



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

**Application #0298CO-1 for Pueblo City School District 60**

**A. Vision (40 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 (PCS D60) provided a turnaround vision to address the four core educational assurance areas as well as an approach to achieving their goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity. The four year vision has an intentional focus on their schools with highest need for transformation (Cadre 1) for the first year, then second tier schools for transformation (Cadre 2), and finally third tier schools in need of transformation (Cadre 3). This approach is aligned with the areas identified by the state of Colorado as areas for improvement. PCS D60 plans to implement school themes such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) which will provide opportunities for students to accelerate their learning. However, there is no evidence to support the purpose in having a focus on STEM. Also, there is no clear evidence of specific content area deficiencies identified by the state of Colorado. PCS D60 plans to provide professional development opportunities for teachers on differentiated instructional practices, lesson planning using Understanding by Design, and data analysis to ensure teachers are equipped to deepen student learning. No justification for a focus on these specific areas for teachers is clear. Also, the vision is coherent; however, it is not clearly articulated. Personalized student support in PCS D60 will be achieved by establishing student goals in an Individualized Academic Plan.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 (PCS D60) provided a clear process for selecting schools to participate in the reform initiative and all schools meet the eligibility requirements. Specifically, PCS D60 will select schools based on their turnaround status determined by the state of Colorado and begin their most critical schools in need of transformation. PCS D60 provided a list of schools selected and grouped by Cadres including Cadre 1, Cadre 2, and Cadre 3. PCS D60 provided the number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high needs, and participating educators.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 (PCS D60) plans to use an approach that intentionally provides attention to the most critical schools first. Furthermore, PCS D60 referenced lessons learned from previous reform efforts to achieve more successful outcome goals. PCS D60 clearly identified underdeveloped components from previous reform efforts and has provided action steps to address these areas of improvement in the proposal. Evidence of action steps for PCS D60 to improve student learning outcomes for all students were provided throughout the reform proposal; however, it was not clearly articulated.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p>		

The Pueblo City School District provided performance data on summative assessments (Colorado State Assessments) for elementary, middle, and high schools in reading, math, writing, and English Language proficiency as well as science for 5th, 8th, and 10th grades. The academic achievement for elementary in Reading did not demonstrate an ambitious goal for achievement since it only strived for a 2% increase each year from SY2011-12 through SY2016-17. However, other content areas for elementary as well as middle and high school subgroups had a range of 3% to as much as 8% which is ambitious and achievable. Furthermore, there is no evidence of decreasing the achievement gap between American Indian, Black, and Hispanic students with their White counterparts. Specifically, there are increases in the academic achievement gaps for many grade levels and subgroups demonstrated in the achievement gap table. The graduation rate using 5, 6, or 7 years is not an ambitious goal especially when the expected outcome in 4 years is set at 82%. The college enrollment rate proposed is achievable with increments of 3-5% each year; however, the minority subgroup does not define the specific ethnicities included. PCS D60 or state of Colorado did not collect post-secondary degree attainment data.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 does not provide a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student achievement. Furthermore, there is no evidence of closing the achievement gap and raising graduation rates as well as college enrollment over the past four years. PCS D60's transformational efforts have been recently implemented and there is limited evidence to demonstrate effects on student performance. There was evidence of leadership training for principals and assistant principals beginning in 2008 with the National Institute for School Leadership; however, there is no evidence to support the training had an effect on student achievement.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 provides links to the salary tables for teachers; however, there is no evidence actual salaries at the school level for instructional staff only and teachers only. PCS D60 provided the allocations for non-personnel items; however, there is no evidence of actual non-personnel expenditures.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 does not provide clear evidence of sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement a personalized learning environment. The school district is pursuing the state of Colorado's Innovation School status; however, there is no documentation of requirements for attaining this status or probability of attaining the Innovation School status upon approval of grant funding.</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The Pueblo City School District 60 submitted a synopsis of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant to the superintendent and assistant superintendent for board of education review. PCS D60 established a leadership team consisting of central office administrators as well as hosted a meeting with school administrators and a parent association representative. However, there is no evidence of direct engagement with teachers, families, or students to support the proposal. PCS D60 provided letters of support from a U.S. senator, Colorado Commissioner of Education, and local community college. There is inadequate evidence of engaging all school and community stakeholders in the development of the proposal.</p>		

<b>(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 provided an analysis of needs and gaps from an Expedited Diagnostic Review from the Colorado Department of Education. PCS D60 identified needs and gaps; however, there was no evidence of currently implementing personalized learning environments. Furthermore, PCS D60 did not clearly align these needs and gaps with action steps for their reform efforts.		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 provided evidence for personalized learning by having all sixth graders establish an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) to articulate their academic and career goals. ICAPs are revised annually and allow to take ownership of their learning and link their interests to career and/or college goals. Furthermore, PCS D60 students will work with teachers to progress monitor their academic achievement throughout their secondary years. This approach provides students an opportunity to determine their mastery of college and career standards as well as meet graduation requirements. PCS D60 will use programs such as Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) to support students with tracking their own learning; however, it is not clear evidence of training and supports to meet the needs of all students since AVID is geared towards first generation college bound students. PCS D60 plans to support digital learning content through community partnerships. Also, PCS D60 will provide cultural experiences and exposure to other perspectives via partnerships with local business, community organizations and post-secondary institutions. There is evidence that students will have opportunities to accelerate their learning or enhance their knowledge through extended learning opportunities such as after-school camps, summer camps, and distance learning.		
<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 demonstrates evidence for leadership training to continuously improve school progress towards their goals by proposing Aspiring principal training sessions, onsite leadership coaching by expert leaders, and establishing professional learning communities. Furthermore, actionable information that helps PCS D60 educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to their students' academic needs is evident. PCS D60 will provide ongoing feedback to educators via School Leadership Coach. A plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals has been established by PCS D60; however, there is no data on the specific number of current effective and highly effective teachers and principals. Also, there is no evidence of a district's teacher evaluation system.		

