



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0452CO-1 for Poudre School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has outlined a plan that focuses heavily upon a specific program, Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID. The plan for implementation in terms of timeline is clear but it lacks specificity in terms of the ability of the program to accelerate achievement, deepen student learning and increase equity.</p> <p>The four core areas are sparsely addressed. While a convincing argument is made that the AVID program provides an avenue to develop personalized learning environments for students who are low income and the first generation in their family to consider college. For example, the district cites that 98% of AVID high school seniors graduate from high school and 71% are accepted at four-year institutions suggesting that students exit the program college and career ready. The implementation of a new data system is planned, though it is unclear in regards to a plan to train staff and parents on the use of this system and no details are included on exactly how that data might be used to effectively inform decision making. Limited evidence that attention has been paid to teacher and principal effectiveness is provided. The information cited that is specific to developing quality teachers and principals is limited to the provision of frameworks and common language to teachers and principals. However, the application is without documentation of recruitment, rewarding and retaining quality teachers and principals or the distribution of high quality staff to areas of relative need. Discussion regarding the applicant's ability to turn around its lowest achieving schools centers on the implementation of the AVID program, and the utilization of RtI and PBIS programming. While the applicant clearly states that attention will be paid to the lowest achieving schools, there is minimal detail beyond that to support the district assertion.</p> <p>The vision is lacking in terms of comprehension and coherence as it relates to the four core areas. The district has outlined a plan that focuses heavily upon a specific program, Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID. The plan for implementation in terms of timeline is clear but it lacks specificity in terms of the ability of the program to accelerate achievement, deepen student learning and increase equity.</p> <p>The four core areas are sparsely addressed. While a convincing argument is made that the AVID program provides an avenue to develop personalized learning environments for students who are low income and the first generation in their family to consider college. For example, the district cites that 98% of AVID high school seniors graduate from high school and 71% are accepted at four-year institutions suggesting that students exit the program college and career ready. The implementation of a new data system is planned, though it is unclear in regards to a plan to train staff and parents on the use of this system and no details are included on exactly how that data might be used to effectively inform decision making. Limited evidence that attention has been paid to teacher and principal effectiveness is provided. The information cited that is specific to developing quality teachers and principals is limited to the provision of frameworks and common language to teachers and principals. However, the application is without documentation of recruitment, rewarding and retaining quality teachers and principals or the distribution of high quality staff to areas of relative need. Discussion regarding the applicant's ability to turn around its lowest achieving schools centers on the implementation of the AVID program, and the utilization of RtI and PBIS programming. While the applicant clearly states that attention will be paid to the lowest achieving schools, there is minimal detail beyond that to support the district assertion.</p> <p>The vision is lacking in terms of comprehension and coherence as it relates to the four core areas.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The school selection process involved identifying which middle and elementary schools feed into the high school systems that currently have the AVID program in place within the district. Consideration was also given to those middle schools that have AVID programming in place in the 6th grade. The district hopes to expand the impact of the program and to increase the number of students meeting the AVID criteria who are exposed to AVID programming prior to entering high school.

Additionally, three elementary schools will also participate, though they have yet to be determined.

Schools self-selected their participation which provides a reasonable assurance of faculty and staff engagement. Students at the high school level must meet a GPA criterion (2.5-3.2) and show a strong desire to improve study skills in anticipation of college attendance. This suggests that student involvement at the high school level would be somewhat limited and exclusionary to students who have not yet determined their desire to attend college. It would be helpful to have more detailed information regarding how the district intends to reach out to sub-groups that are typically underrepresented in four year colleges that might not self-identify or apply to the AVID program.

The district anticipates serving in excess of 2100 students in year one of implementation which is less than .08% of it's total population.

The low number of students served by this initiative in relation to the relative need does not support a high quality school level or LEA level implementation of the proposal. While the plan is achievable it is not ambitious in scope.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan provided by the district is inadequate beyond giving voice to the district mission and goals. The mission and goals are valid but the plan centers around evaluating the efficacy of the AVID program rather than supporting meaningful reform within the district that leads to improved student outcomes.

For example, the district cites a lack of evidence that the AVID program is supporting the reform initiative and is seeking funding through RTT to expand participation in the program to provide opportunity for evaluation.

The district also notes that the proposal seeks to support a cultural shift within the district and that AVID program goals interface with district priorities such as increased proficiency in reading, demonstration of post secondary readiness and successful transitions. However, diametrically opposing to the purpose of the plan, is the desire promote one year's growth in a year's time. This does not translate into meaningful reform or address the concerns voiced in the assessment of needs. Instead this measure will ensure that the gap between subgroups remains static.

The lack of specificity and detail regarding up-scaling of the program does not support the communication of a high quality plan to create reform and district wide change.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district provides evidence of goals that exceed the state ESEA targets. It is difficult to speak to the ambition of the performance indicators as present district scores are not included in the data provided. The articulated goal performance assessment data and graduation rates would place the district in the 90th percentile or above and as such are desirable. The target goals peak in 2012-2013 and are sustained not increased through the remaining years of the grant.

Further, the district identifies college enrollment rates and degree attainment rates at a rate of higher than 85%. Without knowing where those rates currently stand, it is difficult to identify the ambitious nature of such goals.

The insufficient supporting detail of where the district currently stands in relation to where it wants to go leaves the improvement gradient ambiguous. The ambition of the plan is further reduced when reviewing the target goals as defined by the district.

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:

The district provides evidence of students performing at above state prescribed levels on standardized assessments, high

levels of parent involvement and the implementation of a wide variety of intervention programming.

Data provided shows a steady increase in state assessment scores for grade three students over the past five years. In addition, the district has evidence of a decrease in the gap between Hispanic and white students as they progress through the grade levels. Attendance rates are high (95% at the elementary level and 94% at the high school level) and the dropout rate has been reduced to 1.33 %.

The district cites a teaching and learning framework that has been implemented in its lower performing schools and identifies that a turnaround elementary school has seen significant results, though those results are not quantified.

The district provides convincing evidence that it supports students in need of intervention through a variety of academic and behavior interventions in a tiered and targeted approach. Additionally, the district speaks to monitoring data to identify schools and students in need of remediation and specifically targets resources to support the area of need.

There is evidence that the district provides parents and students access to student data and activity (grades, account balances and schedules).

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

The district provides strong evidence that it functions at a high level of transparency with community stakeholders. The district posts its personnel salary schedules, financial statements, as well as debit and check registers at the district level on the website.

There is a lack of evidence regarding the sharing of school specific data and the salary schedules themselves do not speak to individual teacher salaries as required at the school level.

