiers of its model.

· For tier 1, all schools in the district will be served for the data linkages and data dashboards.

· For tier 2, all teachers in all schools will be included.

· For tier 3, a limited number of schools will be served for the most comprehensive services. The schools must apply to be selected.

For the whole school model, the applicant states that a "new school" would be opened in January 2013. This does not appear to be a realistic timeline. For the blended and virtual courses in the top section of this tier, the focus is for on-line courses for all schools in the district.

Overall, the applicant's proposal is a mix of serving all schools in the district to serving only a few, specifically for the most ambitious reform measures. Therefore the score for this section is in the medium range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district describes how the proposal will be scaled up within the three tiers using a logic model. For the whole school reform model, scale up is limited to four schools throughout the district's 172 total schools. This scale-up is very limited.

Additionally, the blended learning classroom is also limited to a total of 16 schools. It is unclear if the schools selected to participate in the most ambitious reform activities are those that are most in need for change and supports.

The applicant's plan links the core educational assurances areas to its initiatives and overall goals. The plan includes outcomes. Some of the performance measures are not specifically defined (i.e.: percent of parents using the dashboard) and are not annual. Rationales, activities, and timelines are provided in the application.

The score for this area is in the medium range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides summative, achievement gaps, graduation rates, college enrollment and post-secondary degree data. The data tables are designed to provide outcome data based on the proposal.

Because the application is providing services to schools in different ways, the outcome data is not specifically aligned to the proposal. The outcomes for the participating schools and students in the most ambitious initiatives (virtual, blended learning classrooms and whole school reform model) are not evident and clearly defined. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the grant progress in a meaningful manner.

The score for this section is in the low-medium range.

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 district states despite making minor progress in raising student achievement, it has addressed its low-performing schools and made student performance data available to its stakeholders. The district identifies the reasons why student achievement is not improving essentially due to an increase in high-need students.

Additionally, achievement gaps between the state and district and within the district's subgroups have not improved. There are also large gaps in the graduation rates of the district. College enrollment rates have increased due to the efforts of the district.

Overall, the record of success is not clear and the outcomes are not consistently improving. Almost 50% of the district's schools are defined as low-performing by the state. Currently, concerted district attention has been directed to a total of six schools. The reforms for the low-performing schools do not appear to be ambitious or significant.

Student performance data is available to students, parents and educators most of which is limited to the internet. The district has a limited set of strategies to increase the use of the available data.

Overall, this section of the application is in the low range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district does not sufficiently meet the application requirements of this section in that the specific school level expenditure data is not currently available to the public.

Currently, the district has other data available (non-payroll, contracts, school budget allocations, school proficiency levels and district chart of account). The applicant has a transparency plan to meet the public data requirements of this application (Phase Two) however no timelines are provided to accomplish this.

Since none of the school level expenditures are already available, the score for this section is zero.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposal builds upon the focus and actions of the state of Wisconsin in particular standards and assessment, data systems, great teachers and leaders and digital learning. The conditions are such that there are no legal, statutory or regulatory requirements that would interfere with the implementation of the proposed initiatives. Therefore this section's score is high.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district describes the process used to engage the stakeholders about the application content. All the required stakeholders participated. Additionally a Strategy Team was established for the purpose of overseeing the application development.

A significant weakness is the level of participation of the district teachers. Only a total of 33 teachers in the district participated in the focus groups. About 600 teachers (12%) completed the application survey.

Student input was obtained via the Student Advisory Council and family input via the District Advisory Council. Letters of support are included in the application.

Based on the level of stakeholder engagement, this section of the application scores in the medium range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant conducted an analysis of needs and gaps using a self-assessment. The applicant addresses these reported needs and gaps with the elements of the proposal. Only teacher survey results are included as evidence of the needs assessment.

The evidence of the process, plan and results used for this evaluation is lacking in the application. There are missing elements such as the goals, rationale, specific activities, timelines and responsible parties. Therefore it is unclear how the needs analysis was conducted and how the outcomes were determined to be addressed in this grant. As a result, the score for this section is low.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant specifically addresses the proposed initiatives in the relevant tiers of its proposal. The application describes the goal, current state and the RTT-D Plan. There is coherence in the descriptions and format.

The applicant also has an Implementation Plan that includes the elements of a high quality plan. For each proposed initiative (Systems Linkages, Dashboards, Teacher Practice, Teacher Evaluation System, On-line courses, blended learning classrooms, and whole school blended model), the plan includes the goal, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible party.

