



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0256WI-1 for Racine Unified School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sets forth examples of how it has previously and is currently focused on aspects of the four assurances, namely:

1. Mention of adopting *college- and career-ready standards and assessments* - without sufficient detail on the process of creating and implementing these, nor detail on their content to demonstrate their rigor;
2. A lengthy list of their *data systems*, including Skyward, SchoolNet, and WiseDash, all of which appear to be software programs for a student information system, as well as both local and state instructional management systems;
3. *Teachers and leaders* participating in a district wide school improvement council - however, the applicant fails to address how this council is related, if at all, to recruiting, retaining, and equitably distributing effective teachers and leaders; and
4. Mention of *turning around lowest-achieving schools*, which the three proposed target schools for this grant are - yet the proposal lacks an overview of *how* school turnarounds are taking or will take place.

While the applicant could make the argument that it aims to increase educational equity in this proposal through targeting three of the lowest-performing, severely economically disadvantaged, and predominantly minority schools, it does not explicitly make this case. Nor does the applicant explain what, exactly, is its vision for these schools - and instead gives an overview of what has been and what is across the district, not *what could be* in these schools as a result of this grant.

The "North Star" district improvement plan (DIP) referenced in this section and included as Appendix 1 is indeed comprehensive, clear, and credible, but it is outdated and reflects prior work. The DIP and this proposal both put forth the overarching goal of preparing students to be college- and/or career-ready upon high school graduation, but that goal has been in place since at least 2010 and the applicant does not provide a clear, updated vision of how that goal would be achieved in the target schools.

The applicant provides some evidence of past work but fails to present a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. This section of its proposal, therefore, is scored in the low end of the middle points range of scoring possibilities.

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

(a) The applicant details a reasonable and well-informed process for how it selected the target schools for this proposal, using the district wide school improvement council to examine and analyze data to inform their decision. The applicant asserts that the selected target schools are:

- Historically underperforming, with recent improvements in student outcomes;
- In a "feeder" continuum, from elementary through high school; and

- In the most economically disadvantaged neighborhood, Inner City Racine, with residents struggling with high unemployment and low educational attainment rates (e.g.: only 5% of adults in the neighborhood have a BA, and 62% have a high school diploma).

(b) The applicant clearly identifies the grant-targeted schools and their respective student enrollment numbers.

(c) In addition to student enrollment numbers across the three schools, the applicant provides specific numbers of participating students who are from low-income families, students who are high need, and educators in each school.

The applicant presents two contradictory tables in which it details this data: one in the body of the narrative, and another at the end of Section A. The second table is more detailed, and helpfully also includes the percentages of high need and economically disadvantaged students, as well as a total numeric and percentage overview of students to be served through this grant. However, the first table states that the number of participating students in Horlick High School would be 2,076 (i.e., the total student body), whereas the second table clearly states that this proposal would only serve 4.8% of the Horlick High School student body, or 100 total high school students. This second table indicates that the overall number of participating students would be 1,357 - which falls below the threshold minimum of 2,000 students required for this grant, despite the LEA providing assurance that it will serve between 2,000 and 5,000 participating students. This contradiction is troubling, and may be grounds for disqualifying this proposal.

Overall, the applicant presents a moderately substantiated approach to supporting high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of that proposal, and therefore scores in the middle range of points possible for this section.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application lacks a detailed, high-quality plan for scaling up its reform proposal, Project RISE. RUSD does describe a continuous improvement process for the proposal, and its theory of bringing its work to scale across the LEA seems to rest on the assumptions that a) the targeted schools will demonstrate improvements, and b) other schools in the district will therefore want to adopt the model reform. The applicant states that it anticipates six new schools implementing Project RISE by the end of the grant period (i.e., in five years) - while that would be a 200% increase in the number of participating schools, a total of nine schools is far from district-wide change, as the district has 34 schools.

RUSD puts forth a theory of change that essentially reads that *if* they integrate new software and technologies into teaching and learning, *then* they will *set the stage* for creating personalized learning environments. This theory stops short of describing achievement in improving student outcomes - merely setting the stage for improvement through personalization is necessary, but far from sufficient of meeting the intention and purpose of an RTT-D grant.