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 will provide school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy pending Innovation status from the Colorado Department of Education. There is no evidence in the plan to provide opportunities for students to progress and earn credit based on mastery versus the amount of time spent on a specific topic. Also, there is no evidence of opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery in multiple comparable ways as well as learning resources for students with disabilities and English learners.		

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 plan provides technical support for students and teachers; however, there is no evidence of support systems for parents. PCS D60 will use interoperable data systems for student information and instructional improvement. There is no reference to opportunities for students and parents outside of school as well. PCS D60 does meet the expectation of systems to export data in other electronic learning systems.		

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 has developed a strategy for implementation of a continuous improvement process through their Management Action Plan which is aligned with district goals, superintendent's goals, departmental priorities and actions, and district outcomes. Furthermore, quarterly reviews are conducted and reported via District Initiative Walkthrough form. PCS D60 has established a plan to elicit feedback from stakeholders; however, there is no evidence of publicly sharing information on the quality of the reform initiative using Race to the Top - District funds.		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District has established strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through professional learning communities, vertical and horizontal teacher meetings, and school accountability meetings as well as newsletters, website, and press releases. However, there is limited evidence of opportunities for community members and parents and no evidence of opportunities for students to engage in continuous improvement of the plan.		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 provided data on highly effective teachers; however, there was no data available for effective and highly effective principals. Furthermore, the performance measures were ambiguous and non-coherent. The information in the narrative pertaining to effective principals is contradictory to the data in the performance measure tables.		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b> The Pueblo City School District 60 plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top - District funds solely on student performance using the state assessment data. There is no evidence of professional development and activities that employ technology. Furthermore, there is no evidence for evaluating the effectiveness of the Race to the Top - District funded activities.		

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The Pueblo City School District 60 identified all funds that will support the project. Also, the funding was reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed budget items. Furthermore, a description of all funds to support implementation of the plan was provided. However, there is no evidence to sustain indentified funds for full time equivalent (FTE) positions after the grant period.

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

**10**

**0**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Thers is no evidence of a plan to sustain the goals of Pueblo City School District 60's plan. Furthermore, there is no documentation of financial support from state or local government to sustain program components after the Race to the Top - District grant is depleted.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

There is no evidence of a partnership to attain private or public funding to recieve the competitive preference priority.

**Absolute Priority 1**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>	<b>Met/Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The Pueblo City School District 60 did not provide adequate evidence to meet the requirements of Absolute Priority 1. Specifically, there is not substantial evidence to supportt the core educational assurance areas to create a learning environment that is designed to improve teaching and learning through a personalized approach.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>89</b>
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**Race to the Top - District**

**Technical Review Form**

**Application #0298CO-2 for Pueblo City School District 60**

**A. Vision (40 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The vision set forth by the applicant is moderately comprehensive and moderately cohesive.</p> <p>The vision is comprehensive to the extent that the LEA seeks to achieve a <i>world-class system</i> where students, teachers, LEA leaders, families and community are all involved in accomplish the goal of improving <i>student learning</i>. The vision is cohesive to the extent that the visionaries of the LEA base their path to achieving the vision based on theory, research, and LEA's own experience in improving educational program and turning around low performing schools, leading to student learning. Research references and theoretical and practical models were studied in the process of articulating the vision. Student centered theory of action with a purpose of enabling them to be college and career-ready. The stated vision is founded on the district improvement plan and school improvement plans that are in place now. Applicant provides a clear overview of actions and progress made by the LEA toward turning around low performing schools and improving student learning.</p> <p>Comprehensiveness and cohesion of the vision are limited to the extent that the vision statement, rationale and supporting narrative fail to take into consideration all of the <i>Core educational assurance areas</i>: Personalized student learning and supportive data systems, along with passing reference to college and career readiness.</p> <p><b>Consequently, a low High-level score is assigned for this criterion.</b></p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high quality LEA level and school level implementation of the proposal to a great extent. A clear-cut description of the process for selecting the participating schools is provided. The process ensures that the participating schools collectively meet the eligibility requirements. A list of schools that will participate in grant activities is provided. The numbers (and percentages when applicable) of total participating students (5,000), low income students (72.1%), high-need students (64.9%) and participating educators (331) are specified.</p> <p>All grade-bands and core subject are targeted for improving student learning, instruction, school leadership and family/community engagement.</p> <p>Applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal is based on a logical rationale and systematic processes that builds on the history of school level student performance and status of the reform/turnaround efforts to-date. LEA plans to implement the reform proposal by providing support services to all students and associated stakeholders. All core subject areas will be impacted with a special emphasis on reading, and slightly lower emphasis on writing, mathematics and science.</p> <p>Based on the characteristics of the approach to implementation presented in the application an <b>upper High-level score is assigned for this criterion.</b></p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>LEA proposes a definite goal and a high-quality plan (presented in Appendix-4) to scale up implementation of the reform proposal by beginning with a limited number of schools during the first year of the project, and to support district-wide change in all schools, all students, and all grade bands within the LEA by the third year of the project. Additional schools will be phased-in during the second and third years.</p>		

LEA has identified nine (9) schools as Cadre-1, 9 schools as Cadre-2, and remaining 12 schools as Cadre-3, for first, second, and third year phase-ins respectively. The phase-in priority (cadre) was determined on the basis of a number of factors which included the current status of the schools in the turnaround process that is underway.