For the students, the proposal addresses the use of the data warehouse and dashboard to help them see their academic work and career goals. It is unclear how students will be supported in using these resources to better equip them for improved outcomes.

The focus of the grant proposal to expand the choice of educational delivery models specifically on-line, virtual courses. This approach does not provide students with a variety of educational approaches. The applicant does not provide evidence that shows the success of such models, rather plans to use the grant to experiment before using it in more of its schools. Therefore, it is not known if the platforms possess high quality content.

The plan does not describe how the virtual and on-line courses and schools will integrate with the existing delivery models. Additionally, the district is relying on the reports generated by the virtual and on-line programs to inform its work with students. It is unclear how these reports will be used for each individual student and how the work will be personalized other than through the virtual platforms. The district does intend to use the data warehouse and dashboards that uses other student data. Presumably, the platforms will allow for accommodations and strategies for high-need students, however this is not adequately addressed.

Additionally, students need to be taught how to use the data tools that are available in the proposal. The applicant does not provide information on how this will be accomplished.

The score for this section is in the low - medium range due to the ambiguity about student engagement and empowerment.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Implementation Plan meets the selection criteria of possessing the elements of a high quality plan. For each proposed initiative, the plan includes the goal, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible party.

The proposal includes strategies for learning communities for teachers using common planning time. This will provide teachers with the tools to adapt their instruction.

The district reports that they have had success in some of their schools however, this evidence is not provided.

The plan also includes the purchase and use of formative assessments for all K-12 Math and Literacy class across the district. This system will provide educators with more opportunities to assess student learning and progress.

Additionally, professional development supports will be provided such as academic coaches and teacher instructional leaders based on the outcome of the formative assessment outcomes.

As a result of the implementation of the teacher evaluation system, targeted professional development will be provided to teachers to address their individual needs and improve their practice. Evaluators and observers will be trained to implement the evaluation system and use the data collection process. The evaluation system for principals is not specifically addressed.

All educators must be trained on how to access and use the data tools and resources. This area is not clearly defined. The applicant also does not fully address a high quality plan and process to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers.

A description of the blended learning models does not provide sufficient detail about the role of the instructors and their supports.

Due to the inadequacies in this section, the score is in the middle of the medium range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the functions of the Central Office, which becomes operational in November 2012. The infrastructure is designed to provide support and services to all of the district schools. It is unclear if all the schools in the district will be able to receive a high level of support to implement the grant effectively. The support is also not differentiated to the schools that will be targeted for the grant's more ambitious reforms. Additionally, the newly designed central office may not be totally ready to manage a grant of this size and scope.

The functions of the key staff support the implementation of the grant proposal. The specific role of the Superintendent is not described in relation to the implementation. Also, the elements of a high quality plan are not included in the application. The specific metrics identified and not all measurable and the timelines are not clearly specified.

All of the required areas are addressed for school flexibility and autonomy - school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions, staff roles and responsibilities, staffing model and school-level budgets. Since all schools in the district are participants in the grant to some degree, all have the same level of flexibility.

The application addresses student demonstrated mastery, multiple opportunities for mastery, and learning resources and practices for all students.

The score for this section is in the middle of the medium range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has made investments to build the foundation to implement the proposal. They propose using these grant funds to move ahead on these investments. These foundational items include:

- Data systems
- Data Warehouse
- Reports for educators
- Stakeholder access

The applicant identifies the stakeholder access to district resources. The district has a variety of ways for current stakeholder access. The identified stakeholders and their access are:

- Students - identified resources are virtual. The district is launching a project to assist home internet access for a monthly fee. The grant funds are for data dashboards, on-line learning, more access at some school buildings and blended learning classrooms and schools.
- Parents - resources are also virtual and the Standards-Based Report Cards are not available in all schools. The grant funds will be used for the student dashboards.
- Educators - resources include a data warehouse, toolkits, learning communities and are electronic. Grant funds will be used for the dashboards, formative assessments, and teacher evaluation.

The proposal does not address access by other stakeholders to district resources. Information about access for low-income stakeholders is sparse. The plan for technical support to the stakeholders does not adequately describe how the proposed strategies will be supported. The range of the support is narrow.

The applicant describes making the cumulative student folders available in an open data format. It does not describe how the proposed strategies such as dashboards will be addressed. The applicant adequately describes its plan to make its data system interoperable and establishing new linkages to its systems for instructional programs. It is unclear how budget and human resource data will be integrated.

The score for this section is in the medium range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A Central Steering Committee will receive quarterly reports and a grant Advisory Board will be established to meet twice a year. This level of frequency does not seem sufficient to ensure that the grant is on track.

