



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0484PA-1 for Norristown Area School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Norristown Area School District (NASD) and Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) have a vision of working together to create personalized strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards to meet the academic needs of each student. They plan to do this by CCIU supporting improved student access to effective educators including data analysis support, and integrating more technology into classrooms for personalized learning in all NASD schools. Their intent is to decrease achievement gaps across student groups and increase the rates in which students graduate from high school are prepared for college. A logic model portrays how four major activities--Educator Training and PD, Data Analysis, Provision of Instructional Coaches for system-wide school improvement, and Acquisition of new technologies for all middle and high school students will lead to the desired student outcomes. It is not clear how their model will deepen student learning and increase equity across schools. They did not articulate a clear and credible approach for how they will build on their work in the four core educational areas.</p> <p>This criterion was scored in the middle range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All schools and students enrolled in NASD will benefit for this grant. An enrollment table showing all the required categories of schools, educators and different categories of students was presented for 2012. The estimated number of students receiving services in the Goal areas was estimated through 2016-2017. There was no narrative to specifically support this selection criteria, but their approach to implementation which is currently being done at Norristown High School is suggested in other areas of the proposal</p> <p>This criteria was scored in the high middle range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A3 was not directly addressed, perhaps because the proposal focuses on LEA wide reform and change so the scaling the benefits of the grant to benefit the entire LEA is irrelevant. The applicant provided a logic model in the Appendix that shows how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students at all schools in the District.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Tables are used to show the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved student performance in reading, math, and science across populations and grades Increased equity in the four areas specified. The size of anticipated decreasing gaps between Whites, Blacks, and economically disadvantaged each year Anticipated increased number of students enrolled in AP classes, number of students graduating, and percentage of students enrolling in college 		

The applicant appears to have set fort ambitious, yet achievable performance measures and annual targets that will result. The applicant scores high in demonstrating LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes. It is not clear in which years the targets meet or exceed State ESEA targets fro LEAS and student subgroups.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD demonstrates a trajectory of successful progress since the launch of a Title I School Improvement Grant in Sept 2011. Below are some highlights of the evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NASD made 189 of its 217 student performance targets (87%) from the past school year. • The high school Data committee, a subset of the School Leadership Team, created a spreadsheet of Math, Reading, and Behavior data for every 11th grade student which were reviewed monthly. The Leadership team also created a data analysis study on every student in grades 9 and 10. • The 2011-2012 State standardized test results from Norristown Area High school indicates that all students increased their scores in both reading and mathematics by 10%. Nearly all student subgroups at this high school met the performance target for AYP in both reading and math.. This growth represents an intentional effort by the teachers to focus the needs of individual students. <p>The Norristown Area H.S. Transformation Model is perceived as being very successful, so much so that the District hopes to expand it throughout the District with funding from RTT. The applicant notes that beyond their pride of the high school, they have taken many other steps to improve the instructional program across the district, including offering 11 PD days last year. A long list of programs and strategies were included, but a record of advancing student learning and increasing equity over the past four years was not presented. Student performance data was not presented even for the 2010-2011 school year. There was also no mention of whether student performance data is made available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation and services.</p> <p>The criterion was ranked in the middle range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There appears to be increasing transparency in LEA investments across Pennsylvania, a State that received RTT funding. Effective November 2012, all districts in Pennsylvania will be required to submit a new financial report that will enable spending at district schools with their highest percentage of low income students to be compared with spending at district schools with the lowest percentage of low income students. 2. The NASD Final budget is displayed on their website and it is shared annually at a meeting. 3. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is also published on their website. It includes teacher information by level and salary, along with expenditures by function., cost per student by function, etc. 4. It does not appear the actual school level personnel salaries, including incentive and supplemental pay are made public. <p>The criterion was scored in the high middle range.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant emphasized that the backbone of this proposal is to help teachers become better and increase student achievement. Adopting the PA Educator Evaluation Effectiveness System, requires the use of student performance data and a high quality professional development plan. The new evaluation system includes a structure for evaluating educators based on multiple measures of achievement. Half of a teacher’s overall rating will be calculated from up to 16 different measures of student achievement. These structures provide incentives to improve student achievement, but the extent to which the new requirements support personalized student learning environments was not discussed and is not clear. Overall, the applicant’s</p>		

score was in the middle for this criterion.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The NASD Central Office Administration made efforts to have meaningful stakeholder engagement regarding this proposal.

- Central office met with the Parent advisory Council and brainstormed ideas to address concerns and drafted a survey to parents
- Central Office is committed as a Title I district to provide Title I parents more information and engage them. Parent Advisory Council wrote a letter to other parents asking for their support and input and principals sent a phone message to parents. Over 3000 letters of parent support were returned.
- Central administration met with leadership of the high school Leadership Team who are enthusiastic from their SIG experience to support the RTT plan and wrote a letter "in support of bringing an SLT and coaching support to every building in our district." They have agreed to share their experiences District-wide to help launch RTT plan. Teacher support from other schools was not in the proposal, but the proposal was signed by the President of the Local Teacher's Union.
- Equity of resources is a topic of concern among principals, ever since NAHS received the grant (especially among middle schools), an the applicant suggests that all school leaders will welcome the help of the RTT plan.