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

The plan proposed by the district falls well within the boundaries of local control and autonomy. The district cites decisions normally made at the district and school level as including curriculum, hiring, and budget and resource allocation. The proposed implementation of the AVID program and school improvement goal action are easily implemented and made at the local level and the district has identified relevant stakeholders to include in a collaborative decision making process.

Additionally, the district is located in a RTT state and the goals of the state agencies and existing policy are well represented in the plan.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district has demonstrated evidence of identifying, soliciting and encouraging stakeholder input during the proposal process. This has included surveys, public meetings, emails, letters and website postings regarding the proposed plan. In addition, the district has provided training at the middle and high school levels and has a plan going forward to train elementary staff as the participating schools are identified.

Provided with the application are letters of support from stakeholders such as district and building administration and the community partner who is assisting with funding for the project.

There is no documentation provided regarding teacher support and engagement or collective bargaining representation.

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

The district provides information regarding the analysis of gaps in student performance as measured by standardized assessments. There is a clear need for interventions that will engage the students in the disaggregated sub groups. The

district has implemented this program in several buildings within the district and is able to identify appropriate data to be monitored through the implementation phase to ensure that the program is meeting the targeted needs of the populations identified.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District has provided sufficient evidence of a high quality plan to personalize and improve learning.

There is also evidence that the content of the program is meant to supplement, not supplant, existing school curriculum. The district has demonstrated that it has provided technology for the targeted population of this plan through the installation of SMART Boards, Netbook carts, and the provision of laptops to all students grade 9 or higher. Teacher support via professional development on integrating this technology into the classroom has also been provided. Digital learning options are available at both high school sites and include both remediation and extended learning opportunities through partnerships with local colleges and universities.

The applicant has a clear plan to monitor student progress in the program via multiple data points including quantitative measures such as MAP testing, annual standardized state assessments, and content based formative assessments. There is evidence that students will actively be recruited and encouraged to participate in the program.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of a convincing plan to personalize and improve instruction through teaching and leading.

The district articulated the implementation of school teams to support the implementation of the project and to provide support for new teachers within the program. Further evidence includes the implementation of a coaching model, representation in leadership forums, and addition of a District Director to ensure that educators receive timely and relevant PD.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is sufficient evidence of a high quality plan to support the project through policies and infrastructure based on the following:

- The district is organized to provide support to individual schools through the assignment of assistant superintendents. Additionally, the district has the benefit of an Executive Director of Student Achievement and Professional Development. This benefit is somewhat reduced when considering the scope and sequence of this position given the number of students served by the district (25,000).
- Schools included in this application have School Improvement teams and decisions regarding schedules, personnel and staffing models are most often made at the building level with support as needed from the LEA central office.
- The district shows evidence of moving towards a move on when ready system, particularly in the middle school levels where grades and credits are assigned by demonstrating competency rather than a traditional seat time model. The

district also indicates that it is moving towards developing and implementing multiple measures of assessments across grade and content areas. Currently the district uses MAPS testing to act as summative assessments. These initiatives appear to be in their infancy but attention is being given to moving this process forward in a constructive and meaningful way.

- Students with disabilities and ELL students are supported through a variety of interventions including the use of instructional coaches and frequent assessments to monitor student progress.

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

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district shows evidence of a high quality plan to support all stakeholders have access to the necessary tools and data to support individualized learning. The AVID program is available to all students without fees and if any costs are associated the district and state provide funds to students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Parental programming will be provided at no cost to the parent and funding from this grant will support the necessary professional development to teachers. The district currently has an Information Technology (IT) team in place at both building and district levels. During the upcoming year a new Student Information System (SIS) will be implemented that will allow parents, students and teachers access to schedules and grades for each student. There is no detail provided regarding the interoperability of this system with other platforms or if other data points and sub-group data will be available through this new SIS. A system for sharing lessons within the professional learning communities (PLC) is currently in place.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has a high quality multi pronged approach to evaluate and communicate findings regarding this initiative. A four year action plan has been identified though measures of performance have not been specifically stated. A management team to facilitate implementation of the process will be created and an outside evaluator will be hired to evaluate the project in terms of implementation, process and product. Management teams will make recommendations based on evaluator (biannual) and project implementation team (quarterly) feedback. School based administration will be responsible for communicating information regarding the program with the School Improvement Team (SIP) and key parent groups at the schools.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has demonstrated a quality plan to support communication and engagement by opening and facilitating ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. This plan is strengthened by the designation of a person who is responsible for sharing information with the school community, parents and students as well as external partners of the project. The district will also utilize existing communications staff to provide information to the public via AVID information stories on their website and through local media outlets.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district has not met the criteria of a including ambitious yet attainable performance objectives as required. Necessary populations and performance measures for Pre K-3 populations were are not addressed for academic growth or non-cognitive indicators. In addition, the performance measure targets as stated in the application are not adequate as they show improvement only in year one of the grant for most indicators (exception is participation rate).		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: The district has an adequate plan to provide for the evaluation of effectiveness of the Race to the Top-District funded activities through the use of an independent evaluator to to provide an analysis of the performance measures included in the application.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district identifies three funding sources including local LEA budget, Race to the Top District funds, and funding from a partnership with a community based organization.</p> <p>The budget presented is reasonable given the scope of the project proposed with the following exceptions:</p> <p>Data Coordinator</p> <p>The amount of data that is anticipated to be generated and mined from this project will require extensive time on the part of a data coordinator to identify, collate and represent in a meaningful way that is of utility to the district and the evaluator. The amount and time as allocated is not sufficient to meet the goals of the district.</p> <p>Outside Project Evaluator</p> <p>Given the amount of data and the qualitative and quantitative nature of the evaluations that will need to be conducted the amount allocated is insufficient to guarantee a quality and timely evaluation of utility to the district.</p> <p>One time investments are clearly identified in the budget spreadsheets provided and the rationale for expenditures is minimally stated in the description column within the budget spreadsheets.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district is invested in the sustainability of project goals for the term of the grant and beyond. This is evidenced by the district committing local LEA funds to the project in the years preceding this grant application. The district also plans to create a detailed sustainability plan in year one of the project.</p> <p>The district is relying heavily upon findings from the outside evaluator to support continued district funding for the project beyond the term of the grant.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has an existing partnership with a local non profit and a state university to provide mentoring to 85-100 youth who are identified as being in need of additional positive adult support. The objectives of this partnership align with objectives of the project proposed in the application. The partnership as explained, allows the district to track academic information and the non-profit to track non-cognitive indicators. This information is then shared and used to inform instruction and identify interventions for students facing significant challenges (disabilities, English language learners, poverty etc.). With increased funding through this grant, the district would expand this relationship and target students meeting AVID criteria. The district also cites support from outside agencies such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) as providing a boost to scale up this initiative.</p> <p>The program currently enjoys a 90 percent retention rate in students and would capitalize on the existing partnership to work with staff in the schools to assess the needs of the students, school, community and create a process to evaluate and improve results.</p> <p>Parents and families of participating students are encouraged to participate in summer programming with the students and mentors. Students within the program participate in a pre and post evaluation survey that is used to identify the positive impact interventions have on the youth and also provide feedback regarding interventions that need to be enhanced or</p>		

augmented to meet the goals of the program.