The Project Director will oversee Executive Sponsors for each initiative. The sponsors will lead a Project Team and develop an Advisory Committee. This is outlined in a comprehensive structural design.

The Initiative Implementation Plan is well designed although it lacks specific outcomes that can be measured. The proposal intends to approach the process of continuous improvement by using existing processes in the district such as standing meetings. Information about the proposal, its implementation and its progress will be shared with the public in a variety of ways via the internet, annual report, and the media.

The applicant's continuous improvement plan does not include the elements of high quality plan for each of the proposed

initiatives such as annual outcome measures, targets, timelines and responsible party. Only two of the initiatives are described in depth. Due to a lack of comprehensive information, the score for this section is in the medium range.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The plan sufficiently describes on-going communication with both its internal and external stakeholders. Only quarterly updates will be given to the Superintendent. This section score is in the high range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance measures are provided for leading indicators using a total of 12 measures, seven of which are district derived. A rationale, what the measure will provide and how it will be reviewed and measured over time are clearly described.

Performance measures are provided including baseline data and targets. Some of the data is inconsistent in the tables for College and Career Ready and for Other Performance Measures for grades 9-12.

The score for this section is in the high range.

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

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities in key categories of spending. The evaluation plan is clearly described.

The Whole School Blended Learning Model is unclear because the applicant indicates that this initiative may become oversubscribed and thus all students in the participating school would not be served.

The score for this section is in the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The total budget for the proposal activities includes the grant funds and a district contribution for a total of $64 million over four years. The budget provides a breakdown for the grant activities in Tiers 1, 2 and 3 as well as for the Competitive Preference Priority and Project Oversight.

The district consulted with its professionals in crafting the budget and plans to utilize the funds to build district capacity. The applicant clearly depicts the initiatives and provides a rationale for each. It provides a breakout of the funding sources - grant and district as well as for one-time and on-going investments. The score for this section is high.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant believes it can sustain the project after the grant ends since the proposal's grant amount is just 2% of its annual total expenditures. The applicant expects that the annual post-grant costs will be about $19 million. The focus of the applicant's response refers to the district's financial health and its ability to continue to fund project's initiatives.

Some of the funds identified to sustain the grant are projected to be from business and philanthropic partnerships.

The sustainability plan does not include the elements of a high quality plan such as goals, rationale, activities, timelines, deliverables or responsible party. The score for this section is in the low.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal is for the district to expand an existing partnership with the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin providing a bullying prevention program - Act Now! This partnership is sustainable given the prior partnership and commitment of both parties. The current program is provided to 14 schools and the plan is to expand it to a total of 50 by the end of the grant period. In year one of the grant, 8 schools will be added.

This program started in 2012 in the district. This year the district is expanding the program to K-5 students. The Act Now! Program clearly describes the services to students using an electronic curriculum with follow-up teacher sessions. Evidence about the outcome data for its existing program is sparse. Outcome data is provided for only one of the 14 currently served schools. A comparison is not provided using non-served schools.

The proposed program clearly addresses the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students and supports the goals of the proposed project. The project will be expanded to 36 schools, 20 of which are RTT-D grant schools. The program will be integrated to include the participating students in the schools with the initiatives of blended classrooms (16) and the whole school program (4).

The proposal has identified a total of 9 population-level desired results for students, parents and educators. The outcomes include student academic performance results. The data will be collected, stored and used with a determined frequency from twice a year to annually. The applicant describes how the data outcomes will be used to target resources and improve results but the specific frequency is not provided.

At the end of the grant period, the applicant projects that all of its 100 K-5, K-8 schools will be served by 2019-2020. The district expects to share the operating costs of Act Now! with the hospital. It states that they may need to fundraise however, no details about this strategy are provided.

The plan to improve results overtime has not been clearly and comprehensively described in the application. The program is slated to be integrated into the school's existing schedule. It seems that all the students in the grant's participating schools may not be served. Rather, only highest-need student subgroups will be identified.

The proposal describes building the capacity of staff at participating including Act Now! teachers, school support staff, and teachers at the school. The needs and assets of each school and its students will be conducted and identified. A decision-making infrastructure will be created. The process to refer individual students for intervention is not specifically described. A parent engagement plan is described, as is the plan to assess the progress of the program. Additionally, the annual performance measures are provided showing goals of increased improvement. These measures include academic outcomes in additional to behavioral outcomes.