Several letters of support from elected officials, community agencies, and High School Leadership Team teachers are included in the application

The score for this criterion is in the high end of the middle range. It could be improved with broader evidence that elementary principals, teachers, and students understand and support the RTT proposal.

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

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant adequately presented a plan for the analysis of needs and gaps. The grant will support building shared leadership and organizational capacity in 8 areas. CCIU coaches will be used to drive the work at the school level and in the first year it will include a report that identifies students' strengths and weaknesses to drive the development of a personalized learning environment for each child. CCIU, SLT, Building Principals, and Parents will be involved in this effort. It was not clear the extent to which teachers would be involved in analyzing needs and gaps.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, the applicant lays out a high quality vision for improving learning and teaching by using a personalized student-centered instruction (SCI) approach. The vision of what this approach will look like and how it will benefit students is organized into descriptions of 6 defining elements. The last and very important one, authentic assessment, suggests that Norristown will utilize all four assessment domains: Diagnostic, Formative, Benchmark, and Summative. It notes that assessment must fit the purpose and can include performance, problem solving, presentations, etc. Like the other sections, the vision is compelling, but there is no indication of how the vision will be translated into a concrete plan that impacts every classroom. For example, there is no mention of how frequently updated individual student data will be used to determine progress and personalize learning recommendations. There is no mention of how accommodations and high quality strategies will help ensure that high need students are on track toward meeting the standards. And, there is no mention of how students will be provided training and support to use tools and resources to track and manage their learning.

The goals are described, but the activities, timelines, and deliverables and responsible parties to implement the plan are not included here. Some relevant suggestions of how this would be done appear in C2.

The NASD board of education adopted PATHS during the 209-2010 school year as a district-wide commitment to 21st

Century readiness for students and it is suggested that it parallels the RTT plan. More detail regarding this plan would have been helpful in this section.

The narrative went over the maximum, suggested length.

Overall, this applicant scores in the middle range for this criterion.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

NASD lays out plans to improve their use of adaptive curriculum that features digital manipulatives to engage, training that supports student centered and teacher facilitated instruction, and technology embedded instruction and support. The plan is clearly laid out:

To support a more adaptive curriculum, they will

- They will use Lexia Learning to support primarily non-English speaking and special education students who are learning to read in elementary schools to better individualize and advance reading development.
- An obvious gap in common core aligned resources is the science program for K-4 students and this will be improved with the purchase of Science Fusion which uses online learning.

To support technology embedded instruction,

- 54 more Smart classrooms need to be installed to support science and Language Arts
- Every middle and high school student will have an I-Pad for research and digital access to core curriculum materials in math, English, science and social students 24/7 in an interactive environment.
- The Instructional Technology Support Specialists will spend 80% of their time in schools and 20% on PD to support personalized education.
- It is not clear whether the technology embedded instruction will be of high quality.

To support teacher-facilitated instruction,

- CCIU will provide effective Instructional Coaching for system-wide improvement, district redesign, leadership, and accountability to promote coherence, intervention, and alignment at all levels.
- All teachers will receive professional development and ongoing support for the implementation of the PA Effective Educator Model which links to Danielson's framework for teaching through CCIU.
- CCIU will provide technical assistance in supporting NSD in analyzing data to inform school performance and personalize instruction.
- CCIU will utilize three models of instructional coaching to raise student achievement that represent a change in the way time and expertise is used by special education, and English Language learner specialists. These specialists will spend 80% of their time in schools and 20% of their time for collaboration and PD.
- Periodic Assessment data will be provided to support improved instruction, but the frequency was not specified. The plan calls for building a culture of assessment in which assessing and using data is a natural part of a teacher's work.

There was no discussion of how principals' practices would be improved to work in the new environment.

Overall, the response is medium high.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	14

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

NASD provides evidence of 4 key personnel improvements that have made since 2008/09 under the direction of a new Superintendent of Schools. Several policies that support administrative efforts in delivering this initiative are presented and evidence that the applicant has policies that facilitate personalized learning. Among the most relevant:

- Policy 003 gives the superintendent the flexibility to empower the school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over school schedules, calendars and staffing models, roles and school level budgets.

“Policy 213 gives administration the flexibility to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic.” And for “students to have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple ways.”

- Policy 917 ensures that all students, parents, education, and other stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of RTT in the District.

The policies support a high quality plan that could benefit from more detail..

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As mandated by the Pennsylvania Gaskins Ruling, as well as federal legislation, NASD has an inclusive, blended model of instruction that ensures that students with disabilities receive equitable educational opportunities. Inclusive classrooms comprise both general education students and students with special needs under the direction of two certified teachers (one general, one special ed educator). This structure encourages differentiated learning techniques.

The applicant also presented the goals for the ESL instructional program and noted that Lexia, a software program will be purchased with RTT funds to better serve the reading needs of these students.

- Details about the information technology systems were presented in this section. The IT department consists of an “enterprise level” network with close to 4000 computers and fiber optic connections that provide network connectivity to every classroom in the district.
- NASD uses PLUS 360 to bring student information, assessment, and curriculum management, special education, financial and human resource software under one location. It includes eSchoolPLUS, IEPPLUS, and PerformancePLUS.
- The Norristown Area School District Virtual Academy offers online instructional opportunities for students, and makes possible a variety of settings in which students can receive instruction. A wide variety of computer-based courses. are taught by Penn. Certified teachers and aligned and assessed with Pennsylvania state standards. Thus, NAVA delivers similar instruction to that found in neighborhood schools and offers students and parents more flexible options.