The district provides an outline of desired results from the expansion of this partnership but does not provide measurable objectives in the narrative.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not meet Absolute Priority 1. While there is information that suggests the program will create a personalized learning environments for a group of students the application lacks in several areas including vision, a prior record of success and continuous improvement.

Total	210	124
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	3

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The district does not provide an adequate budget supplement. The request for additional funding would negatively impact the initial project if not funded and is largely a mentoring program. In addition very limited information provided regarding the proposed budget and rationale is provided.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0452CO-3 for Poudre School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sets forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision:

- Data from the 2010 Comprehensive Assessment for District Improvement (CADI) provides a good foundation for the reform vision described in the application. The reforms' outgrowth from an existing internal review of systemwide strengths and weaknesses helps establish the credibility of the AVID approach that has been selected.

- The applicant does a good job of aligning the reform vision to the four core educational assurance areas and the district's Unified District Improvement Plan (UIP). Embedding the reform within the overarching UIP grounds the reform with existing efforts and adds to the reform's credibility.

- The proposal lacks specific data regarding the existing AVID program; this historical data would add clarity to the reform description. In several instances concrete links to existing AVID program were not made. More focus was given to national AVID statistics. While national AVID historical data are impressive, the proposal lacks links to the existing AVID program within the district.

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

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides a description of the process that was used to select the middle and high schools participating in the program.
- An explanation is provided as to why the names of participating elementary schools have not been included in the application.
- A list of schools that will participate in grant activities has been provided.
- The description appears to ensure that the participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements and 41% of the 2,134 students who will participate in the program are identified as coming from low-income families. According to the applicant, the participating schools self-selected their participation based on their students' needs for academic growth and the culture of their schools. The fact that some of the participating schools already have AVID experience should help to enhance the deployment to new schools.
- More details are needed on the selection of high school students for the expansion of the AVID program. Currently students self select to participate in existing AVID electives, and the applicant describes an "intentional, concentrated effort" that will be made by each school to reach out to "gap students." More specifics about the recruitment efforts for these targeted students is needed to add clarity regarding school-level implementation.
- Because the four participating elementary schools are not named, the applicant needed to submit a timeline to provide assurance that the elementary schools will be named within 100 days of grant's award.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant does not adequately present a high quality plan to describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up into a meaningful reform to support district-wide change. For example, the applicant presents goals, activities and impact for implementing AVID within selected schools but does not present similar details for deploying AVID's tenets beyond the participating schools. Although the applicant notes that the AVID program will serve as a working model to determine if the program is a fit for the district, more specifics such as goals and specific activities for scale up should be provided. Moreover, the applicant failed to discuss how the underlining theory of change will guide possible scale up efforts.
- The district's strategic goals are provided, but the applicant does not adequately link the reform to the 5 strategic goals. For example, some elements of a high-quality plan are omitted such as timeline, person responsible for targeted activities, etc.
- More details are needed to explain how the outcome goals will be achieved by the reform.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance.

The applicant has identified a varied list of annual goals aligned to the 4 areas provided in the application template. Some of the goals appear to be achievable given the baseline data provided and the strategies outlined in the grant. For example, increasing the college enrollment rate from the current 74% to $\geq 76\%$ in school year 2012-2013 appears both reasonable and achievable given AVID's focus on nurturing a college-going environment for middle and high school students. In addition, the increase of 2% in one year is reasonable given the 4% increase in 2011-2012.

Other goals need more explanation to ascertain their achievability. For example, the applicant has the goal of improving minority students' MGP of 46 in SY 2011-12 to $MGP \geq 55$ in SY 2012-13. The 8 point increase needs additional explanation to justify the single year increase based on year 1's expansion of the middle school AVID program. Reported previous increases in MGP do not provide sufficient evidence that such an increase has been achieved in the past.

In addition, the applicant failed to use the subgroups identified under section 11 (b)(2)(C)(v)(II) of the ESEA. The use of such nontraditional subgroups as “Students Needing to Catch Up—Middle School” did not add clarity to the application.. This group’s median growth percentile in 2011-2012 is reported as 48 and is projected to increase in 2012-2013 to ≥ 55 . The 7 point increase needs additional explanation to justify the single year increase based on year 1’s expansion of the middle school AVID program.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B (1). The applicant provides clear evidence of a strong track record of success with previous reform efforts. Evidence cited, for example, from the 2011-12 Annual Report focused on third grade reading assessment gains from 80.9% in 2010 to 82.26% students testing at proficient or advanced levels in 2012. The 5-year trend line for reading assessment demonstrates a consistent pattern of overall improvement. The applicant did not provide explanation for the decline in student achievement in reading between 2011-2012. Because of the steady growth demonstrated for the previous 5 years, additional explanation for the one year decline is needed since it is the most reason year of data reported.</p> <p>Moreover, the applicant does include data to demonstrate success in improving student learning outcomes and decreasing the achievement gap in selected areas. For example, the applicant notes the four –year average of K-3 Hispanic and white students meeting and/or exceeding grade level benchmarks has been steadily narrowing. Since many states do not begin using state assessments until grade three, the applicant needed to have information on the type of assessment used to produce K-3 benchmark data.</p> <p>The applicant describes a teaching and learning framework that has been used to improve student achievement in the lowest performing schools. Additional information is provided regarding how over the past year the Rtl and PBIS teams have been structured to work together on common issues. But, the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of these strategies over a four year period of time. More information should have been provided to highlight the success these types of strategies have garnered over the previous four years.</p> <p>The applicant implemented an on-line grading report system 6 years ago to allow students and parents to access a variety of summative assessment and assignments. The applicant also provided information on the recent implementation of Student Snapshot, an online portal that allows students and parents to view individualized information such as grades, schedules, account balances, etc. The system also appears to provide educators with information that can be used to inform instructional decision making. The on line features of both these systems should make access for both parents and educators more convenient and user-friendly. The easier access that parents have to information, the more informed and involved they can be in partnering with educators.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B (2) There appears to be a high level of transparency in making a variety of LEA processes, practices and investments available to the public. The applicant uses the overarching umbrella of the Article 44 of Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, the <i>Public School Transparency Act</i> to implement a number of measures that enhance public access. For example, according to the applicant annual comprehensive financial reports, financial audits, quarterly financial statements, and salary schedules and policies for the previous three years, are available in a downloadable format via the applicant’s website. The level of information published on the website was increased in July 2011 to include accounts payable check registers and credit, debit and purchase card statements. Finally, the applicant notes the district also has summary information on its investment performance on the website for public review.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>B (3). The applicant describes an environment where reform can be implemented successfully. The evidence provided begins with Colorado’s Race to the Top award in 2011. The applicant lists a variety of laws and regulations that support the state’s</p>		