The Implementation Plan for the Competitive Preference is well organized and includes goals, key activities, timelines, deliverables/outcomes and responsible party. This section's score is in the high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The grant application builds on the four core educational assurance areas although the interventions to low-performing schools and students are not particularly strong. Schools participating in the most ambitious and intensive services offered in the grant to deepen student learning are very limited in number and not based on the greatest needs of the schools and students. Participating schools will be selected based upon an interest in participating and an application submitted to the district.

The focus of the grant is on building its district-wide data systems and technology infrastructure at the schools for capability to use on-line learning programs for students. The grant initiatives are also targeted to the overall implementation of the district's teacher evaluation system.

The overall approach of the grant is not multi-faceted or totally coherent and comprehensive.

Total	210	114

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0424WI-3 for Milwaukee Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant - Milwaukee Public Schools (hereafter MPS) - presents a broad vision that appears to capitalize on the reform efforts currently underway in the district. The focus of MPS' approach is personalized learning for students and teachers as well as improved data systems with a limited set of initiatives to build capacity within the District.

The applicant provides its current status and prospective work in each of the assurance areas but there are limited examples of how the District is using the assurance areas to build the RTT-D strategies. For example, the supporting evidence for the District's Literacy, Math, and Science Reform describes instructional time and classroom organization rather than how the course content is explicitly aligned with the Common Core Standards. In the area of data systems, the concern appears to be more focused on Dashboard technical functionality than its use to improve instruction. The teacher and principal evaluation systems are to be implemented by 2014 but do not indicate the type of "more detailed" information it intends to capture nor how purchasing more on-line professional development resources will improve practice. Finally, the support to lowest achieving schools is presented as an organizational model, i.e. regionalization, without a specific plan to provide support as well as oversight.

Taken as a whole across the four assurance areas and the specific personalization approaches contained in the RTT-D plan, MPS' vision lacks the level of clarity and specificity necessary to build a robust system to accelerate student learning.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed selection process for some of the large scale projects is based on the geographic regions within the District without an explanation of how or why different regions were selected to begin in Year 1, 2 or 3. Without a thorough explanation of the capacities or leadership within the different regions, it is difficult to determine if this is a random or a purposeful selection process.

The school selection process for the applicable initiatives includes broad criteria, such as enrollment and graduation rates, but does not specify how those criteria will be applied beyond the statement of "highest need." These vague criteria do not provide a clear picture of how or why MPS will select participating schools. For those initiatives where more detailed criteria are provided, i.e. Blended Learning Classrooms, the applicant has set basic eligibility criteria of attendance rates for students and teachers as indicators of climate and engagement conditions that are conducive to reform without describing deeper indicators of current reform activity, student achievement, or teacher capacity. On the positive side, there is a description of a competitive process that will be used which includes teacher support and other capacity indicators. Taken as a whole, however, it is an inadequate description of a selection process.

MPS does provide a complete list of the number of participating students with the appropriate data. It is unclear in the footnotes provided for this section if charter and contract schools and their students will be included in any of these initiatives.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

MPS provides a general plan to scale-up its three major reform initiatives and monitor their implementation over the grant period. The plan follows the applicant's logic model and includes appropriate linkages to the core assurance areas and overall goals. The applicant provides limited documentation of the process it will use during the implementation phase to make decisions on the scale-up process. Two of the initiatives are intended for district-wide implementation by the end of the grant period with simple expansion as the scale-up process. The measures of meaningful reform appear to be more usage counts and satisfaction surveys which are difficult to translate into school improvement outcomes.

The third initiative focuses on blended learning at the classroom and whole school levels and may have the greatest potential to impact meaningful reform yet does not provide for interim benchmarks of improvement to guide the scale-up process. Given that the applicant intends to add only one school a year with four schools implementing blended learning at the end of the grant period a more detailed process for carefully monitoring the scale-up is expected and necessary. The applicant does articulate a caution throughout the plan in regard to the "nascent stage of the field" that would indicate a careful, well-articulated monitoring process which is absent from the application.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

MPS proposes growth rates over time aligned with the state AMO rates of approximately 5% per year for the district overall with separate rates for subgroups that reflect different baselines. Given the baseline, it is unreasonable to assume a projected growth rate for subgroups of 5-6% per year for most of the student subgroups with the exception of Caucasian students who will grow at approximately 1-2% per year. The rates are ambitious but the improvement plan lacks evidence of a robust enough approach to achieve these targets. For example, the baseline differences in reading and math as well as for the district as a whole and subgroups indicate variations that need specific targeted initiatives.