The plan presented in Appendix-4 includes program deliverables and key goals and activities to (for) students, schools and teachers. Three (3) key strategies guide the activities: (1) Connecting students to goals and a future vision, (2) Creating a safe and supportive environment, and (3) Delivering personalized instruction. Under each strategy, specific activities relevant to curriculum, instruction, leadership, community and parent partnerships, etc. are specified. It is worth noting that the plan's foundation a *Logical Model* (Appendix-5) that incorporates identified needs, philosophies, vision, theory of change, inputs and outcomes.

A pseudo timeline for the activities under each strategy is provided. The reviewer considers this timeline as a pseudo timeline because each of the four years of the project is presented as a time point and almost all activities of the first year is continued/repeated during the next three time points. Realistic time lines for achieving the goals and parties responsible for achieving the goals and performing the activities are not identified for the plan under this criterion. The reviewer also considers the plan presented in Appendix-4 has been made too complex to guide, implement, monitor, troubleshoot and evaluate. A simpler targeted plan would be more practical, efficient and result oriented. Based on these observations, the plan included by the LEA does not meet all the qualities of a *High-Quality Plan* as defined in Appendix-A of the NIA. The plan meets most of the required qualities.

**Thus, a low High-level score is assigned for this criterion.**

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA's application includes ambitious yet achievable annual goals for student outcomes in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and English proficiency, demonstrating that the applicant's vision has potential to result in improved student learning and performance, and increased equity.

The overall and sub-group targets set by the LEA are equal or better than the SEA targets. The targets are for student performance on the State's summative assessment, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment.

Note: The fifth grade reading performance target for ELLs for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16 are much lower than for the same in the previous years. If this is not a typographical error, it is major concern and specific rationale is needed.

**A middle High-level rating is given for this criterion.**

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The historic student performance data for the past three years, presented in Attachment-6, tend to indicate a mixed track record of results in advancing student learning and achievement and equity in learning.

In particular, performance data from 2011 State assessments were lower than those from 2010 and 2012. The district presented data/charts show that there is a mixed record of district-wide success in improving student performance and enhancing equity across subgroups. This is in spite of the fact that the district implemented (and continue to implement) school turnaround initiatives. The reviewer acknowledges that some of the initiatives for improving student learning

outcomes and achieving ambitious/significant reforms in low-achieving /low-performing schools were put in place only during the 2011-12 school year. As mentioned in the application, it takes a couple of years to see the impact of these reform measures on student performance.

It is worth noting that the new leadership of the LEA is aggressive in putting in place a wide variety of reform measures designed to improve student, staff and school performance.

**Consequently, an upper Mid-level score is assigned for this criterion.**

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal does not include reasonably sufficient demonstrated evidence to indicate a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments.

A description of the extent to which LEA already makes available this information is included in this section of the application. A URL for a Website where LEA level budgetary and expenditure information can be accessed is included. Since outside sources such as the URLs are not considered part of the application, the statements are not verifiable.

LEA acknowledges that school level information is not shared with stakeholders through. There is no indication as to whether the LEA plans to share this information in the future.

**A low-mid score is assigned for this sub-criterion. The partial credit is given due to the common knowledge that States, especially RTT-S require some level of transparency from its school districts.**

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Successful conditions and sufficient autonomy, under State, legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to consider flexible work schedules for professional development and providing extended learning opportunities, of course with additional compensation funded through the grant. Other than this, there is no or limited flexibility and autonomy within the State context.

Schools that receive *Innovation School* designation will have a broader flexibility and autonomy with regard to budgets, decision making, and personnel decision. The applicant is seeking such a designation for three of its schools.

**A lower Mid-level score is assigned.**

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

There is minimal demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal. There is evidence of meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal, as demonstrated by letters of support and feedback from multiple sources, including the required State and City officials.

A district level leadership team developed the proposal, which was presented as a draft to a representative group of building and other district level administrators. The process did not involve other stakeholder groups. There is no evidence to suggest that support from individual school staff and leadership was garnered. Nowhere is it made clear as to whether the applicant is a collective bargains district or not.

The letter of support from the State RTT-S director, written on October 26, 2012, included a number of constructive recommendations, which may not have been incorporated, possibly due to lack of sufficient time for a revision of the proposal.

**Thus an upper Low- level score is assigned.**

<b>(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has not demonstrated evidence of a *High-quality plan* (as defined in the NIA) for an analysis of the applicant’s current status in implementing personalized learning environments. The applicant has demonstrated evidence of the logic behind the reform proposal, including the identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

In response to selection criterion (B)(5), the applicant has identified a number of gaps grouped into the categories of individualized goals, expectations, and learning. A general observation of the reviewer is that, these gaps pertain to systemic gaps and seem to have distant relevance to gaps between desirable/ideal and current status of implementing *personalized learning environments*. A similar observation was made by the State RTT-S Director in the letter of support/comments (included in Attachment-1).

**Thus a high Low-level score is assigned for this sub-criterion.**

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has presented *High-quality plan*, for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment, only to a limited extent. Further, the plan presented in response to criterion (C)(1) does not include an approach to implementing instructional strategies that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college and career ready graduation requirements, and accelerate the student’s learning through support of that individual’s needs.