reform agenda such as the state's existing educator effectiveness law (S.B. 10-191), as well as the following initiatives: Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB08-212); Concurrent Enrollment Act (HB09-1319); Ensuring Quality Through Educator Effectiveness (SB10-191); and Dropout Prevention and Student Re- Engagement Act (HB09-1243).

The applicant also describes an environment where schools have sufficient autonomy to implement reform. Decision making authority under state law and embedded in District contracts (including employee agreements) provide mechanisms for decisions regarding curriculum, budget, hiring of administrative personnel, the school calendar and school improvement goals, allocation of resources, and hiring of staff are made at either the district or school level.

Finally, the applicant includes evidence of both a state and mayor comment period.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of the involvement of a broad segment of stakeholders in the development of the proposal. No evidence was provided to show, for example, how stakeholders such as parents and parent organizations or student organizations were involved in the development of the proposal and how stakeholders' feedback was incorporated into the proposal.

As noted in B (3) above, the applicant does provide evidence of state and mayor comment periods for the proposal. Letters are included from both the state and town administrator acknowledging the comment period.

In addition, the applicant does describe the process used to share information and includes samples of information provided to stakeholders about the proposal and AVID. There is an array of support letters from school principals and community members. However, there was no explanation provided regarding teacher support from participating schools. According to the applicant, AVID includes an IHE component, but no letter of support from a participating IHE is included.

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

The applicant presents a plan that identifies a series of needs and gaps within the targeted schools that the proposal is designed to address.

It was especially illuminating that the applicant began the analysis of gaps and needs with discussion of a Table of 3rd grade state assessment results by free/reduced lunch program status over the past five years. Without targeted intervention strategies, early proficiency gaps will accelerate.

Tables were used to illustrate data disaggregated by the following measures to determine proficiency gaps: ethnicity, students with IEPs and ELL students.

An overview of a logic model was included to describe how the proposal to enhance and expand AVID programming will reach those students who are falling behind or on a course to potential academic failure. The Logic Model was listed to be included in the Appendices, but unfortunately, this document was not available for review. Therefore, it could not sufficiently be determined if the logic model showed the relationship between the student needs demonstrated by the disaggregated data and the outcomes expected from the proposal. Although the logic model's narrative establishes a broad overview, more specifics needed to be provided to demonstrate the link between the described gaps and needs and the outcomes that can be achieved through AVID.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Although AVID, the reform program selected as the focus of this proposal, has a strong research base and a wealth of historical data to provide academic and social support for targeted under-achieving students, the applicant does not present a high quality plan that showcases AVID as the centerpiece of the district's reform effort. Components of a high quality plan were presented such as the following:

- Focus on AVID's curriculum at the elementary, middle and high school that emphasizes critical thinking, and such tools

as AVID binder that helps students to take responsibility for their own learning.

- Focus on aspect of AVID’s curriculum that are linked to college and career ready standards, such as providing academic and social structures that will help students succeed in rigorous entry level college work.
- Focus on a AVID’s strong support system for students to include college-level tutors using Costa’s Levels of Questioning
- Focus on AVID’s “Write Path” curriculum materials and professional development for vertical teams of teachers
- Focus on the personalized learning recommendation for AVID students, and the process for ongoing and regular feedback.

Yet, the applicant does not present a plan with timelines, deliverables and responsible parties for the described goals and activities. Primarily, the plan's focus is on AVID’s goal and activities. The goals and activities provide needed information about AVID as a reform model, but the goals and activities are not sufficient to ascertain whether the applicant has a high quality plan. The list of appendices notes the inclusion of a Project Implementation Team Chart. Unfortunately, this chart was not included in the appendices and therefore, it could not be reviewed for more specifics regarding the high-quality plan for AVID implementation.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Similar to the comments made in C (1) above, the applicant provides specifics regarding the approach that will be used to help educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress in relation to AVID’s implementation, but the application does not present sufficient details to have a high-quality plan for the professional development of educators. Components of the plan focus on the following:

- Creation of AVID School Teams, composed on teachers, counselors and administrators, which lead the implementation of the AVID program at their schools.
- A list of annual AVID professional development, and description of professional learning communities at existing AVID sites that promote interventions based on Response to Intervention (Rtl).
- Use of formative and summative assessments to measure student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards.

Yet aspects of a high quality plan are not readily available. Several activities are identified without timeline, deliverables or responsible parties being identified:

- New evaluation tools for principals and teachers will be introduced in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 respectively. The applicant does not sufficiently describe impact of Educator Effectiveness on student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards.
- The applicant notes AVID’s 11 Essentials required for programming will be monitored through the Certification Self Study (CSS). No information is provided regarding timeline and responsible parties. It is noted, for example, that the 11 Essential will be included in a progress chart. More information is needed on how the 11 Essential will be assessed.
- The applicant notes that having AVID leadership on school teams makes it possible to ensure that college preparatory curricula such as pre-AP, AP, and IB instruction is available for all students. More clarity is needed as to when this type of leadership should be in place. It is not clear whether the expectation is to have this type of program in place in all participating high schools since AP and IB instruction are not typically offered in the same secondary program.
- The applicant notes that the AVID School Team, as well as each school’s School Accountability Committee will guide AVID’s implementation. More information is needed regarding how these two teams will work together. The role of the school coordinator and district AVID director needs to be clarified.
- Finally, the applicant notes that one method that will be used to increase the number of students who will receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals will be the development and delivery of professional development on Response to Intervention (Rtl). A timeline, with deliverables and responsible parties is not provided this PD to explain how the number of students will be increased beyond the 2134 targeted for year one implementation.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
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(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>D (1). The applicant describes a central office organization with Assistant Superintendents at the elementary and secondary levels. No information is provided as to the reporting structure for middle schools since a Middle Grades Assistant Superintendent is not specified.</p> <p>The applicant notes that a School District's Organizational Chart is attached as Appendix H. But, this organizational chart was not available for review.</p> <p>The applicant provides a listing of state laws and regulations in B (3) that appear to provide participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over such features as school schedules, personnel decisions and staffing models. The District's Decision Making matrix provides an additional avenue for flexibility and autonomy.</p> <p>The applicant notes that at the middle grades, standards-based grading is used where students earn credit by proficiency rather than hours in the classroom. More information is needed to explain how this process will impact AVID's middle grade implementation.</p> <p>The applicant notes the ongoing development and implementation of formative assessments in all content areas at all grade levels. A timeline with deliverables and person(s) responsible is not included.</p> <p>The applicant notes AVID's goals are adaptable for all students including English Language Learners (ELL) and Integrated Services (IS)--special education. The applicant makes a general declaration that since ELL and IS are part of the identified gap in academic growth in the district, collaborative work will take place to make sure that AVID materials and strategies are accessible to all students and parents. More information is needed to explain how the district will be proactive in ensuring this collaboration and accessibility to materials.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes an LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by describing the no cost feature of AVID; the program is accessible to all students regardless of income.</p> <p>The applicant also notes that selected fees such as SAT exam fees are paid based on certified free and reduced lunch rosters. The applicant does not provide sufficient examples of cost-effective strategies for providing access to resources outside of the regular school day.</p> <p>The applicant describes examples of technical support that are provided by national AVID programs to all participating AVID schools. The applicant also describes the function of onsite technical support staff at each participating school to provide additional technical support for teachers and school leaders. Yet, the applicant does not describe the level of technical support provided to parents and other stakeholders that may be necessary for effective implementation of AVID.</p> <p>The applicant describes the current student information system (SILK) and Snapshot online system that allow student and parents access to limited student data. A fully integrated student information technology system that will allow students and parents to have full access to their schedules and grades is reported to be fully functional by the start of the 2013-2014 school year. The applicant does not provide a sufficient plan to incorporate this system into the implementation of AVID at the elementary, middle and high school. In addition, the applicant failed to include a timeline with specific deliverables and professional development for parents and students on the use of the student information system.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a system for a continuous improvement process that does provide limited feedback. For example, the applicant provides an overview of a four-year action plan that identifies critical activities, timelines and responsibilities. The action plan is described as being included in Appendix A. Unfortunately, this document was not available for review. In addition, the management team outlined in Appendix I was also not available for review. Therefore, the continuous</p>		

improvement process described in the narrative appears to be incomplete because of the inability to access identified appendices.

The improvement process describes monthly, quarterly and bi-annual status reports to be developed by a variety of people. More information is needed to fully explain the continuous improvement loop of the status reports. For example, according to the applicant, members of the Management Team will receive quarterly status reports. More information is needed as to who will prepare the status reports and how this information will be used to improve the AVID program.

According to the applicant a Project Evaluator creates bi-annual reports for the Project Management Team; this report is designed to help this team to review prior semester's successes and plan revisions to the implementation plan as needed. More information is needed on how the project evaluator will collect this data; the type of data is not identified.

The applicant also fails to discuss how information will be shared with the public on the quality of such elements as AVID's professional development, technology and staff.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As a component of continuous improvement, the applicant clearly describes a variety of strategies for maintaining ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Central to the applicant's communication plan is the ability to provide information about the project and to receive feedback from a variety of stakeholders. The feedback loop described by the applicant is an essential feature of continuous improvement. For example, AVID council members are charged with disseminating program information to their school communities and collecting feedback from the community regarding AVID's implementation. The applicant notes that the four-year action plan designates person(s) responsible for direct, on-going communication with a variety of internal and external stakeholders.

The applicant also makes use of the district's Communications Department to promote AVID stories to local media.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes 13 performance measures connected to the three overarching goals of the proposal. The performance measures are an adequate combination of required and project specific performance measures that are ambitious yet achievable.

The rationale provided for the selection of each of the performance measures is credible; the applicant describes how the data for each performance measure will be collected. But, the applicant does not describe how measures will be reviewed and improved over time if the measure is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. For example, the applicant describes the path for data collection and indicates data will be reported in many instances to the Project Data Coordinator. The applicant is silent on how the measure will be reviewed and improved over time which is a central feature of continuous improvement..

In several instances more informative is needed to determine how formative leading information will be tailored to the proposed plan. For example, Performance Measure 13 focuses on the number of parents who attend AVID pre-college and career activities. This data is collected by the AVID School Coordinators and the targets appear to be ambitious and achievable. Yet, no information is provided as to how formative data on this measure will impact the proposal's goals. Moreover, no information is provided as to how this measure will be reviewed and improved over the period of the grant.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a detailed description of plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposal around any identified activities such as professional development or activities to employ technology. The applicant's response describes some of the expenses the district will incur to implement the proposal, but little information is provided regarding the evaluation of the proposal's activities.

At several places in the proposal a Project Evaluator is referenced. The role of the Project Evaluator in improving uses of technology, working with community partners and modifying school schedules is not described.

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 clearly identifies all funds that will be used to support the project including grant, LEA, State, and other Federal funds.</p> <p>The funds included appear to be reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. The applicant provides a description of funding and details how the funding will be used to implement the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant makes a clear distinction between one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a list of components in the district's sustainability process that are already in place such as funding from an external organization, several AVID personnel are already hired, and the District's mandate to close achievement gaps in subgroups. Because the proposal is designed to determine the cost effectiveness of the AVID expansion model, the applicant does not project beyond the 4 years of the grant cycle. Indeed the applicant is careful to note the proposal's expenses are written so that the program may be quickly scaled back if data do not support the expansion. This underlining thought process appears to have prevented the district from developing a high-quality plan for sustainability of the proposal's goals for "X" years after the end of the grant cycle. Sufficient details are not provided regarding budget assumptions, potential sources or uses of funds after the term of the grant..</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Lobo Partnership described by the applicant expands on an existing partnership the school district has with a local non-profit youth mentoring program. The objectives of the partnership align nicely with the goals and activities of AVID. Indeed the youth mentoring program is already serving existing middle grades AVID schools in the district with positive results.</p> <p>The applicant describes 7 desired results that support the targeted AVID population with both educational results and other education outcomes.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient information on how Partners Mentoring Youth and the school district will collaborate to track the performance indicators. In addition, the applicant does not provide a robust description of how data from the partnership will be used to improve the results of AVID students. The applicant's focus is on the expansion of the contractual relationship with its partner rather than on the improved AVID student results.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide an adequate strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to other high need students. The applicant notes that the strong evidence of success would not make it difficult to scale up the model, but no specifics are provided as to how the scale up will occur.</p> <p>Finally, the applicant describes a realistic decision-making process to select, implement and evaluate supports that are a part of the partnership. Since a smaller version of the partnership is already in existence, the applicant proposes to build on the data collection system already in place. The use of pre and post surveys to measure the effectiveness of the mentoring outcomes has a history of effectiveness.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Through the proposal presented by this applicant to expand its existing AVID program to serve over 2000 students at the elementary, middle and high school, the applicant does coherently and comprehensively address how Avid will be used for the following goals:

- To create personalized learning environments based on a national model with targeted resources for high need students
- To provide AVID based strategies that help students be prepared to meet college- and career ready graduation requirements
- To use AVID professional development to help educators become more effective; thereby increasing students exposure to the most effective educators.
- To use AVID to increase the number of students who take a more rigorous course load at the middle and high schools; thereby decreasing the achievement rate and increasing the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	137
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	9

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a plan to carry out activities related to the School Based Mentoring for AVID schools. The rationale stresses the historical success of the program, the personalized aspects, and its portability to other school sites.

The applicant's plan focuses on activities and timelines that will be carried out by the district and are clearly supportive of the School Based Mentoring for AVID schools. The performance measures for the program need more information to help flesh out the quality of the plan. For example, several components of the plan are referenced and described individually such as Partners Mentoring Youth, training for mentors, social work intern/mentors. The applicant does not link all elements together and clearly describe how all activities will be carried out and support the program's goals.

The proposed budget appears to be reasonable to carry out the activities outlined.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0452CO-4 for Poudre School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a vision for reform that includes expanding the implementation of Advancement Via Individual

Determination (AVID) for groups of underachieving and under-motivated students, implementing a program called Narviance for post-secondary and workforce readiness, and using the results of assessments such as MAP, EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, and TCAP results to prepare students for college success. The applicant describes strategies for implementing a data system called Synergy by Edupoint that will serve as the district's student information system and Grade Book application. The applicant mentions a Standards Based Teaching and Learning Framework that includes assessment for student learning, classroom environment and culture, student engagement and curriculum and pedagogy, and refers to a diagram in the appendix. However, the appendix is not included, and details regarding how this framework relates to the project are limited. The applicant describes a plan for dedicating resources to schools with the greatest need by focusing on the implementation of three initiatives (AVID, Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Intervention Support) as part of systemic reform to improve academic growth. The applicant mentions that teachers will be trained in the use of AVID, however, it is unclear how the applicant plans to support Common Core Standards implementation, and promote tasks that are based on individual student interests. It is also unclear how the applicant plans to address the implementation of a teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation system by 2014-15.

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

10

6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes the process used to select the schools that will participate in the project, and provides a rational for their selection based on student needs. The applicant states that schools self-selected their participation, however, a description of how schools determined if they met the eligibility requirements of the project is not provided. A table that includes demographic data for participating schools is included and describes the number of participating educators from each school, the total number of students who will participate, the number of high-need students participating and the number of low-income students who will participate. The applicant mentions a plan for selecting additional elementary schools that are not named in the application. The percent of the total district low-income population that will participate in the project appears very low (2%,1%, or .5%) for each school. It is unclear why the project does not address the needs of all students in the participating schools.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan to scale up the implementation of an existing program called Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programming for groups of underachieving and under-motivated students. A plan to analyze this intervention in additional populations is mentioned, in regard to determining if the program should be expanded even further. The applicant refers to a graphic that describes feeder schools involved in the project, however, this attachment is not included in the application. A plan for district-wide change beyond the nine participating schools is described and includes five strategic goals that address high individual expectations in regard to: students demonstrating proficiency in reading, students in grades 4-10 demonstrating at least a year's academic growth in a year's time, student demonstrating post-secondary readiness, students successfully transitioning each education level through graduation and into post-secondary, and supporting the integration of health and wellness in student learning. A culture change is also described in regard to creating a supportive, more personalized, college-going environment. The district's Plan for Unified Improvement is also mentioned in regard to collaboratively defining the elements of standards-based strategies and learning framework, however this attachment is not included in the application.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The applicant describes annual goals for performance on summative assessments in a table that mentions targets such as having 85% of students score at the proficient level or advanced on Third Grade Reading State assessments. However, baseline data is not provided in order to determine if this goal is ambitious yet attainable for this grade level.
- (b) The applicant mentions goals for decreasing achievement gaps in elementary, middle and high school subgroups, however, baseline data is not included and the targets are not described in reference to any specific assessment, in order to determine their meaning.
- (c) The applicant provides a goal to increase graduation rates to greater than 85%, however, current graduation rates are 85.9% which indicates that this goal is not ambitious. The applicant provides data for minority student current graduation rates (76.7%), and sets a goal for increasing this to equal to or greater than 85% by the first year of the project. However, this goal does not increase in future years, which indicates that it is not ambitious for minority students, given the investment in project activities to support this goal.

(d) The applicant provides a goal for college enrollment rates that includes a current rate of 74%, with a goal of 76% during the first year of the project. However, this goal does not increase in future years, which indicates that it is not ambitious, given the investment in project activities to support this goal.

(e) The applicant provides a goal for postsecondary degree attainment rates that includes a current rate of 41%, with a goal of 45% during the first year of the project. However, this goal does not increase in future years, which indicates that it is not ambitious, given the investment in project activities to support this goal.

Overall, the applicant does not provide evidence of ambitious goals for the project that illustrate impact of project activities as a result of improved student learning and performance.