It is not clear the extent to which parents and students have access to online student performance data.

This criterion included evidence that the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning. It is not clear the extent to which all administrators, teachers and other personnel will have adequate levels of support to support implementation.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide convincing evidence that they have a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. The strategy must address how the applicant will monitor, measure and publicly share the quality of its investments funded by RTT, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.

NASD wrote that it would engage in district-wide comprehensive *planning* with CCIU and School Leadership team members being vital to the process. CCIU would assist NASD in deliverables for 21st Century Characteristics of High Performing Educational Systems. District teams will go through the process of looking for shared common characteristics across the district and try to ensure evidence of nine characteristics, such as high levels of collaboration, frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, etc. that are strongly correlated to consistently high performing districts.

NASD did not explain how they would collect data to monitor the quality of the RTT investments and discuss them with others as part of a continuous improvement process for feedback and ongoing corrections and improvements if necessary.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This criterion asks for evidence of ongoing strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant wrote about the efforts they have made to improve engagement with parents, especially under-represented African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged constituents. The School Leadership Teams are charged to work with these parents. It is noted that a major accomplishment of this committee during the 2011-12 school year was to create a Positive Behavior Expectations list with Expectations of Everyone, Student, and then Parent Responsibilities. It was distributed it to all parents.</p> <p>The response to this criterion was very weak because it did not include strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with external and internal stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant appears to have enough ambitious, yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup. The narrative explains that dramatic district impact is anticipated to be seen in 2015/16 in student performance. More students will be added to the ranks of proficient in reading, math, and science and the achievement gap between white and minority students will begin closing, and graduation rates boosted.</p> <p>How the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information tailored to the proposed plan is discussed for the teacher evaluation system, but it is not discussed for each content area. Non-cognitive or socio-emotional indicators of growth were not included in the performance measure tables.</p> <p>How NASD, with the help of CCIU, will review and improve the measures over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress is not discussed.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Plans to analyze outcome and performance measures and develop reports and tools for tracking progress against RTT objectives is planned. Five major outcomes were listed that include an engaged teacher leadership team in every building, teacher use of data to inform decisions, evidence of instructional systems aligned to standards, assessments, teaching materials and intervention strategies, and a technology infused instruction. While improved classroom instruction is anticipated, increased personalization of learning environments was not specifically included in the list (which is of concern). It was not clear whether the proposed plans would be used to improve decision-making and results going forward.</p> <p>Criterion received a low score.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget identifies all funds that will support the proposed work and appears reasonable and sufficient to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal. Separate budgets for the following major projects were provided: school leadership teams, professional development and educator evaluation tool, blended learning, mobile learning tools, blended learning through Norristown Area Virtual Academy, and administrative personnel. A project-level budget narrative that summarizes the various projects and itemized some expenses, along with a key showing which criteria and location in the application where the projects were proposed was very helpful. Another table showed all additional funds besides RTT funds, including a District Grant, external foundations support, and other LEA State, and Federal funds that support their school reform.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant did not provide a specific plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. There appeared to be no section labeled F2.

A chart identifying all funds that will support the project includes a column which notes how different project support funds, RTT, being one of them might be sustained. It suggested that the establishment of a pipeline of effective teachers across the District that can serve as coaches and mentors" and "Continued partnership with Chester County would hopefully be sustained.

Hunting for other clues, the reviewer found:

In an earlier section of the proposal, bullet points noting project outcomes that the applicants anticipate sustaining, such as exemplary educators, engaged learners, and collaborative leadership.

In the budget section of the proposal, their sustainability plan was referred to: "As part of our sustainability plan, instructional support teachers will become distinguished educators – and distinguished educators in the classroom will take on a leadership role in the development and delivery of PD for his/her peers."