The goals for decreasing achievement gaps follow a similar pattern as the performance goals and are set at a very ambitious level that may not be achievable given the District's RTT-D improvement plan and its lack of focus on classroom and school outcomes. The achievement gap goals also indicate an increasing gap, rather than a decreasing one for Caucasian students in math. The applicant presents these LEA-wide goals as formulae decreases rather than specific, appropriate changes as a result of the reform plan

The applicant does provide a credible rationale for the graduation rate projections that is based on actual increases over time that appears achievable. MPS does not, however, describe how the reform plan will increase these rates to across the board improvements.

The two percent rise in college enrollment rates are aligned with the high school graduation rates and rise appropriately over the life of the RTT-D project. The applicant does not, however, provide for any differential rates for those subgroups currently enrolling in college at lower rates, e.g. Hispanic students and students with disabilities. The rates and the gaps remain constant.

The optional calculated post-secondary degree attainment rate of approximately 13% for those students graduating in 2005 indicates a poor level of preparation that the applicant expects to change with the implementation of the reforms. However, it is not clear if the applicant will actually have an impact on this post high school population given the design of the project.

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:

MPS shows a limited and inconsistent record of success in the past four years in improving student learning outcomes, raising graduation rates and college enrollment. The applicant acknowledges this weak record which is further supported using the previous state cut-scores included in the Appendices. Achievement gaps show a similar pattern of stagnation. The one percent improvement in reading over four years and the two percent increase in mathematics are not an indicators of success. Achievement levels started at a low point and have remained constant, achievement gaps started wide and have remained wide. Graduation rates indicate a similar stable pattern while there is a slight rise in college enrollment which might be due to other factors. Without additional data on college retention it is difficult to judge the relevance of the increase in college enrollment as a result of District efforts. While the applicant contends that the one to two percent increase in attendance sets the stage for academic success, it is difficult to determine if that is justified.

The applicant articulates a number of instructional and management district wide reform efforts to address the low level of achievement. On the instructional side, MPS has spent three years implementing a comprehensive reading and math plan that does not appear to have substantially improved achievement but will form the foundation of the reforms for RTT-D. On the management side, MPS has reorganized the district and provided additional supports to low-performing schools in one area which do seem to be making some gains in some of the schools. There is, however, little evidence documenting the relationship between these reforms and any changes (or lack thereof) at the site level.

MPS makes data available to students, parents, and educators but much of it is attendance, assignments, and report cards. The type of data currently available is a partial list of what is expected in terms of performance data.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	0

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant claims that it currently makes school level budget allocations available on a website and updates the District's accounts to show expenditures at instructional, administrative, support, and grade levels. The applicant does not provide

evidence in the application or Appendix to show any of these data.

As for school personnel salaries, MPS makes none of this information available. The RTT-D application provides that MPS will do so in “Phase Two” of its transparency plan but includes no specific information on the timeline for completing this project. Without a specific timeline and any indication of work to date, the plan lacks credibility.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that the state has "created conditions that enable the District to execute on (sic) the key pillars of the initial Race to the Top process." To support this claim the applicant cites various state initiatives such as the adoption of the Common Core Standards and membership in the Smarter Balanced Consortium, the development of a statewide data system, and the state framework for measuring teacher effectiveness using student growth measures. Each of these statewide initiatives is aligned with MPS’ RTT-D application.

The applicant, however, does not address the issue of autonomy beyond a statement on the state’s flexibility in the area of digital learning. This is not sufficient to ensure that MPS will have the autonomy to implement appropriate reforms over the life of the RTT-D project. It is not clear in the application if MPS has sufficient legal, statutory, and regulatory autonomy to implement its proposal beyond this general statement at the initial phase of implementation.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

MPS provides a broad description of how it included various constituents in the development of the application that indicates minimal meaningful engagement at either a numerical or substantive level. Both the state and the city had one representative on the Strategy Team as did the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association. The bulk of the members were the senior leadership of the district.

Teachers were surveyed on their beliefs related to personalized learning. There was only a 12% response rate which does not provide a realistic picture of teacher belief or support for this effort. Focus groups with a total of 33 teachers were also conducted but a description of how the teachers were recruited or selected for the focus group was not addressed in the application. It is difficult to determine if it was a representative group even with the basic demographic data on school level and subjects presented in the application.

The applicant did not discuss any specific changes considered or made as a result of this input but did indicate an open process.