Therefore, since the applicant lacks a detailed, high-quality plan for supporting and scaling reform, but does provide some modest targets for doing so, it scores in the middle range of possible scores for this section.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant puts forth annual goals for student improvement as measured by state tests by subgroup that ultimately equal the state ESEA targets, these goals are neither ambitious nor are they convincingly achievable - and the applicant fails to directly link its vision to the outcomes it anticipates through this proposal.

(a) The applicant describes the target schools as predominantly serving African American students, yet *across all tested grades and subjects (elementary through high schools in reading and math), the percentage of black students scoring proficient or advanced ranges between 0% and 10.3%*. These low levels of achievement are alarming. That said, the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI) set the goal that all subgroups achieve 50% proficiency in reading and 65% proficiency in math by the end of this proposed grant period (2016-2017). These DPI goals still leave *half* of all students below proficient, thereby not adequately preparing them for success in college, career, or life. Nonetheless, the gap between *NO* proficient students and *half* proficient students is significant, and may be overly ambitious for the LEA to achieve in a short period of time.

(b) ED defines the achievement gap as the difference between each subgroup within an LEA and that LEA's highest-performing subgroup (which, in this case, would be the difference in achievement between RUSD's black students and its white students) or the difference between each subgroup within an LEA and the SEA's highest-performing subgroup (which would likely be a comparison of achievement between RUSD's black students and Wisconsin's white students). Instead of comparing across these dimensions, the applicant appears to compare its subgroups to the state's same subgroups, i.e.: the achievement gap between RUSD's black students and Wisconsin's black students. While there is indeed an achievement gap across this dimension that should be closed, it is likely far less than the achievement gap as defined. Furthermore, while the projected improvements in performance across subgroups would close the achievement gap as defined, it would do so by requiring less of the higher-performing subgroups, and asking more of the lower-performing subgroups - so that expectations could be both lowered for some and unrealistic in the given timeframe for others.

(c) RUSD states that the average graduation rate for the district is 73.2%, and for the targeted high school it is 66.4%. RUSD aspires to increase the graduation rate of the targeted school to 76.4% by the end of the grant period. This ten percentage point increase is likely achievable, but could be more ambitious.

(d) The applicant aims to increase the college enrollment of its high school graduates from 55% to 67%. Again, this increase (twelve percentage points) is likely achievable, but lacks sufficient ambition to substantively improve the equity and outcomes for students.

(e) N/A

Given the above statements, the applicant's vision does not inspire certainty that it will improve student learning, performance, and increased equity. It therefore scores in the middle range of potential points available for this section.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

While it has some particular examples of improvement, the applicant fails to put forth a consistent record of coherent and successful district improvement.

(a) The applicant states that it is committed to ensuring that the "maximum feasible number of its learners reach their full academic potential" - which is an ambiguous statement that does not overtly include a commitment to *all students*. In some subject areas and grades, RUSD states significant improvement from 2008-2009 to 2011-2012 (e.g.: the percentage of all 10th graders proficient in writing increased from 12.1% to 40.5%, and the percentage of low SES students proficient in 8th grade writing rose from 5% to 40%), in many subject areas and grades, the improvement over this timeframe is moderate (e.g.: the percentage of all 6th graders proficient in reading increased from 72.5% to 72.8%), and in some subject areas and grades, improvement declined (e.g.: the percentage of African American students scoring proficient in 5th grade math decreased from 47.6% to 42.7%). The paragraph on ACT scores is confusing, insofar as it sometimes refers to scores in their numeric value, and sometimes inadvertently as a percentage. Nonetheless, the ACT test scores have largely decreased across subgroups from 2008-2009 to 2011-2012, as have the percentages of students completing CTE certificates.

(b)The applicant outlines its strategies for improving persistently lowest achieving schools, namely: technology deployment, school improvement plans, personalized learning environments, and parental involvement. RUSD goes into comprehensive detail on personalized learning environments, outlining their ambitious and transformative characteristics for schools. Oddly, the applicant repeats identical phrases and paragraphs consecutively in this section, in different formats (one in bullets, the other in body text), which, while the content is laudable, is confusing to the reader. Despite this detail, the applicant fails to demonstrate any improvement in turning around schools, lacking any data on its past track record for doing so, and instead focusing on its future intentions to do so through this proposal.