LEA has presented three groups of deliverables and actions aimed at improving personalized instruction. These activities collectively have the potential to improve delivery of instruction. But, they do not necessarily:

- Engage and empower all learners, in particular *high-need students* in an age-appropriate manner and with the support of parents and educators, including all the characteristics (i through v) listed as part of the criterion (C)(1) (a);
- Ensure that each student has access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development, instructional approaches and environments, high-quality content, ongoing and regular feedback that are frequently updated with personalized learning recommendations, and accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students;
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources.

**A lower Mid-level score is assigned because of lack of high-quality in a number of aspects of the plan.**

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Applicant has provided detailed description of activities designed to deliver personalized instruction with building level and district level leadership – *teaching and leading*. These activities are expected to help educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress. Thus, the district proposed activities contribute to possible full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students.

Included professional development activities, training for leadership teams and supportive leadership actions will ensure that all participating educators engage in training and in professional teams or communities which in turn can enable them to:

- Effectively implement personalized learning environments and strategies;
- Adapt content and instruction;
- Frequently measure student progress;
- Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness using feedback;
- Use of information from teacher and principal evaluation systems;
- Assess and act on the basis of collective educator effectiveness and school culture; and
- Implement training systems and practices for increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

There are three major weaknesses in LEA's response to the criterion (C)(2):

- LEA recognizes that one of its capacity gap is relevant to the requirements under criterion (C)(2)(b) namely, all participating educators have access to use tools, data and resources necessary to accelerate student progress. These resources tend to include actionable information, high quality learning resources, and processes and tools to match student needs. Yet, there is no clear cut definitive action plan to address the capacity gap.
- LEA has identified *personalized instruction* as an overarching theme of the efforts to improve teaching and learning, but has not demonstrated or acknowledged that they need to create *personalized learning environment*.
- Applicant has not provided a clear-cut and thought out high-quality plan that addresses all elements of criterion C (2). Applicant has not articulated a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly-effective teachers and principals, including those required for the high need areas.

**Thus a low Mid-level score is assigned for this cub-criterion.**

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Currently, the practices, policies and rules do not provide for flexibility and autonomy needed for designing programs that foster personalized learning environments.

LEA has provided a general description of the roles of entities within the organization including, the Board of Education, the Division of Learning Services, Finance Department, and Pueblo Education Association. These organizational entities provide support within the context of existing practices, policies and rules. They are structured in such a way that the central office provides support and services to all participating schools. But, they lack the power, flexibility and autonomy to control factors such as schedules, calendars, staffing models, etc. They do not have authority to grant credits based on demonstrated mastery and there are limited opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and multiple comparable ways. The district seems to have limited autonomy and flexibility to provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. Grant funded support service positions will contribute to having /creating some instructional flexibility.

The applicant is in the process of working with the Colorado State Department of Education for obtaining *Innovation school status* for three middle schools, which are currently identified as *Turn-around Schools*. Innovation school designation will permit great flexibility and autonomy for the schools to be released from contract clauses, and allow schools to make needed changes in expenditures, schedules, extended learning opportunities, etc.

**Because of the district’s initiative in seeking flexibility through *Innovation school status*, a low Mid-level score is assigned, instead of a Low-level score.**

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA has provided a general description of the technological capabilities (and lack of it) which are used for within school/district technological applications necessary for data/information management and support. The current level of technological infrastructure provides school and LEA staff with necessary technical (technological) support. Limited skills of users limit effective use of available resources. Applicant has identified technological service gaps in terms of the age of equipment and lack of dedicated technological support personnel.

However, LEA’s description does not includes current availability or plans for ensuring availability of technological support for all stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school. There is no assurance that information technology will use interoperable and open data systems which will permit ease of resource and data use by stakeholders (parents and students in and out of school).

LEA’s district and school infrastructure provides limited support for personalized learning to all of its stakeholders.

**Thus a upper Low-level score is assigned.**

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

LEA has addressed this criterion from the perspective of required summative (annual or quarterly) evaluation of its academic and support programs. Procedures and processes in place for both systemic and targeted improvement of school and district functioning are described. An external evaluation service provider will provide summative evaluation services.

A high-quality plan, including appropriate process and procedures, for a continuous improvement process within the context of an individualized learning environment, with timely and regular feedback on progress and associated improvement of the project is not provided. A timely feedback for continuous improvement does not solely depend on annual and quarterly observations alone. For example, LEA has identified that one of the major gaps in continuous monitoring and feedback has been with the lack fo full understanding and skills in the use of Galeleo system. Specific, actionable plans for an ongoing/continuos progress monitoring of the effectiveness of training, professional development, coaching, etc. oneffective use of the Galileo system be in place early on at the start of the project. Yet, there is no definite plan for continuous progress monitoring of needed major systemic improvements expected to be derived from RTT-D undertakings. The applicant chose to describe the mechanisms such as Building Leadership Teams, evaluation of fidelity of implementation by an external evaluator, etc. for continuous improvements. But, failed to identify top priority undertakings and determining the course of action for continuously monitoring effects, successes and failures, and means of enhancing the effectiveness.

**Thus, a low Mid-level score is assigned.**

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Ideas relevant to monitoring, measuring and publicly sharing information on the quality of the LEA’s project-funded investment along with outline of strategies for ongoing communication and engagement are provided in response to this criterion. Channels and avenues for communication with internal and external stakeholders exist, and district intends to use these for ongoing communications and engagement.