Just a few references to sustainability and no well-defined sustainability plan resulted in a low score for this criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Norristown Area School District chose to write about its partnership with Chester County Intermediate Unit in response to this criterion. CCIU is one of 29 regional education service agencies created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly to serve as liaison agents to provide cost-effective management programs to Pennsylvania's 501 public school districts and over 2400 non-public and private schools and serve as liaison agents with the State Dept. of Education. The narrative provides a history of various projects and accomplishments of CCIU. The important role of CCIU to provide job embedded professional development and crucial instructional coaches was described throughout the proposal. While it augments the schools' resources, it does not focus on providing additional student and family supports to address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. Consequently, despite the partnership, the Competitive Preference Priority received a mid-level score.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has met Absolute Priority 1. Norristown Area School District (NASD) and Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) have a vision of working together to create personalized strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards to meet the academic needs of each student. A logic model portrays how four major activities: Educator Training and PD, Data Analysis, Provision of Instructional Coaches for system-wide school improvement, and acquisition of new technologies for all middle and high school students will increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	128
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	1
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD chose to apply for two Optional Budget Supplements</p> <p>#1 An additional \$1,907,798 would enable NASD to continue to contract with their local police departments to continue funding for four School Resource Officers (one at each of three middle schools and one at the high school.) These positions are currently being funded with carryover funds as a grantee of Safe Schools/Healthy Students and end at the end of the current school year. The SRO's monitor gang activities and violence/bullying prevention. A high-quality plan for how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented was not provided. The budget was proposed to simply sustain funding for personnel that is ending. The number of students served is not noted and no plan for evaluation or replication was provided.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	14
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>#2 An additional \$1,305,800 would enable NASD to secure four social works and 1.6 guidance counselors to be placed in the high school and middle schools. During the past four years, the secondary schools have been able to have an additional 4 school counselors pad for by the Safe Schools/Healthy students grant and funding ends for these positions in June 2012. The RTT supplemental funds will sustain and expand upon counseling services that have been significant in addressing mental health and substance abuse issues involving secondary students. An overarching goal to contribute to the social-emotional well being of students in grades 5-12 and provide staff training to recognize and react to early warning signs and symptoms of mental health concerns was included along with 9 measureable outcome objectives that could be replicated at other schools. A list of training topics presented to the staff was included.</p> <p>This supplemental project was clear, has a proven track record, and is a discrete service. The reviewer supports this as important work, but did not find it particularly innovative because this type of service, which has considerable success, is a mechanism used other places to replace lost resources.</p>		



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0484PA-2 for Norristown Area School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>Applicant provides a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on work in 4 core educational assurances areas. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new evaluation instrument based on Danielson's Framework for Teaching • instructional coaching for teacher support • models of instructional coaching including: special ed strategist model; English language learner strategist model and instructional technology support strategist model • data analysis to inform school performance • infusing technology into personalized instruction 		

insightful administrators who empower collaborative teams, engage staff in purposeful analysis of systems and guide the development of data-based decisions

- use of ongoing, periodic and annual, large scale assessment data.

Weaknesses:

The application does not include discussion about the role that personalized learning will play in the overall vision of the plan to deepen learning, increase equity, engage with student interests and accelerate student achievement.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Applicant provides clear and abundant data regarding the 11 schools who will participate and the 598 participating students, their demographics and racial/ethnic performance on various measures.

Applicant provides summative assessments to be used, methodology for determining status and a methodology for determining growth for each school and sub-population.

Weaknesses:

Application does not include a clear description of the process that the applicant used to select participating schools.

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

Strengths:

Applicant discusses the need for teacher instructional improvement, professional development and the inclusion of technology into the curriculum as the basis for the plan vision.

Weaknesses

Applicant does not address how the plan will be scaled up or translated into meaningful support to support district-wide change or help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

Applicant does not provide a clear theory of change upon which the model has been designed nor provide an explanation of how the plan will improve learning.

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

A-4

Applicant has provided ambitious yet achievable goals for student populations and sub-groups. Evidence includes:

- summative academic performance measures, individualized by sub-group, in reading, math and science for all students with targets for decreasing gaps
- number of students enrolled in advanced placement classes (all and by disadvantaged subgroup)
- High school graduation rate increase for all students and sub-groups
- college enrollment rates (graduating class numbers and FAFSA forms completed)
- postsecondary degree attainment for graduating classes within the project

Weaknesses

None noted in this section.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

A record of success in the past year in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching has been presented. Evidence includes:

- completion of 87% of state identified learning targets in the past year
- implementation of rigorous standards, aligned curriculum and common assessments
- comprehensive professional development with job embedded coaching
- expanded learning opportunities for students beyond the school day and to engage families
- Data committees to analyze performance data on an ongoing basis
- upgraded curriculum and technology
- improved school climates and teacher involvement in leadership
- district point of pride were cited to demonstrate student recognition and district progress toward improvement

The applicant has taken clear steps with the use of a data committee to make student performance data available to educators in the district.

Weaknesses:

The application does not include data showing increasing student academic achievement growth over time. Several schools are in various stages of corrective action under NCLB.

Data is only presented for the 2011 school year so no comparisons for growth over time or in reducing racial/ethnic achievement gaps can be determined.

While the applicant has demonstrated that it has made strong progress in the past year, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the applicant is able to sustain improvements and a cycle of continuous improvement that will result in long-term growth since no historical data has been provided on student growth or achievement prior to the past year.

College enrollment data is only a list of where students have been accepted and not a presentation of an increase in college attendance.

No information has been provided on how the LEA makes student performance data available to students, educators and parents in a way that informs or improves instruction.

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

Strengths:

The applicant complies with state public school requirements for financial reporting by complying with state transparency requirements including a new state requirement taking effect in 2012 that districts must detail expenditures by building. Evidence includes:

- internally coded spending within each school and department by category per state regulations
- financial reporting to the PA Department of Education
- the preparation of an annual District budget by the district Business Office
- publication of the budget on the district website
- presentation of the budget in an open meeting
- a comprehensive annual financial report published annually including statement of revenues, expenditures, changes in fund balances, demographic and economic statistics, full-time equivalent employees, expenditures by function, general fund, cost per student by function, free and reduced lunch participation and student to teacher ratio.

Weaknesses:

None noted in this section.

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

10

6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The district is an established school district entity with state authority to operate legally and statutorily within the state and complies with NCLB regulations therefore, the district has sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments.