(c) The applicant states that it makes student data available to students, educators, and parents, and uses data in parent-teacher conferences and in school data teams to set goals and improve achievement to improve participation, instruction, and services. It does not, however, provide sufficient detail on how that improvement would take place as a result of data sharing.

Because of its inconsistent record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching, the applicant scores in the middle range of possible points for this section.

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

The applicant fulfills the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requirements to make all actual school-level expenditures transparent to the public. The following information is accessible through the DPI website, as well as through individual requests made to the district:

- (a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances;
- (b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only;
- (c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and
- (d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level (if available).

In providing the above data, the applicant fully meets the requirements for transparency, and therefore scores a full five points for this section.

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

The applicant fully meets this criteria, citing Section Chapter 120 of the Wisconsin Statutes, in which local school boards are given the authority to manage districts and and supervise schools. RUSD, in turn, has a governance policy that provides the Superintendent with the authority to manage the day-to-day operations of the district, subject to school board oversight, standards, and monitoring.

Therefore, the applicant's response is awarded the full points for this sub-criterion.

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

The applicant provides an appropriate overview of its stakeholder engagement process in the development and support of this proposal, and thereby demonstrates strong evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement.

- (a) The RUSD district wide school improvement committee (DWSIC), comprised of 40 people from across stakeholder groups, served as an advisory guiding coalition throughout the creation of this proposal. Stakeholders included students, families, teachers, principals, and many others. The conducted a needs and gaps analysis, participated in a visioning exercise, and regularly reviewed and discussed drafts of the proposal. The core grant task force included teachers and leaders from the proposed target schools, as part of a 20-person group.
 - (i) The Racine Education Association President was a member of the core grant task force, and her signature is on the proposal.
 - (ii) N/A
- (b) The applicant submitted ten letters of support from various individuals and organizations, including one from the Chief of Police that speaks to the challenges of the high crime rates in the neighborhood of the selected target schools, arguing that this proposal would complement the police department's community policing neighborhood stabilization strategy.

The applicant scores the full amount of points available for this section.

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

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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant conducted a needs and gaps analysis, using the "Tregoe Process of Decisionmaking" in a three-part process: situational appraisal, decision analysis process, and potential problem analysis. Each of these parts has clear sub- steps, and in the appendix the district has articulated related "Quality Objectives" and "Organizational Expectations and Indicators" that align with the overall process. This process, however, is districtwide, and broader than simply analyzing the status and needs in implementing personalized learning environments. RUSD distilled from the process a list of key existing strengths and key needs and gaps - which, while lengthy, is not categorized to indicate strategically planning for personalized learning.

The applicant again outlines the need for this initiative, based on the barriers and challenges in the target schools and their neighborhood, but does not put forth a coherent or evidence-based argument for connecting their needs, strengths, or gaps to their logic model for change.

Overall, the applicant does not have a detailed, *high-quality plan* to analyze its status and logic behind implementing this proposal, and scores in the middle range of possible points for this section.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a)

(i) The applicant outlines how, through this proposed initiative, students would set personal goals and track their progress towards them. The applicant inconsistently argues that these strategies will help students understand the connection between what they are learning and successfully accomplishing their goals. Strategies includes:

- A comprehensive baseline battery of assessments; the applicant lists seven assessments, but does not detail which grades/students will take which assessments and to what end;
- Creating "customized learning plans" (CLPs) in partnership with students, educators, counselors, and families - that include college- and career-readiness goals as young as in Kindergarten - and student progress is collectively reviewed each semester;
- Integrating technology into the classroom, though the applicant fails to substantiate how or why that would help students connect what they are learning to their goals, or how it would change student outcomes - it does not draw upon any research or exemplars here to substantiate the argument for technology; and
- Individualizing instructional practices through a variety of pedagogical strategies, which are centered on individualizing teaching and learning, as well as ongoing feedback to teachers.