Details or plans for implementing communication with all stakeholders, specifically referencing to RTT-D project activities, timelines and outcomes, are not presented.

**Thus, a mid Mid-level score is assigned.**

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Ambitious and achievable performance measures with annual targets are specified for qualified and highly qualified instructional and administrative staff.

Ambitious and achievable performance targets are set for student outcomes.

State required growth targets are presented as rationale for selecting the specific performance measures and targets. The capacity of the selected performance measures to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information is not evident. Because the selected performance measures are annual measures, their capacity to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information seems to be limited. However, the benchmark assessment system being used by the district has the capacity to provide more frequent performance data.

Also, no plan is provided to review and refine the performance measures themselves when found to be ineffective, in an ongoing manner. A plan or process for reviewing and improving these instruments is not included. Issues like performance measures appropriate for high need students, including language/accessibility supports are not addressed. The primary reason contributing to this condition is that most of the instruments and measures planned to be used are prescribed by the State, and LEA has adopted only a limited set of additional locally applicable measures. The benchmarking assessment is an example of such an instrument.

A number of data elements, especially numbers and percentage are not provided in the NIA provided tables. Considering the fact that the applicant plans to phase-in more schools during the second and third year, an appropriate tabular data would have been beneficial not only for the reviewer, but for project monitoring by the LEA.

**Thus a Mid-level score is assigned for this criterion.**

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

A plan of moderate quality to evaluate the effectiveness of significant RTT-D funded activities is presented in the (E) (2) section of the application. A structured plan that includes all the elements of a high quality plan is NOT provided. While performance target percentage are given, no indication as to what will be baseline numbers of *participating students, teachers*, etc. for each of the three first years are not given. Even if exact numbers are not available, inclusion of estimates based on current data would have been of use. Such an estimate is essential because the applicant plans to almost double the number of participating students in the second year and multi-fold during the third year. There is no plan for differentiating the return on investments for the first post grant year for students who benefitted from RTT-D for four

years, three years and two years, controlling for the baseline performance. (These are just examples.) Specific timelines and analytical framework/methodologies for cost-benefit analyses are indicated.

The plan includes evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development, technology, productivity, school leadership teams, and partnerships. Multiple methods will be used as data collection strategies/methods.

Additionally, performance targets for certain project goals are presented in section (E) (4).

**Thus an upper Mid-level score is assigned for this criterion.**

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

In the *Overall Budget Summary* and associated narrative the applicant has:

- a. Identified all funds that will support the development and implementation of the applicant’s proposal;
- b. Provided a limited description of all other the funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal,
- c. Did NOT identify funds that are one time investments versus those that will be used for operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period with a focus on long term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

There are some observations on the sufficiency/reasonableness of the budget from the overall budget summary:

- 1. It is prudent that travel line is kept to the minimum.
- 2. Although the plan is to phase-in 15 additional schools during the third year, the budget allocation for the third year has been reduced by about 10 percent from the allocation for the second year. This raises the question of adequacy of the budget or reasonableness of the first and second year budgets. This is not a comment of negative nature, but a question is raised so that LEA may review the budget in light of the comment. If there is a rationale for the requested level of budget, it is not clearly spelled out.
- 3. A substantial amount (20%) of funds from other sources is committed and details regarding other sources of funding are provided elsewhere in the budget section (see comments on project level budgets).

A note on the way the budget details are organized: Initially, the district made the assertion that the total RTT-D project is one project and hence did not complete the project level budget summary forms. Later in the proposal, the applicant chose to present an exact copy of the overall budget summary form as project level budget summary form. Additionally, the applicant provided project level budgets for five sub-groups of allocations, without specifically identifying them as projects. The project level budget and narrative includes some information on the budget details from which the reasonableness and sufficiency of the budget was assessed. One positive aspect of this second set of budget details is that the applicant included details of other sources of fund that will contribute to the fiscal resource pool for the RTT-D project, and thus

A review of the project level budget summaries and associated budget narratives lend to conclude that the project budgets are reasonable and sufficient.

**Based on these observations, an upper Mid-level score is assigned for this criterion.**

[Note: Four or five contractors have been identified for different projects. There is a need to examine the contracting/procurement practices of the LEA with using sole source contracting, specific reference to RTT-D funds.]

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>One-time and ongoing expenses are NOT identified in the overall budget summary. LEA has not given due consideration for the issue of long-term sustainability of project practices and successes.</p> <p>A high-quality plan that includes financial support from local and State government leaders as well as the suggested three year plan for the post grant period is not provided.</p> <p><b>Based on these observations, a low Low-level score is assigned for this criterion.</b></p>		

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant proposes build on the work done under the Safe Schools/ Healthy Schools (SS/HS) program during the past four years. During the period of 2009 – 2012, the applicant implemented the Federally funded SS/HS program in the district. The program was a grand success, accomplished as a result of formal partnerships with a number of community agencies. These partnerships addressed social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, including a focus bullying reduction initiative. Details of the project and its past accomplishment (evaluation) are provided as attachments.</p> <p>The partnerships included in the LEA’s plan are coherent and sustainable and are aimed at supporting the plan described in response to <i>Absolute Priority 1</i>. Since the Federal funding for the project ended and local resources are extremely limited, the applicant is seeking funding for the continuation of the partnership and project services through RTT-D funds. The applicant has presented eight population level desired results that align with and support the applicant’s broader RTT-D application.</p> <p>The applicant provides a detailed description of how these partnerships will track the selected indicators (services), target the resources, and improve the results. Scaling is not an issue in this project because all schools and all students are involved in the project. The applicant provides some details regarding how the partnership will integrate educational and other services, and how the partnership will contribute to building capacity of the school staff. Relevant, ambitious and achievable performance measures for various age/grade groups are specified.</p> <p>Over all, LEA has provided a reasonable description of the partnerships, benefits, outcomes and performance targets. The maximum possible 10 points are not given due to the absence of some elements required of a high-quality plan.</p> <p><b>An upper High-level score is assigned for this criterion.</b></p>		