The district is implementing the new state evaluation system required by the state for teachers this school year and will be implementing a new evaluation system for support staff next year which will provide increase accountability for teacher effectiveness.

Weaknesses:

No discussion of practices that the district has already implemented to increase student achievement was provided.

No information about how the district's previous continuous improvement efforts may have resulted in more successful conditions to enable to the project to promote positive and productive change was presented.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant involved many groups in the planning of the proposal. Evidence of stakeholder involvement and support included:

- Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
- High School Teacher Leadership Team
- Legislative support from Representatives and Senators
- Director of district 21st Century Learning program
- community judge, police chiefs and local District Attorney support
- Educational Foundation support
- Community behavioral health and civic group support

Weaknesses:

While the applicant provides a letter of support from a high school teacher leader group, it is unclear whether teachers from other organizational parts of the district also support the proposal.

Applicant does not clearly state whether the organization has or does not have collective bargaining representation nor that at least 70% of the teachers from participating schools support the proposal.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Applicant has identified a plan that includes 8 areas of reform that will be undertaken in the project to fill current needs and gaps. Evidence includes:

- shared goal of success for all students
- informed decision making through the use of data
- empowered teacher leadership teams for innovation
- clarifying student learning expectations
- adopting effective instructional practices
- addressing organizational structures
- monitoring progress and improving support systems
- continual refinement

Weaknesses:

Applicant provides a minimal assessment of the current status of implementing personalized learning environments within the district.

Applicant does not provide a clear link to how the intended reforms will fill needs or minimize identified gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>Applicant has a multi-pronged approach to implementing a personalized learning environment within the district. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active learning including problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking and simulations in a self-paced and/or cooperative environment. • teachers assessing pupils in real-time and taking on the role of learning coach • learning based on student performance level, learning style and interest • implementation of teacher-advisers to support student success • building a school culture of collaboration (student learning teams) within a constructivist environment • apprenticeship experiences, learning by doing and active learning experiences • flexible scheduling and pacing • authentic assessment of student performance <p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>Applicant does not discuss the role that parents will play in the reform effort.</p> <p>Applicant does not discuss how they will create a personalized sequence of instructional content based on student learning goals.</p> <p>Applicant does not address how they will develop or provide for high-need students to ensure that they are on track to meet college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	6
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p>		

Applicant provides a clear and concise logic model graphic of their proposed plan. The overall plan is based on the following components:

- teacher professional development
- use of data analysis to inform school performance, teacher effectiveness and to personalize instruction
- instructional coaches
- implementation of new technologies for middle and high school students
- support from specialists for assisting special education and English Language learners
- use of teams to support instructor effectiveness

Weaknesses:

Applicant's plan was not well focused and cohesive.

Applicant does not discuss how it will improve administrator practice and effectiveness.

Applicant does not discuss the role of school leaders and leadership teams in training, policies, tools, data or resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment.

Applicant does not provide a detailed plan for increasing teacher and principal effectiveness, including hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>The applicant has in place many practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personnel improvements including a new superintendent and administrative leadership in specific support roles throughout the district • establishment of 3 district teaching priorities including: engaging lessons, assessment for learning and the need to engage disaffected students • institution of collaborative teams at each school • support for English Language learners and special education students • expanded and updated technology services throughout the district • a district Virtual Academy to provide online learning to district students <p>Weaknesses</p> <p>The applicant does not discuss in detail how students are able to earn credit based on content mastery, rather than time on a topic nor does it discuss opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.</p> <p>While the applicant briefly discusses the use of "collaborative teams" to assist in site decision making, insufficient detail is provided to determine school flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>The applicant has a fully-functioning, online Virtual Academy taught by experienced teachers in operation which is accessible by all district students.</p>		

The applicant has an effective technology support group and offers many online solutions to district teachers and students to allow students to access instruction when and where they need it.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not discuss how students, parents, educators and other stakeholders can receive appropriate levels of technical and instructional support as may be needed for success.

The application lacks details about how stakeholders can export their information in an open data format or use the data in other electronic learning systems.

The applicant does not discuss the interoperability of systems between the LEA and local schools such as human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>Applicant has a plan to implement a continuous improvement process across all district schools. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • district-wide comprehensive planning • clear and shared focus • high standards and expectations • effective district leadership • high levels of collaboration and communication • 21st century curriculum, instruction and assessment • frequent monitoring of teaching and learning <p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>Details about how the applicant will use regular and timely feedback to assess project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant are not presented.</p> <p>The applicant does not discuss how the LEA will measure, monitor or publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top such as investments in professional development, technology and staff.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>The applicant has worked with a committee to establish Positive Behavior Expectations that include expectations for the organization, staff, parents and students and has communicated these to parents/guardians.</p> <p>The applicant has provided letters of support from many community organizations demonstrating broad communication with various stakeholders regarding the goals and plan the applicant proposes.</p> <p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>The applicant has not provided a detailed plan about how the LEA will continue to improve the plan through ongoing strategies for communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholder groups.</p>		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>The applicant has established ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and percentage of students with a highly effective teacher and principal • number and percentage of students with an effective teacher and principal • reading performance • number and percent of students on track for college and career readiness by subgroup • attendance improvement • high school algebra proficiency • high school biology proficiency • increase number of students taking college courses while still in high school <p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>The applicant has not discussed how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern.</p> <p>The applicant has not addressed how it will review and improve the measures over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <p>The applicant plans to use target student growth measures and college and career readiness indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top-District funded activities. Evidence includes plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT-D plan based on the following indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainability of improved classroom instruction • presence of an engaged leadership team in every building • teacher access to data and the use of data to inform decisions • modernized teacher practice and instructional systems aligned to standards, assessments, model curricula, teaching materials and intervention strategies • evidence of technology infused instruction • smart classrooms district-wide <p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>The applicant does not include plans to evaluate or make revisions to the RTTT plan based on feedback from professional development activities conducted during the period of the grant or change the use of resources such as time, staff, money or other resources to improve results.</p>		
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F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p>		