(ii) The applicant has in place college- and career-readiness standards and graduation requirements and assures that, through this proposal, it will further scrutinize them to "ensure full articulation," an ambiguous statement or process. The applicant will rely on annual testing and students' CLPs to structure learning and measure progress to students' goals. If done well, CLPs could play a key role in this process - however, the applicant has not outlined how it will train and provide ongoing professional development to teachers and monitor and support their ability to consistently and successfully implement CLPs for all students.

(iii) The applicant states that students will be involved in deep learning in areas of academic interest, but does not provide specifics or examples of how that will take place. Instead, it asserts that the CLPs will ensure this, as well

as technology-enhanced lesson plans. While this may indeed prove to be an effective means of achieving personalized deep learning, it could use more detail to explain *how* it would achieve this.

(iv) The targeted schools for this proposal are predominantly minority, and the applicant expresses a multifaceted and complex understanding of the cultural, social, and historical barriers that students of African American and Hispanic heritage may face in motivation and engagement in school. While the applicant states that this proposal would use "culturally sensitive and specific approaches," it does not provide any detail as to what those approaches are. Also lacking is a strengths-based approach to the assets that the multicultural target schools bring to the proposal.

(v) The applicant says that this proposal would develop "skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving," simply repeating the criteria verbatim. It also adds the additional term "academic grit" to the list. There is no indication of how these skills would be developed and nurtured in students.

(b)

(i) RUSD's theory of action for personalizing instruction entirely relies on the assessment and CLP process for all students. It does not provide any specifics regarding the sequencing of content and skill development.

(ii) The applicant outlines a comprehensive variety of instructional approaches and environments, such as: customized lesson plans on iPads, Socratic method discussions, self-paced and self-directed learning, peer tutoring, individualized support, and project based learning.

(iii) The applicant does not provide detail on the content - digital or otherwise - that it would utilize in Project RISE, other than vaguely stating that it will be high-quality.

(iv.A) Through this proposed initiative, the applicant states that teachers will monitor and update CLPs on a daily basis, and tailor interventions accordingly. While ambitious, this may be unrealistic for teachers to do for all students every day, or to do well each day. The lack of information about supporting teachers in the CLP process does not engender confidence in this process.

(iv.B.) Again, the applicant states that the assessments and CLPs will direct the personalized learning recommendations.

(v) Most of the students to be served in this proposal qualify as "high need." While it lacks details on *how* it will make accommodations for these students' needs, and instead restates that the assessments and CLPs will ensure they are on track to meeting standards and graduating. This is a weak assumption to assert.

(c) The applicant aims to provide group and individualized instruction to students on the usage of iPads and other technologies to support their learning both in and out of school, including time management and other soft skills to help students self-regulate their learning. It does not, however, speak to how and when these trainings will take place, and what steps will be taken to differentiate student supports in this area.

While the applicant puts forth some elements of an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner, it does not provide enough detail about the CLP and assessment *implementation* process. It therefore scores in the middle range of points available for this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	11
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant states that all educators engaged in this proposed initiative will participate in at least 30 hours of pre-implementation training, followed by four hours of "refresher" training annually. While the pre-implementation training seems reasonable to get educators launched in a new method of teaching, only four hours every year thereafter seems inadequate to sustain and continually improve such a change in instruction. The training element would be strengthened if it were ongoing and embedded into the school year.

(i) RUSD aims to support personalized learning environments through professional development centered on the usage of technology and on the assessments and CLPs that are the backbone of the applicant's proposal. The argument appears to be a bit of a tautology, i.e.: we will support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments through supporting the effective implementation of personalized learning environments.

(ii) The applicant assures that it will adapt content and instruction, but does not provide any detail about *how* it will do so through the usage of CLPs, beyond restating the criteria.

(iii) The applicant states in this section that it will measure student progress through tracking data in students' CLPs at least twice per quarter. Previously in this proposal, the applicant stated that CLPs would be tracked daily, and that CLPs would be reviewed once a semester. The cycle times for measuring progress could be better clarified and more consistent across the proposal. Additionally, the applicant fails to explain how CLPs will reflect on the progress and improvement of instruction by educators - the CLPs are designed to track *student* progress, not *teacher* progress.