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
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: (a) The applicant provides evidence of improved student learning outcomes during the past four years in regard to closing the achievement gap between white and Hispanic students, and provides a graph that indicates progress in third grade proficiency. However, the graph does not state the content area referenced in the data. The applicant mentions success in high school graduation rates, however, a clear description that provides four years of data is not included. The applicant does not address a track record in regard to college enrollment rates. (b) A description of district reforms is mentioned in regard to the adoption of a teaching and learning framework that is already used in the lowest performing schools. However, evidence of the impact of this reform is not clearly described. (c) The applicant describes recent efforts to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents that includes the implementation of a new interactive system called Student Snapshot on the district's website. The applicant states that this system provides information on schedules, grades, account balances, and school information, as well as data that leads to informed decisions by educators. However, details regarding how specific student performance data, such as data on formative and summative test results, is made available to students, educators and parents are limited.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: (a) The applicant mentions that it has made annual comprehensive financial reports, financial audits, quarterly financial statements, and salary schedules for the last three years available on its website, and mentions that it added the F-33 survey data of its government finances. However, details regarding the transparency of actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff are limited. It is unclear if this information is provided at the school level or only at the district level. (b) The applicant does not provide evidence that actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only are made available to the public. (c) The applicant does not provide evidence that actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only are made available to the public. (d) The applicant does not provide evidence that actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level are made available to the public..		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a clear description of the State context for implementation of the project and includes details regarding policies for the implementation of State Standards through a Content Collaborative, who will assist with the implementation of new educator evaluation procedures and increase access to STEM education. Several State initiatives are mentioned, such as the Dropout Prevention and Student Re-Engagement Act, Ensuring Quality Through Educator Effectiveness, and the Concurrent Enrollment Act. The applicant also describes autonomy in regard to the district's superintendent and Governing		

Board, in relation to decision making, and provides examples of the types of decisions that are made at the District and school level. However, details regarding district autonomy in regard to personalized learning environments are limited. The applicant does not specifically address this in regard to implementation of project initiatives.

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

10

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were informed about the project through newsletters, website postings, and training and informational sessions for educators where provided. However, it is unclear how these stakeholders were engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. The applicant mentions samples of shared information and letters of support from stakeholders in an appendix, however, this appendix was not included in the application. It is unclear if the application was supported by 70% of teachers or by a collective bargaining entity. It is also unclear if the application was supported by parents, students and community members, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides data that illustrates achievement gaps in the past five years among students in subgroups such as Limited English Proficiency students with Individual Education Plans, ethnicities other than White, and students living in high poverty. The applicant mentions a logic model in the appendix, however, this is not included in the application. Details regarding gaps in specific areas such as infrastructure, professional development, and the need for technology to support personalized learning environments are not addressed.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a plan to expand the AVID program to groups of high-need students. This program builds skills that support success in rigorous coursework such as organization, critical reading, writing and inquiry from elementary to secondary education, and utilizes tutors from a local college to work with students to increase college-readiness. Components of the program include career exploration, understanding the academic preparation required for career choices, and researching colleges. Student trips to colleges and universities are also included as part of this initiative. However, it is unclear if these opportunities are available to all students, or just high-needs students in the district. In addition, while the applicant mentions student reflection in regard to portfolios that illustrate personal growth, details are limited in regard to how students' interests are incorporated into their learning.

(b) The applicant states the program is designed to involve students in a strong group of peers and adults who share a commitment to academic achievement, however, it is unclear how parents are involved in the program. It is also unclear how students will be exposed to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals, since the program is based on rigorous, sequential curriculum materials. The applicant states that the district's classrooms are equipped with cutting edge technology, such as interactive white boards and personal lap-tops for students starting in ninth grade, and mentions remediation resources for Credit Recover and opportunities for concurrent enrollment in college courses. The applicant also mentions a P-16 collaborative that is in place to improve access linkages between high school and college that provide digital learning content aligned with college-and career-ready standards for all students. The applicant describes strategies for collecting ongoing and regular feedback through an AVID Coordinator who will ensure that appropriate information is collected on a biannual basis to meet performance measures. There is a plan to hire a Data Coordinator to collect performance measures, as well as a plan to hire an Evaluator to analyze the data. AVID data will also be analyzed through a comprehensive data collection and certification system that gives districts and schools data needed to support student improvements. However, it is unclear how the applicant plans to capture perception data from students, teachers and parents in regard to the project. The applicant describes a

component of the AVID system called AVID English Learner College Readiness that offers more strategic support for students who are learning English. However, it is unclear how the applicant plans to address accommodations for special needs students. While professional development for special educators is mentioned in regard to RTI, details are limited as to how AVID strategies will apply to special education students.

(c) The applicant provides a plan to implement strategies to support the student training on how to use AVID tools that includes tutors, School Coordinator, and an overall Project Coordinator that will work closely with teachers to ensure effective application of AVID strategies and curriculum.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a plan to train all participating educators in the use of AVID resources, and includes strategies such as a two-day Summer Institute that includes online training resources, time district wide AVID communities of practice meetings, and a train the trainer initiative. Workshops for parents and guardians that focus on supporting college and career readiness are also mentioned. However, details regarding training on implementing personalized learning environments are limited. The applicant mentions the teachers will work in professional learning communities that focus on interventions to close achievement gaps through differentiated learning, but does not specify how teachers will be trained to adapt content and instruction to provide students with opportunities to engage in tasks that address their personal academic interests through optimal learning approaches. In addition, oversight by a AVID District Director is mentioned. A solid plan for frequently measuring student progress and analyzing data is provided, and includes support for data collection from a School Coordinator and data analysis support from a Project Evaluator. The applicant mentions site visits from the National AVID Center, however, it is unclear if these will be part of the project activities. The applicant does not clearly describes strategies for using feedback provided by teacher and principal evaluation systems, except to mention that a district tool will be used to evaluate teacher and principal effectiveness when the district evaluation systems complete.

(b) The applicant describes a plan for participating educators to have access to learning how to use AVID resources and tools. However, details regarding how additional training in the use of data and other resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements are limited. The applicant mentions the use of differentiated instruction as a strategy for providing actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to student needs, however, details in regard to student interests are lacking from this description. AVID resources that provide teachers with additional support are also listed and include a newsletter, online training resources, regular Webex trainings and peer sharing opportunities, and a MyAVID online link with the research articles on improving student achievement. It is unclear how teacher will receive training in the use of SMART Boards, projectors Document Cameras, student laptops and netbooks, or training in how to create new tools. and match tools to students needs.

(c) The applicant mentions a plan to utilize a School Team, a School Accountability Committee, and a School Coordinator to ensure that adequate information is gathered about the program in order to make changes as needed. A self study and the AVID Certification program documents are mentioned in regard to monitoring continuous improvement and the identification of barriers to individual student achievement. However, details regarding training, policies, tools are not provided. Though the applicant mentions surveys that will be collected to capture teacher perceptions of changes in their teaching practices, it is unclear how the applicant plans to use information, from the district's teacher evaluation system to improve teacher effectiveness, school culture and school climate.