The applicant includes 26 letters of support from key constituency groups throughout the city, local higher education groups who support the project, and political leaders. The letter signed by the Union representatives indicates their interest in developing a technology based blended school.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide evidence of a high quality on-going plan to analyze the gaps in its current reform efforts that will be addressed by the RTT-D reform proposal. The applicant does, however, provide an analysis it undertook as part of developing the RTT-D application to identify its remaining gaps and needs in support of personalized learning. The gaps and needs identified through this process are at a general level and do not provide a level of specificity necessary to implement a reform initiative of the size and scope intended by RTT-D.

The applicant does, however, provide for a few, limited reviews of current practices within the implementation framework. For example, it intends to review current professional development offerings for their degree of alignment with a new initiative. These reviews and analyses are limited and do not provide a holistic view of the current status within the district. The lack of a high quality plan to analyze the current status of reform efforts will limit the potential impact of RTT-D at the individual site level and thus for the District as a whole.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

MPS provides a limited plan to personalize the learning environment to provide the support all students need to graduate college- and career-ready. The plan is aligned with the logic model and includes two goals: meaningfully engage and empower students and meaningfully engage and empower teachers. The learning goal is supported by numerous initiatives which are further delineated by the implementation plans which include key activities, timelines, outcomes and deliverables, and responsible parties. The credibility of the plan varies by initiative based on its relationship to the ultimate goal of improving student learning. In addition, the applicant provides different levels of detail within the activities in support of the initiatives including the outcomes and deliverables expected within each of the initiatives.

Within the learning goal, the applicant includes the following initiatives:

- Turning Data Into Intelligence: It articulates an improved data system that does not specifically link to improved learning but provides more information to educators, students, and parents through a dashboard that the applicant believes will have an impact on learning. The plan in the application provides detail on the implementation of this system that is detailed on the technology aspects but vague on the instructional uses of the data. The focus is more on gathering additional information on students and their interests rather than assisting students use information to improve their educational outcomes. The applicant does not provide for a robust integration of the technology improvements into the learning activities of its students. While some data elements focused on personal interests are to be added there is little indication that these elements will actually assist students to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to career- and college-ready standards.
- Virtual Courses and On-demand Learning: The plan provides for an expansion of virtual coursework to improve student outcomes but does not provide a description of its current experience in this area other than a lack of site licenses and limited availability. The implementation plan focuses on hiring additional online teachers on the type of digital and on-line coursework it intends to make available and how it will ensure that the coursework contains high quality content aligned with standards. The plan focuses on buying additional site licenses and purchasing materials.
- Blended Learning Models In Literacy And Math: The applicant's plan presents a four school pilot for blended learning classroom. The plan provides for a selection process but does not articulate what the criteria might be or how schools will be recruited. The applicant does not discuss the implementation of the blended learning classrooms other than plan for an outside provider to be hired.
- Whole School Approach: In addition to the blended learning at the classroom level, MPS intends to create four schools over the three years to implement blended learning at a whole school level. The plan provides for a set of logistical activities but does establish a selection process or a training process other than contracting with an outside provider.

Throughout the plan, the applicant identifies key managerial process steps, i.e. issue RFP, establish linkages with data warehouse and the like, but fails to provide key activities to support more substantive activities that lead to key decisions that will impact the outcome of the implementation and ultimately student learning.

The timeline is extended over the four years of the grant with many activities coming being implemented in years 3 and 4 which may not allow for a full implementation and evaluation of the project. This raises further questions about the credibility of the plan to impact student learning.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

MPS presents an adequate plan to engage and empower teachers. It is the second major goal of its RTT-D application. It focuses on helping educators improve instruction and support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards by implementing a set of common strategies including collaborative planning time, more frequent formative assessments, and professional development and supports, such as instructional coaches. This approach follows the logic model of MPS' plan and reiterates the rationale provided throughout the application.

The applicant describes the main initiatives it intends to use but provides limited descriptions of how these strategies will support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and adapt content and instruction. For example,

providing 60 minutes of common planning time to schools that currently do not have it may be an effective strategy if additional supports are provided to ensure that the time is used to focus on key instructional issues. Since only 45% of the teachers who responded to the survey agreed that they have common planning time, it is important to provide specific supports to use this time effectively beyond the modeling by central office staff provided for by the applicant. It is interesting to note that the implementation timeline indicates that MPS will need to survey the first group of schools in one region to identify schools that do not have collaborative planning time which is one area that the district should currently be aware of.

The professional development supports described in the application focus on academic coaches and teacher instructional leaders. While these are both recognized professional development delivery systems with some evidence of effectiveness, the applicant provides limited information on the content of the professional development as well as how decisions will be made concerning the best delivery method. Given the need expressed within the application, the lack of details on the content of the professional development will not result in improved instruction.