The applicant has provided a detailed chart of non-grant funding which would support the RTTT-D grant.

Evidence includes:

- Federal entitlement grants (Title 1, Title I-school improvement and Title IIA)
- SIG grant funds
- 21st Century Community Learning Center Funds
- Business Grants (Lockheed Martin Corporation, Toshiba, Aetna Foundation)
- Dollar Family Literacy Grant (ELL services)
- Community Organization Grants (Norristown Ed Foundation, Children's Hospital)
- Safe Schools grant
- Other partnerships with in kind service donations

The applicant has identified the investment timeframe for expenses and the proposed budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has added many staff positions into the proposed plan and has not outlined a clear strategy to ensure that the district is able to maintain these positions once RTTT-D funding is complete.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant has identified many partners and provided detailed information about the financial and in kind support the LEA receives from many sources beyond the funds which would come from the RTTT-D grant.

Weaknesses:

No specific plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant was found in this section.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The LEA has provided a coherent and sustainable partnership with the Chester County Intermediate Unit for online learning for teachers and students and technology support. Evidence of support of the LEA by this partnership include:

- provide a virtual academy resource to LEA students
- Keystone catalog with 600 student courses and 88 PD programs for educators
- provide cloud-based hosting and storage for districts
- conducted summer science campus for students across the state
- Emergency Assistance grant for school safety initiatives
- Assisted with construction of a Technical College on a high school campus
- provided quality PD for teachers, support specialists and paraprofessionals to build staff capacity
- coordinated purchasing services and health care contracts to save districts money

Weaknesses:

The applicant did not identify population-level desired results or performance measures for students in the LEA that align with and support the applicant's broader RTTT-D proposal.

The applicant does not discuss how the partnership would work to improve results over time, scale the model beyond the participating students, engage families in decision-making about solutions to improve results over time or address high-need students.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant presented a coherent and comprehensive plan to build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning through personalized learning. Evidence includes:

- improved teacher evaluation methodology
- professional development to strengthen instructional skills and knowledge of best practices
- instructional coaching support for job-embedded teacher support
- implementation of college and career-ready standards
- goals to close achievement gaps and improve student performance
- increase rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers by enhancing skills in math and science while in high school

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not provide a detailed plan for how it will, involve parents and stakeholders in the ongoing cycle of continuous improvement and refinement of the grant goals and objectives.

The applicant does not have a clear and detailed plan to build long-term capacity and sustainability after the term of the project.

Total	210	109
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	2

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant details how it will carry out the activities that would be implemented across two or more LEA's

Weaknesses:

The applicant's proposal was for the continuation of services that they have already had in place and not a plan to expand on

the applicant's plan for creating improved learning or personalized learning environments.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

15

11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant has provided a detailed rationale for addressing the needs of the specific population addressed in the optional budget supplement.

The applicant has presented a reasonable budget that appears adequate to support the development and implementation of the proposed plan.

Weaknesses:

The proposal does not indicate that the plan will be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEA's.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0484PA-3 for Norristown Area School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: NASD does not outline a clear vision for coherent reform, particularly in terms of accelerating student achievement and preparing students to succeed in college and the workplace and compete in the global economy. They do not mention their lowest achieving school(s). NASD provides a detailed rubric for assessing teachers that clearly shows the importance of using differentiated student data to inform all components of instructional responsibility. NASD also provides PA law concerning educator evaluation and the data components that are incorporated both as tools and as elements of evaluation. This section merits a medium score.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: - No description of the school or grade level selection process. - The listed schools do meet the eligibility requirements. - The total and disaggregated numbers for students and educator numbers are provided for each school and the total LEA. The participating schools also have all students as participating students, and NASD also lists all students in all schools as high-need students, with no explanatory narrative. This section merits a low medium score due to missing and inconsistent elements.		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

NASD does not specifically address (A)(3), perhaps because all schools and students will be included in the RttT-D initiatives. NASD does provide a logic model that provides a supportive basis for reaching outcome goals, but does not provide a plan. This merits a medium score.