(d) The applicant's plan to implement the AVID initiative is well thought out. However, details regarding how it will increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education) are not provided. Specifically, it is unclear how effectiveness will be measured in regard to teacher evaluation.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The applicant mentions an organizational chart that depicts how the district supports schools through an Assistant Superintendent. However, this chart is not included in the application.
- (b) The applicant mentions site based management policies that allow school leadership to decide schedules, staffing decisions, and school level budgets, with input from School Improvement Teams. The applicant provides a description of how additional requests for flexibility and autonomy are approved through a District Decision Making matrix.
- (c) The applicant states that all core content areas are currently developing or have developed formative assessments to support Standards based instruction, and mentions that credit is earned by mastery of Standards, rather than hours in the classroom.
- (d) The applicant describes frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times using formative, summative and State assessments.
- (e) The applicant describes strategies for providing learning resources and instructional practices that address the needs of students with disabilities and English learners that involves a collaboration among departments. Examples include support from Integrated Services in the delivery of professional development for RTI, and district leaders involved in the implementation of ELL AVID resources.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The applicant describes how AVID resources are free to students and parents involved in the program, including costs for SAT testing.
- (b) The applicant mentions that technical support for students, parents and educators will be provided by district and AVID resources, such as the information technology staff at each school and at the district office.
- (c) The applicant provides a plan for implementing a student information management system that will provide information to teachers, parents and students. It is unclear if this will include an open data format. Plans to use the data other electronic learning systems, such as BlackBoard for sharing lessons are also mentioned.
- (d) The applicant mentions an existing information system called Snapshot will be replaced in 2012-14, and notes that the district's human resource system and budget system is part of a separate system called Bitech. It is unclear if the applicant has a plan for ensuring that schools use interoperable data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a plan to hire a project Evaluator to measure progress towards goals and provide biannual reports. Details are provided regarding a Project Management Team that will guide the vision of implementation of AVID. This team will make recommendations for project improvements based on information from the Project Implementation Team, and receive quarterly status reports at their meetings. In addition, each School Coordinator and School Improvement Team will provide information for the monthly reports, while the Superintendent and AVID Council will share information about the project with the Governing Board. Information about the project will be posted on the district and each school's website. However, details are limited in regard to how the applicant will publicly share information about investments in professional development, technology and staff, in order to obtain feedback.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant mentions a four year plan in the appendix for monitoring the project and addressing on-going communication and engagement, however, this was not included in the application. Details are limited in regard to how the applicant will publicly share information with external stakeholders and obtain feedback, in order to improve the project.		

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a description of 13 performance measures and provides a rational for each measure and details regarding how the measure will inform stakeholders. A theory of action is not provided. Examples include percent proficient on State assessments, a social and emotional youth survey, and the number of parents who attend AVID activities. One measure of college- and career-readiness is mentioned and involves the percent of students who meet all ACT Readiness Benchmarks. The applicant describes plans for a Project Evaluator to evaluate the project and inform the Board of Education on progress towards goals. A description that ties the performance to a theory of action is not provided.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a sound plan for evaluating the project that includes an evaluation conducted by a Project Evaluator and an AVID self-study. However, a plan to evaluate how to more productively use time, staff, money and other resources in order to improve results are not provided. It is unclear if or how the applicant plans to work with community partners other than tutors from a local college, to improve project activities.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant identifies how grant funds that will support the project and includes an explanation for each expense. Funding from the district (\$120,000) and from a foundation (\$120,000) are mentioned in addition to requested grant funds.</p> <p>(b) The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of AVID activities.</p> <p>(c) The applicant provides a description of funds that will be used for one-time investments, such as college marketing materials and PATH TOT training materials. Details regarding a rationale for investments and priorities are limited.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The describes a plan for sustainability of project goals that includes support from a foundation, support from district funding, and AVID trained staff to sustain professional development. A plan to have the Project Management Team develop a sustainability plan is also mentioned. However, details regarding other sustainability activities such as creating community partners are not described.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1) The applicant describes a partnership with five school districts, a mentoring organization, an a local university School of Social Work that will provide school based mentoring., establish peer mentoring, and train community volunteers.</p>		

(2) The applicant provides four population-level desired results for students . Examples include decreased acceptance of interpersonal violence, decreased delinquent behavior, and decreased acceptance of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.

(3) The applicant mentions that the partner mentoring organization has a secure system for tracking academic information, but details regarding this system are limited. It is unclear if all measures planned for the project can be tracked through this system. The applicant plans to use the data to target its resources to AVID sub-groups in order to improve results for participating students. It is unclear if this includes students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty (including highly mobile students), family instability, or other child welfare issues. The applicant mentions that the program is well established by the original funders. However, details regarding a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating high-need students are limited. Similarly, strategies to improve results over time are not clearly described.

(4) The applicant describes how the partnership would provide mentoring services to build relationships between mentors and high-needs students, in order to instill positive attitudes toward school.

(5) The applicant describes how the partnership with a mentoring organization will build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs participating students and match them with a mentor based on schedules and the strengths of mentors.

(b) The applicant describes how mentoring programs build trusting relationships with peers and adults. However, it is unclear how the applicant plans to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant.

(c) The applicant describes a data reporting process for tracing mentoring activities. Data includes survey data, process data, and demographic data. A plan for analyzing and evaluating data by an independent research firm is included.

(d) The applicant provides a description of how parents are involved in the project. Activities include signing a permission slip, providing permission to use data, and participating in summer activities with youth and mentors.

(e) The applicant describes ongoing evaluation activities, using a pre and post survey. A tool called an Operational Summary is also mentioned, in regard to tracking information on group activities, the number of mentoring sessions, and demographics.

6) The applicant identifies annual performance measures regarding the desired results for students, however, details are not specific to targeted goals. For example, the applicant mentions increasing self esteem in youth as a desired result, but does not describe a measurable degree of expected improvement.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a coherent plan to build on an existing interventional called Advancing Via Individual Determination (AVID) for groups of underachieving and under-motivated students. The applicant mentions the use of a new student information management system called Synergy that will improve access to data and include a parent and student portal. Training in the use of AVID is mentioned in regard to increasing educator effectiveness. This initiative is expected to increase graduation rates and improve college and career readiness.

Total	210	140
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a plan to support the expansion of School-Based Mentoring to AVID sites in neighboring districts and

states that the current program at 5 sites is able to serve 85 students for approximately \$500,000. However, it is unclear how much the applicant is requesting in supplemental funding and how many students it plans to serve. A clear rationale for the specific population of students to be involved in the project is not specified. It is unclear who the project will serve and how the applicant will deliver program services. This makes it difficult to determine if the proposed budget is adequate to support the development and implementation of activities.