The applicant does provide a plan to implement more frequent formative assessments that will be used to closely monitor student progress. The six-week formative assessment cycle is an appropriate method to better inform students, teachers, and parents on both progress and improvement strategies. The results are to be included in the to-be-developed dashboard system to make the results available and actionable. There is, however, little indication that the results of the formative assessments will be directly linked to different instructional strategies thus making improvements more difficult to identify.

The applicant also adequately describes a teacher evaluation process, including improved observation processes that will provide frequent feedback. MPS proposes to increase the number and frequency of observations as well as improve the timeliness of the feedback to teachers. It is, however, unclear how much of the improvement cycle is self-directed and if there will be a formal monitoring system to ensure that teacher practice improves.

The process the applicant intends to evaluate Principals is under development at the state level and not addressed in the RTT-D application. In addition, the applicant does not address how, or if, it will ensure that highly effective teachers and principals will be retained or recruited.

Taken as a whole, MPS has identified the key activities it intends to implement to engage and empower teachers but fails to articulate these activities at a credible level of detail. It is difficult to determine if the activities will lead to successful implementation.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

MPS presents an adequate plan to support project implementation by providing supports and services at the district level to schools, teachers, and students. The applicant articulates this plan as part of its ongoing comprehensive strategic plan. Taken as a whole, MPS intends to continue its current personalization process with the addition of staff at the central office level and additional opportunities for students.

At the central office level, the Applicants' management structure will support and provide services to the participating schools. It intends to focus the work of RTT-D project across the Chief Academic Officer, Chief Innovation Officer, and Chief of School Administration. Specific responsibility for the RTT-D project will rest with a Project Lead. The placement of different RTT-D initiatives in three different offices may require a higher degree of cooperation and collaboration that could be expected in a newly reorganized central office. The management structure could also de-couple key initiatives from the intended audiences and outcomes.

At the school level, the RTT-D project will not alter individual MPS' schools current level of autonomy over budget, hiring, and scheduling. The applicant does not describe any variations that might be present in the autonomy afforded to local schools such as additional oversight for the lowest performing schools. It is difficult to determine if the central office local oversight has been a positive aspect of the district's performance.

For students, the applicant plans to continue its current policy to provide students with opportunities to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery as well as having multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery at a number of schools in the district. MPS states that it will add more mastery programs based on the effectiveness of at least one approach it has implemented.

Under the RTT-D plan, the applicant intends to add two possible extensions of mastery-based learning. Both of the initiatives, however, lack essential detail on grade spans, timelines, and resources other than purchasing an “off-the-shelf” set of programs that do not address essential questions of rigor and alignment with college- and career-ready standards.

The final aspect of MPS’ plan is to continue its RtI process to ensure that the needs of all students are met. The applicant presents improvement data to support its RtI plan.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant’s plan to provide district and school level supports is the development and implementation of a "Dashboard" system to ensure that all stakeholders have access to content, tools, and other resources they need to personalize learning. MPS’ plan to develop and implement the dashboard is the most fully realized aspect of the RTT-D project. The applicant demonstrates a well-developed plan to implement this part of its project which will provide a range of important information. The applicant also describes how these systems will be interoperable.

In addition to the information itself, the applicant describes the support it intends to make available to parents, students, and teachers to support their use of these technology tools. MPS provides for a technology hotline which will increase its staff using RTT-D funds. Service for parents and students will be supported by a hotline, service requests, and out-of-school centers which are an effective source of help. For educators, the applicant provides for on-site technical approach which will be critical to full implementation of these projects. The applicant provides funding for these activities.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

MPS describes a a set of committees, executive sponsors, project teams and advisory boards/committees to oversee and manage project implementation. While the structure may allow for system-wide investment in the outcome of the project, it could also lead to a lack of cohesion across key activities. The applicant does not provide a clear description of the final authority for this project to ensure that the shared leadership process remains focused.

In the area of on-going corrections, MPS clearly describes the need to carefully consider the implementation of key activities as the pilot projects are considered for scale-up which is the responsibility of the project teams. The applicant does not clearly describe how these mid-course corrections are to be considered or communicated, i.e. allowing for modifying the agenda of on-going meetings to include these discussions is not as convincing as making them part of the on-going process. The importance of a thorough discussion of how possible changes/corrections might be processed over the four year project life is key to its success.

In addition, the interim outcomes included in the appendices included the right questions but lack appropriate metrics for tracking the continuous progress of the project.