**Absolute Priority 1**

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>	<b>Met/Not Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
<p><b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b></p>		

The applicant has consistently, and purposefully, used the concept of *personalized instruction* throughout the application. Applicant has avoided/excluded mention or recognition of the concept of *personalized learning environments*.

The proposed plan for the project addresses

- college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements to a limited extent ;
- accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student to a limited extent;
- increase the effectiveness of educators through professional development and building leadership teams;
- expand student access to the most effective educators to a limited extent;
- decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and
- increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers to a limited extent

The limited attention given to addressing the above key goals, through personalized learning environments, may be because of the limited flexibility and autonomy available in the district.

Additionally, the four core assurance areas have not been addressed coherently and comprehensively.

**As a result, the applicant has not met the *Absolute Priority 1* criterion.**

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>102</b>
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## Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0298CO-3 for Pueblo City School District 60

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant articulates a clear and credible approach in their reform vision. Examples of credibility are tied to key decisions made by the school district during recent years such as: hiring new Superintendent, established partnership with NISL, received SIG/TIG funds, and an increase in the number of certified school administrators and teachers. The applicant's approach to accelerating student achievement is supported by data in Appendix 6 in all four core subject areas. The district's ability to show gains on 17 of 27 state assessments compared to only 8 the previous year is convincing. There were many individual school percentage increases in the double digits.

The Pueblo-Ready for the Future reform initiative's three layers demonstrate the applicant's understanding and plan to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning. The applicant's plan to reward effective teachers who choose to work in the district's lowest performing schools demonstrates their ability to increase equity.

The applicant did not detail how personalized student support would occur, but all other areas were addressed through the data and institutional change that has already been demonstrated.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides required details regarding the three cadres - list of schools and demographic information for students. The rationale for the schools within each cadre is detailed and supports the applicant's approach to reform that is already underway. Implementation strategies and performance measures are clearly identified and the performance measures are ambitious, but based on the success thus far, they are also achievable.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provided a high-quality plan including a timeline and strategies in section A2. Efforts detailing scaling up for district-wide change was provided and included rationale. This was based on the district's current reform efforts and included lessons learned thus far, these lessons will be built upon where successful and addressed where unsuccessful. The applicant provided four underdeveloped areas of their current reform efforts, these are addressed in the RtT-D proposal and demonstrate the applicant's commitment to successful reform. Several strategies were described regarding teacher/school reform, however, the applicant did not directly connect this to improved student learning.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Based on performance on summative assessments thus far and the applicant's proposed continued reform efforts, the applicant is likely to achieve goals provided. All goals provided were equal to or exceeded the State's ESEA targets. The overall goal of increasing middle school reading performance by 38% within four years is ambitious, but given the current reform efforts underway, possible. The goal for middle school math (100% growth over four years) is not achievable. The graduation rate goal of 82% for all students is achievable and surpasses the state's expectations.</p> <p>The percentage gains on all charts, for all subgroups, and all measures are reasonable and therefore attainable.</p> <p>The achievement gap does not decrease in all suggested goals. For example: third grade reading from the baseline year to 2016-2017 for Hispanic and white students maintains the same achievement gap (15 percentage points). And the percentage increases are only 5-6 percentage points. A higher expectation for closing and even eliminating the achievement gap in this example would be ambitious and achievable.</p> <p>However, there are some examples of the achievement gap closing, such as 4th grade math assessments. For example: Hispanic and white students have an eighteen point discrepancy in the baseline year, but this gap is expected to close fifteen points during the grant administration. But this is not the case in the next year, fifth grade math for the same two subgroups begins with a seventeen percentage point gap and ends with a fifteen percentage point gap. The discrepancies between the closing and non-closing of achievement gaps is not detailed for further explanation.</p> <p>Overall the applicant provides details and goals that are likely to result in improved student learning. The two areas that are not as significant for promoting reform as defined in the application are: 1. the unexplained achievement gap differences proposed for the end of the grant and 2. some of the percentage gains are not ambitious (example: graduation rates).</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant details a clear record of success in advancing student learning (examples: professional development, grade-to-grade vertical alignments, decrease in bullying rates at all three grade levels). Equity in teaching is evident in the</p>		

SIG/TIG Turnaround/Transformation initiative, the district's investment in teacher and principal professional growth, professional learning communities, completion of NISL training, and Middle School Realignment Group efforts currently underway. Data regarding student achievement supports that the strategies put in place by the district are having a positive effect on student learning and growth. There is no evidence to support these strategies have yet to impact graduation rates, however, the applicant has predicted such in the data chart provided.

The applicant has proven ambitious and significant reforms in it persistently lowest-achieving elementary schools.