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

NASD presents data for the total student population and each subgroup of students on reading, math, and science at each grade level, showing 2011-12 percent proficient and growth expected for each year of the RttT-D grant and the year following the grant. These goals show planned improvement in student learning that is ambitious, especially by subgroups, but within achievable levels. Gains are differentiated by subgroup, resulting in an increase in equity and decreased achievement gaps. NASD shows an already impressive overall 85.28% graduation rate; the lowest subgroup (Latino/Hispanic) had a 79.4% graduation rate in 2012. Their goals, to move to a total graduation rate of 95% with improvements in every subgroup, will significantly increase equity. NASD addressed post-secondary enrollment and degree attainment, but their measure of both depends on completion of a FAFSA rather than actual tracked enrollment. The current levels of college enrollment are not presented by subgroup, but are provided overall for all graduates. This detracts from the rating, resulting in a low-end high score for this section.

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: NASD does not provide chart or graphs that show data for the total student population and each subgroup of students on reading, math, and science at each grade level for the past four years. They provide a narrative of comprehensive improvement strategies, augmented by excerpts from their School Improvement Grant proposal that demonstrates areas of need in a discussion of 2009-10 data for the high school. The attached District Report Card for 2011-12 shows that NASD's high school is in its 6 th year of corrective action. Of NASD's ten schools, only two met AYP. NASD provided an end-of-year analysis of lexile gains for the 443 students who participated in Read 180 during the 11-12 school year. They also provided a list of the colleges for which their 2012 graduating class members had acceptance letters. The narrative and lengthy attachments show substantial improvement initiatives but do not demonstrate a clear track record of success over the last four years. The narrative does address substantial reforms at the high school as well as growth there in 2011-12. NASD does not address the availability of student performance data. This lack of responsiveness to the selection criterion results in a medium score for this section.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: NASD provides its total budget on its website, at each school, and at the public library. Further, NASD attached its revenue analysis, Budget Presentation (provided at a public meeting), and its annual financial report. These documents do not display personnel salaries or non-personnel expenses at the school-level by any category, and NASD does not address how they make these school-level expenses available to the public. This failure to address these components required in (B)(2) merits a low score for this section.		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD will comply with PA law on educator evaluation, and explains that the law supports NASD reform initiatives for RttT-D, especially in terms of planned professional development. NASD cites PA statutes and NCLB provisions that support their personalized learning environment RttT-D initiatives. This merits a high score in this section.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD describes a comprehensive approach to parental input, with outreach through parental advisory groups at the district level to parent groups at each school, including notices to all parents as well as Connect Ed calls. Teacher involvement, especially through school level leadership teams, also informed the development of this proposal. The teachers' union president signed this application, and NASD provides evidence of direct engagement and support from teachers at its participating schools. They also provide extensive letters of support from key stakeholders. The strong evidence of widespread focused involvement merits a high score for this section.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD's logic model (Appendix) includes data analysis as an activity related to outputs, and identifies addressing achievement gaps. The logic model also identifies areas in which improvement is needed to fully implement a personalized learning environment as the basis for their RttT-D proposal.</p> <p>NASD's narrative in this section does provide a plan with some activities listed. These appear to be activities for implementing the RttT-D award rather than for an analysis of status in implementing personalized learning plans. Failure to address this analysis merits a low score in this section.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD provides extensive narrative discussing concepts related to personalized learning environments, almost entirely in the abstract. There is no plan provided – no key goals, activities to be taken with their rationale, no deliverables from those activities, no timeline, and no identification of aligned responsible parties. This lack of specificity and failure to provide the components of a high-quality plan make it difficult to determine NASD's credibility in implementing the elements that they globally discussed, resulting in a low medium score for this section.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NASD's logic model (Appendix) addresses elements they will develop to improve teaching and learning through a personalized learning environment. NASD does not include a high-quality plan, and fails to address no key goals, activities to be taken with their rationale, no deliverables from those activities, no timeline, and no identification of aligned responsible parties. NASD provides a bulleted narrative of several instructional strategies, programs, and tools, described as concepts, which they intend to include in their RttT-D initiative. They do not address how all participating educators will be involved in professional development. The lack of a high-quality plan makes it difficult to determine NASD's</p>		

credibility in plans to improve teaching, earning a low medium score for this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: NASD has added central office personnel with clear support roles for their schools in improving instruction and differentiated services. The listed policies also provide guidance and focus on student learning while also providing flexibility and exceptions. These include autonomy for participating schools, in concert with the Superintendent. NASD refers to blended classrooms and policies to adapt practices for all students while also ensuring that resources are adaptable for all students. They specifically highlight their policies for students with disabilities and English learners. NASD does not address a focus on mastery versus time. NASD does not provide key goals, activities to be taken with their rationale, deliverables from those activities, a timeline, or identification of aligned responsible parties in a high-quality plan to support implementation through policies and infrastructure. This results in a medium score for this section.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: NASD does not address the components of a high-quality plan in this section, but does refer to policies that ensure that all stakeholders have access to relevant resources. NASD describes a strong technology infrastructure without providing a high-quality plan for its support of their personalized learning environment initiatives. This section merits a resulting low score.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	2
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: NASD describes a concept for continuous improvement called “Comprehensive Planning” as well as a partnership with its intermediate unit “in deliverables.” They list eight characteristics of high performing educational systems without describing how those characteristics would be monitored or measured, or how they would share progress on those characteristics with the public. There is no description of timely and regular feedback, and no discussion of reviewing the quality of investments. This lack of response to the description called for in this criterion merits a low score for this section.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: NASD states that it will actively support parent and community involvement through its school leadership teams. They list the responsibilities identified in their 2011-12 Positive Behavior Expectations, but do not specify how these responsibilities will translate into strategies for ongoing communication and engagement concerning the RtT-D implementation process. This section earns a resulting low score.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

NASD does not describe a baseline year for highly effective or effective teachers because of current implementation of PA’s new teacher & principal evaluation systems. Their performance measures for PreK-3 are defined for subgroups as the grade levels, rather than the demographic and economic subgroups defined in the notice. One of the grades 4-8 measures is attendance, even though the district is already above the state average in attendance rates. Their 9-12 FAFSA completion measure is not broken down by subgroups. NASD does not provide an explanation addressing rationale for selection of these measures, any discussion of the use of these measure to inform program implementation, or review and refinement of the measures over time. This merits a medium score in this section.