Taken as a whole, MPS articulates the need for continuous improvement and provides a broad structure to ensure that appropriate issues are raised over the course of RTT-D implementation, it does not provide sufficient detail to ensure a credible process.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

MPS provides a varied communication strategy to keep both internal and external audiences well-informed. It provides for

appropriate frequent communication, different formats, and languages.

The communication plan, however, appears to be one-directional. The applicant does not provide for the engagement of internal and external stakeholders with an active plan to include a broad active outward looking strategy.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

MPS provides a rationale for selecting specific performance measures as well as the process it intends to use evaluate the measure. The use of current formative assessment is an appropriate tool.

As for the measures themselves, MPS has set achievable and ambitious performance measures for each subgroup in the area of effective and highly effective teachers. The performance measures for academic growth may be achievable given the starting point for most students. However, the final targets are not as ambitious as they need to be to ensure that at least 50% of the students are achieving at appropriate levels. The applicant does not describe why these measures are "very aggressive" nor if it intends to modify the measures or targets over time.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

MPS provides a brief overview of the types and range of evaluation questions and methodologies it intends to use as well as its commitment to participate in ED sponsored evaluations. While the applicant allows for the possibility of an external evaluator, it is unclear how it will decide to add this important outside resource to its plan. The credibility of the evaluation plan and its results may be called into question without the presence of an external evaluator.

The applicant describes a reasonable internal process to track the implementation of its key data system activities based on usage numbers and client satisfaction surveys. The more challenging area is the potential changes in teacher practice in the areas of personalized learning and blended learning classrooms. The deeper more difficult changes that are expected as a result of an RTT-D plan will not be captured with the level of evaluation articulated in the applicant's plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a thorough justified budget that identifies the funding source for each activity as well as the nature of the investment, i.e. one-time or on-going.

Federal funds account for approximately two-thirds of the total RTT-D budget, the remaining funds are from other sources. This is an appropriate distribution given the one-time investments in technology and infrastructure improvements. With the federal funds, the $40M is split almost evenly between personnel costs and contractual costs. This reflects the one-time investment in technology including the infrastructure and the development of specialized data systems.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes its plan to sustain the project over time using District funds. MPS explains that its investment in the on-going costs of the RTT-D project is well within available funds. It is unclear, however, if the surplus funds it intends to use to cover its expenses and will continue well into the out-years of this project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	4

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

MPS intends to continue its long standing partnership with Children's Hospital of Wisconsin to strengthen and expand the blended learning anti-bullying program *Act Now!* from 14 to 50 K-5 and K-8 schools. The applicant presents the program as an important addition to its school improvement efforts based on the limited results in one school in reducing bullying incidents thus improving school climate. The relationship between school climate and culture and school improvement are present in the reform literature but are not robust causal links. In addition, the applicant does not provide data on the current level of bullying with MPS and whether or not this is an area identified as a great need by parents or students. Given the degree of need within the District, the applicant does not provide an adequate explanation as to why it selected this additional area to add to the RTT-D program.

The applicant proposes to expand the program to include parent training sessions and students with special needs as well as share the individual student reports with appropriate school staff to further support students. It is not clear in the application if the student reports are covered by the Family Rights and Privacy Act rules and regulations.

MPS identifies nine desired results for students, parents, and teachers associated with *Act Now!* (Note: Results 8 & 9 appear identical) Specific tracking indicators are included in the application that will become part of the data warehouse. It is not clear how these data elements will actually be used, e.g. correlations of declining bullying incidents and student climate surveys.

The applicant adequately describes the training program and staff supports as well as the role of the Regional Program Coordinators in implementing and monitoring the program. The applicant does not address the actual amount of time it will take to implement the program at each site level and the possible burden on teachers and the Regional Program Coordinators.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

MPS does not present a cohesive and comprehensive approach to build on the core educational assurance areas throughout the application. Its RTT-D plan focuses almost entirely on the core assurance area of building data systems which, while critically important, will not in and of themselves significantly improve learning and teaching. The applicant addresses the other assusrance areas - standards, effective teachers and principals, and turning around low-performing schools - as secondary to the development of the data system. It's plan does not provide a comprehensive approach across all four areas providing strategies to both address all four and link them together throughout the reform approach.

In addition, the plans for personalization and accelerating student achievement are poorly conceived and have a limited potential to impact the goals established by RTT-D. The plans provided throughout the application lack clarity and actionable strategies that will lead to effective implementation and improved results for students.

Total	210	96