The applicant does not provide information for making data available to students and parents. This is a significant part of the criterion which is not addressed.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant does not provide actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff or teachers. The only criteria demonstrated within this component is actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level, although this information is not viewable by the public in the provided format. The current format included investment reports and monthly check registers by school.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant recognizes the changes necessary to successfully implement a personalized learning environment, Pueblo-Ready for the Future. The applicant has requested Innovation School status which will allow the district the autonomy needed to implement the proposed project. However, this request is not assured for the district and only involved three schools.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant provided evidence of collaboration and meaningful engagement of various school personnel, the Board of Education, and the local and state government. In addition a district accountability team consisting of employees, parents, and business owners also reviewed the proposed project. The applicant does not state or provide evidence that students were included. The number of parents and staff is not detailed.  
  
 Letters of support were provide as well as the signature of the teacher representative.  
  
 Overall this was a high response, but the absence of student input is concerning. Also teacher input by cadre or the lowest performing schools is not included which would strengthen the proposal.

<b>(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant presents a well-documented case for the proposed project. Due to expedited diagnostic reviews by the state board of education, the applicant has an extensive list of needs and gaps to be addressed by the project. The needs provide a rationale for the reform proposal.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		

The applicant describes a high-quality plan for improving learning by engaging and empowering all learners and providing the schools with the resources necessary to do so. Deliverables for schools and students are provided. Providing students with a choice at the middle school level will better promote a student's understanding of what he/she is learning and its importance. College and career readiness skills are promoted through the used of AVID at the high schools and college prep nights as part of the Parent Academy.

The use of middle school choice will also enable teachers to provide deep learning experiences to all students. The incorporation of partners at all Cadre 1 schools will also deepen individual tudent learning and provide access and exposure to diverse perspectives that also support college and career readiness.

By adding goal setting at the elementary level (ICAP), the district will promote a personalized sequence of instructional content in the primary years and further strengthen the mastery of critical content and development of goal-setting skills as students progress through their academic career.

The Parent Academy will provide additional support to the parents. The academy will be promoted in a variety of methods, which supports the applicant's proposal to engage all learners.

High-quality instructional approaches and environments are appropriate as described -- problem-based learning, extended learning opportunities such as afterschool programs and summer camps, student learning communities, and the middle school choice model.

Use of the Parent Portal will support ongoing and regular feedback to students and parents. Academic data and ICAP data wll assist teachers in determing each student's progress towards mastery of college and career readiness skills.

Several strategies are detailed to provide training and support to students including: elementary counselors' roles in the development of ICAP, peer mentoring, and Link Crew mentoring for ninth grade students.

Overall this is a high-quality response with specific actions and measurable outcomes. The only criteria not specifically addressed was accomodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's approach to improving learning and teaching through teachers and principals is focused on all educators engaging in aproprate levels of training and professional development. For example, the Teacher Academy has three levels for teachers and the LEAP program provides leadership opportunities for teachers aspiring to become an administrator in the near future.

The addition of a School Leadership Coach will support the effective implementation of personalied learning environments. This position will work with principals at all schools to provide training and expertise in conducting class walkthroughs, evaluating teachers, organizing PLCs, and differentiating instruction.

Actionable information to help educators adapt content and instruction to create optimal learning aproaches will be supported through the continued development of vertical curriculum alignment through Learning Progressive and horizontal curriculum alignment through Instructional Sequence Guides. Understanding by Design will be the district protocol for unit development, this protocol will incorporate rigor into lessons.

The applicant states district staff struggle with data interpretation. This challenge will be addresses by in-depth, ongoing professional development and coaching throughout the grant period.

Response to Intervention, along with previously mentioned strategies, supports efforts to close achievement gaps, particulary for students with disabilities or in need of behavioral support.

The applicant proposes to provide support based on the needs of each grade level as well. For example, Responsive Classroom is a research-based approach to elementary education that supports the applicant's focus on increased academic achievement due to decreased behavior porblems and improved social skills. Also, a committee will design afterschool and summer opportunities for students who need these most.

The applicant proposes to increase the number of students instructed by highly effective teachers in the lowest performing schools by offering pay differentials. The Teacher Academy will also aide in increasing the number of effective and highly effective teachers throughout the district. The applicant also proposes to continue a teacher cadet program to provide "home-grown" teachers in future years.

Information regarding the applicant's current or proposed teacher evaluation and principal evaluation systems was not provided.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides sufficient details regarding components "a" and "b" of criteria D1. However, the applicant does not address components "c," "d," or "e." The applicant states curent discussions to obtain Innovation School status for three middle schools, however, that has not been obtained and the only student-/instructional-based outcome listed is "schedules."</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district's infrastructure supports personalized learning during the school day through a variety of supports for students and teachers including: technical support to all stakeholders through an in-school model, teachers are also designated to provide technical support to peer teachers in the use of technology, each school has a media specialist, and their is a help desk.</p> <p>The applicant states technical support is also available to parents, district partners, and community members, but the strategies in place were not provided.</p> <p>The applicant did not provide sufficient details to ensure all participating students, parents, and educators, regardless of income, will have access to the necessary content. The only possible reference to this was in regards to the district having Title I schools which connect school and home. No additional support system was mentioned for the other 35% of elementary schools and 17% of middle schools. In a previous section the applicant stated Internet access would be available throughout the community, but no details regarding the help desk during non-school hours has been detailed.</p> <p>The applicant listed several types of technology used by the district to collect and disseminate data and again mentioned the need for a new server and data storage system which is included in the proposal. The applicant also previously mentioned students and parents could access data through Parent Portal.</p>		

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Overall the applicant's response to this criterion is sufficient which is why it received a high rating. The applicant detailed several strategies already in place across the district for implementing a continuous improvement process that provide timely feedback as the result of a variety off quantitative and qualitative data. With regards to the proposed project, Pueblo -Ready for the Future, the applicant proposes to use an external evaluator, The University of Colorado - Denver's Evaluation Center. The center worked with the district on a previous evaluation with positive results.</p>		

The score is not the full 15 points because the data being collected should be done so more than quarterly.