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

NASD states that it will “analyze outcome and performance measures, present data analysis to the central office and federal program officer, develop reports and tools for tracking progress against the RttT objectives.” It does not provide a plan for doing so or for evaluating the effectiveness of RttT-D funded activities. This merits a low score in this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

NASD does a thorough job of using a separate chart to describe other funds that will support implementation of their proposed RttT-D implementation. Their project level budget summaries break down the budget’s components. The project-level itemized costs for School Leadership Teams do not provide a time basis for the \$7,500 additional stipends that are allocated to 29 educators each year. The Blended Learning project costs include an iPad for every middle and high school student does not specify any sustainability plan, include any discounts, or show any other resources assisting with these purchases. The Professional Development and Educator Evaluation project seems to be providing full-time staff members to the intermediate unit through contacts without explaining how these contracted specialists will be managed or sustained. The Administrative project includes contracting out a full-time Project Director (“Project and Professional Development Director/Leadership Coach”) with duties and responsibilities that clearly call for an employee. This also does not address how the leadership of this systemic initiative for personalized learning environments would be sustained beyond the grant period. NASD does identify some one-time investment funds versus ongoing operational costs. They do not address expenses after the grant period. Their sustainability of personalized learning environments hinges on the continued benefits of highly trained educators. The budget includes items that have not been addressed as part of the plan, and lacks a consistently thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, meriting a medium score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

NASD provides a very thorough list of other funds that will be directed towards their RttT-D efforts. Most of those resources will be gone by the third or fourth year of the grant. NASD doesn’t address the components of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project’s goals. There are no sustainability goals, activities associated with a timeline, or deliverables. NASD’s list of existing funding sources includes sustainability statements such as “sustained through grant writing, community support” and then either continued partnership, reauthorization, or decreased need. There is no budget for years after the grant term. This section merits a medium score.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

NASD describes an on-going partnership with its regional education services agency, the Chester County Intermediate Unit. NASD’s narrative does not address how this partnership will augment the schools’ resources in supports that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. NASD’s narrative does not refer t specifics concerning high needs student participants, but NASD has earlier listed all of the students in all of its schools as high needs, without any explanatory narrative to justify that categorization. NASD’s earlier description of the existing funding sources that will be aligned with its RtT-D efforts do show intentional integration of public resources as well as existing partnerships with foundations, corporations, and high education. NASD does not address specific population-level results for this competitive priority, instead referring to the overall achievement results in Section (E)(3), which does not include other education outcomes or family and community supports. NASD does not address a special emphasis on students facing challenges or how to improve results over time, and fails to address family and community supports. This merits a low score in the Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

NASD weaves its focus on personalized learning environments throughout the proposal with the intent of significant improvement in educational outcomes and in educator effectiveness.

Total	210	82
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	1

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

NASD proposes funding of \$1.91 Million for four School Resource Officers from local police departments for three years of the RtT-D grant (current funding for these officers expires with the 2012-13 school year). The rational provided is that these SRO’s created safe and secure settings at the three middle schools and one high school and that their continued funding is “critical.” NASD does not provide a high-quality plan for carrying out activities, nor does it mention any other LEA in this Optional Budget Supplement. The propped budget for this supplement simply shows total annual contracted costs with local police departments, such as one contracted officer at \$173,600 for Year Two and at \$204366 for Year Four, with any breakdown of what is included in contracts totaling \$1.91 Million. There are no objectives or proposed project activities associated with this supplement other than an overall goal in NASD’s Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative to increase safety and security and the middle and high school buildings. This and the lack of contractual detail make it difficult to determine reasonableness of

the costs. This optional budget supplement is not responsive to the selection criteria, and merits a low score.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

NASD proposes funding of \$1.3058 Million for four social workers and 1.6 guidance counselors at their middle and high school over four years of the RttT-D grant (current funding for some of these costs expires with the 2012-13 school year). The rationale provided is that these positions are a catalyst for positive change in students and families due to the ability to provide school-based mental health services. NASD provides a goal and set of objectives for this supplement, but does not address other components of a high-quality plan, particularly the activities, timeline, deliverables, or responsible parties. NASD makes no mention of co-development or implementation with any other LEA. The proposed budget is for contractual costs, but 5 of the proposed contracts are with full-time personnel, and all 5.6 are positions that have specified locations, times, and duties, making it unclear how this would appropriately be contracted costs. The costs do seem adequate and reasonable for the implementation of activities proposed in this supplement. This supplement merits a medium score.