(iv) The applicant describes its *Educator Effectiveness Model* evaluation, 50% of which is based on student achievement outcomes (30% of which is from state assessments, 30% from district assessments, 30% from student performance outcomes, 5% from district improvement strategies, and 5% from school wide data), and the other 50% from an assessment based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework. RUSD uses three categories of performance, and if a teacher lingers in the "developing" category "over a time period" then they are subject to performance improvement plans and potential removal. While the applicant states that educators will receive feedback, they do not state how often, from whom, and in what form. The applicant does not describe the leader/principal evaluation process.

(b) The applicant states that all participating educators will have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Educators will also be encouraged to create and share their own tools.

(i) The applicant again copies the criteria nearly verbatim, and states that this information will be identified in students' CLPs.

(ii) The applicant again repeats the criteria in its proposal, and provides no new details beyond what is described in the NIA.

(iii) The applicant again repeats the criteria in its proposal, adding that the assessment and CSP development and monitoring will serve as the process to match student needs with resources.

(c) The applicant rewords the criteria in the NIA, clarifying that school leadership and leadership teams include PTA representatives, school data teams, payday teams, and others.

(i) The applicant states that a continuous improvement process will be derived from the RUSD information systems, but it lacks details of who will be responsible for reviewing data and tailoring improvements, and when - instead it states that all educators will be able to offer up improvements. This could be a means for wide ownership of the grant's implementation and improvement, or it could indicate that with everyone pitching in, no one person is ultimately responsible for following through.

(ii) The applicant assures that it will create training, systems, and practices to improve outcomes, and states that it will hold a data retreat process to establish school data teams. However, no detail is provided concerning what these data teams are and will do for the initiative, nor how the systems created will actually improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps.

(d) While the proposal claims to have a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers, it fails to describe how teacher allocation into the three target schools will take place.

Instead, it describes the demographics of the student body in those schools, stating that the schools have been historically hard to staff.

This section primarily repeated the NIA criteria, without adding much substance detailing the specifics of their proposal, and with no evidence or research base to substantiate their proposal.