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides strategies currently in place to facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders including -- weekly PLC meetings, strategies within School Improvement Plans, weekly principal meetings, School Accountability and District Accountability committees consisting of parents, community members, and staff, and the Board of Education meets twice a month. The majority of these strategies involve internal input, not external.

Based on the applicant's response it appears that most engagement takes place internally and the communication efforts are internal and external. The lack of external communication is problematic because students are only in the classroom 20% of any given week. "Teachers" for students are not just school district employees, they are also members of the community and most importantly, parents. Meaningful family/community engagement strategies are necessary for any successful RtT-D program.

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides achievable performance measures in the areas specified in the application. In chart E3A, the applicant states the number of highly effective teachers will decrease at all grade levels during the first three years of the grant. This is not explained in the narrative. The same is true for chart E3B which also details a unexplained decline in the number of effective teachers for the first three years of the grant.

Measure E3C is achievable in all stated performance measures, however, only ambitious in the higher grade levels.

The chart provided details significant percentage gains between the baseline year and 2013-2013 in writing (27%) and math (16%). The narrative does not provide an explanation for the projected double-digit gains.

Attendance was also provided as a performance measure with minimal projected year-to-year gains (1 percent or less). Based on the strategy previously mentioned regarding attendance currently being analyzed daily and the success of this, the minimal gains are not considered ambitious.

The projected achievement gap closures noted support one of the four core educational assurance areas stated in the proposal.

The rationale for all selected measures was provided and supports to proposed project.

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

**5**

**5**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

Plans to evaluate the effectiveness of RtT-D funded activities have been adequately described and planned by the applicant due to the fact that the applicant has three primary mechanisms in place for examining the return on investment: summative growth data, school improvement plans, and cost/benefit data collected will include benchmarks in performance measures, educator qualification and effectiveness, state accountability measures, and English language development and attainment, and most importantly the primary gage of success is student success.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		

The applicant provides a detailed and thorough budget including requested funds and funds from other sources. All elements support the applicant's narrative and performance measures. The one concern is the amount of funding designated for new personnel, the personnel and fringe benefits amounts are over half of the budget. Several of the positions' salaries could be reduced and the applicant did not state any anticipated concerns regarding filling the new positions. For example: the parent/community liaison's annual salary is \$85,000. The proposed administrative assistant's salary is \$45,000. The instructional coaches are \$60,000 each per year (not designated as 10 or 12 month position).

Creating new positions with above average salaries, as compared to other district employees, presents an opportunity to create disparity amongst employees that could result in barriers to the success of the proposed project. The applicant justifies the salaries and professional development requested amounts and does present a rationale for doing so within the narrative.

The fringe benefits are calculated at 30% which is a high estimate.

Funding is designated for cadre 1 schools as well as technology and needed supplies to support the middle school themes, though ideas of how each middle school will use the \$150,000 is not detailed.

The new server and data storage system are included within the budget and support previous gaps and needs assessments.

Funds to create community Internet hubs are included over the four years at \$1.25 million. Previously the applicant mentioned the community Internet hubs were an in-kind community partnership, but the budget states the opposite.

The field trip estimate of \$10 per student is not reasonable to offer a high-quality experience and also take into account fluctuating, high fuel costs.

The applicant states they will contract with Spanish Peaks Mental Health to provide a licensed mental health worker at four clinic sites at a cost of \$55,000 per year. A rationale for this partnership was not detailed in the narrative.

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

**10**

**5**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Over half of the applicant's budget covers personnel and professional development costs. The rationale for this is included within the narrative and is also supported by the data and performance measures provided. Significant evaluation efforts are already in place and more will be added if the applicant is awarded funds which will support the district's reform model and therefore will be more likely to promote change sooner at the teacher and leadership levels. With the cadre approach, there are concerns that the needed change may not occur prior to the conclusion of the grant. Also, there are no plans included for the post-grant period.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant describes an already formed partnership based on a 2008 USDOE Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant. The partnership and results were successful and resulted in "One Community-Pueblo" which is currently studying the feasibility of establishing the initiative as a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

The proposed initiative establishes eight population-level desired results for students that are educational and social/mental/health. The stated performance measures and annual targets are achievable and will support the four core areas of the RttT-D proposal.

Based on current results of the four year initiative, it is actually ready to scale-up now throughout the district, and if funded then beyond to other districts. The group assessed and identified the needs of participating students, created and

implemented a decision-making process, and now proposes to expand the initiative to all students in the district. An assessment model is in place.

The additional positions for mental health workers (four, full-time) were included in the budget, however, their need/impact wasn't detailed until this narrative for the competitive preference priority.

Overall this is a high-quality plan.

**Absolute Priority 1**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>	<b>Met/Not Met</b>	<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant, Pueblo Schools, meets absolute priority one. Overall the applicant provided a high-quality plan to improve learning and teaching through significant district-wide reformation and professional development for all teachers. The rationale is clearly explained and personalization strategies will be encouraged through the data storage system described. Performance measures detailed by the applicant support the applicant's understanding of district-wide reform, effectiveness of principals and teachers, and the ability to decrease achievement gaps based on previous results.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>156</b>
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