Given the aforementioned lack of detail, the applicant scores in the middle range of available points for this section.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant provides sufficient assurances that the LEA central office and school board provides support and services to the three target schools - and all schools.</p> <p>(b) While the applicant states that RUSD will provide target schools with bottom-up autonomy and flexibility to determine factors like calendars and staffing, it makes no mention of needing to negotiate with unions on these matters. It also states that it will create school-based leadership teams and that each school will have at least one representative on the district wide school improvement council.</p> <p>(c) RUSD asserts that all students served by this proposal will earn credit based on demonstrated proficiency rather than on seat time - but makes no mention of how students' individualized progress will be tracked, and how benchmarks for improvement will be determined. A shift from Carnegie units to proficiency-based learning is a significant paradigm shift for a school, and requires a radical change in teacher practice, intensive data systems, stakeholder engagement, and ultimately student agency to ensure that continued growth takes place.</p> <p>(d) The applicant proposes to provide multiple occasions for students to demonstrate their mastery of standards, using determined assessments. It does not, however, describe providing multiple means of demonstrating mastery through a variety of assessments.</p> <p>(e) Adaptable learning resources through technology as well as modifications as appropriate (such as providing lessons in an ELL student's native language) and reasonable accommodations (such as providing adaptive technology and lengthening test time for SWD) will be made through this proposal.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant presents a reasonably well-crafted argument that its practices, policies, and rules facilitate personalized learning, and scores in the highest range of available points for this section.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant will provide equal access to all project activities to all participating stakeholders (including students and parents), and will encourage ongoing engagement and involvement. No mention, however, is made of how access to content, tools, and resources will be made equitably available outside of school, which may be a challenge to consider given the low-income neighborhood targeted in this proposal.</p> <p>(b) The applicant states that it will ensure a range of strategies for providing technical support to stakeholders, and mentions resources such as a project website and Facebook page, but it does not provide detail about how it will dedicate staff time to providing support.</p> <p>(c) The information technology system proposed would accommodate exports of student information to other electronic data systems.</p> <p>(d) The applicant assures that it will use an interoperable data system.</p> <p>Once again, the applicant predominantly repeated the criteria from the NIA in this section, and could have provided more specific details, data, processes, and responsible parties for the policies and infrastructure that support project implementation. Nonetheless, it provides a comprehensive overview of its LEA policy and infrastructure, and scores in the highest range of available points for this section.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant intends to use the RUSD Continuous Improvement Team to plan data collection, monitoring, and sharing processes. Its plan for continuous improvement is feasible and appropriate, including monthly data collection, quarterly progress reports shared with the school board and other stakeholders and used to modify implementation as needed, and annual evaluations published online and accessible to the public. This transparency in sharing progress demonstrates a commitment to ongoing improvement.</p> <p>The applicant lacks details to better explain its continuous improvement process, such as a timeline or work plan for continuous improvement, outlining data collected and for what purpose, persons responsible for collecting and reviewing data (and steps to be taken if they do not do so), and processes for determining how to use data to inform program changes could strengthen this section.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the applicant demonstrates sufficient planning and commitment to continuous improvement, and scores in the highest range of points for this section.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive list of outreach and engagement techniques and targets to share information about this proposal.</p> <p>All students at the target middle and elementary schools will be served, but only 100 students from the target high school will be served by this grant - and the applicant makes no mention of how it would incorporate personalized outreach to high school students and families, nor does it define its process for student selection into Project RISE.</p> <p>Regardless, its plan for ongoing communication and engagement is strong, and it scores in the highest range of available points for this section.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant puts forth specific and measurable performance measures for this proposal. Some appear to be more feasible than others, and some lack sufficiently high expectations.</p> <p>The tables corresponding to Performance Measure 1 (increasing scores on tests across content areas by 3% for all schools and by 6% for minority and high need students) do not indicate the baseline scores for students - neither aggregated or disaggregated by subgroup - and instead provides data on the percentage of students with highly effective teachers and principals, perhaps as a proxy for student performance. By omitting student scores, one cannot determine the reasonableness nor the feasibility of the targets set. Given the historically low achievement described in the three target schools, setting a goal of increasing scores by 3% each year may be too low, and result in the majority of students still struggling and failing, even five years from now at the end of the grant.</p> <p>While third grade literacy is critical to future success - as that is a time in students' learning trajectory when they tend to shift from <i>learning to read</i> to <i>reading to learn</i> - the applicant asserts that, by the end of this proposed grant, 100% of third graders will be reading at grade level. This does not take into account that RUSD will be working with <i>cohorts</i> of students, each starting in different places - rather than longitudinally and cumulatively improving one group over time. Furthermore, it does not recognize that students will be moving through standards at different paces through a proficiency-based model, but instead puts the same yardstick (i.e.: reading level) across all students at the same time.</p>		

The number of suspensions at the elementary school level is alarming (currently 92 per year). The applicant seeks to decrease suspensions through this proposal - but does not speak to changing school culture or other underlying causes of student suspension (for example, teacher assumptions about students), only to lessening the number of students suspended.

The applicant seems to have arbitrarily inconsistent project rates of improvement for different schools - for example, minority elementary school students are anticipated to improve in math scores from 48% proficient to 78% proficient, whereas minority middle school students are anticipated to improve in writing scores from 33% proficient to 100% proficient.

While it mentions the Search Institute's *Developmental Assets* as a research-based tool for RUSD to use in developing the socio-emotional and "soft" skills in youth, such as grit and resilience, the applicant does not speak to how it would support building students' Developmental Assets anywhere in this proposal, nor does it make the argument that doing so would improve academic outcomes. Nonetheless, inclusion of this tool as a performance measure adds a depth and dimension to student profiles of performance that would help the district in assessing improvement.

The applicant uses the percentage of 9th grade students successfully completing and earning credits for all courses taken as a performance measure, indicating their readiness to be on-track for graduation.

Overall, the rationale for the selected performance measures is unclear; not all measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information; and the applicant makes no mention of how it will review and improve its performance measures over time. The applicant therefore scores in the middle range of available points for this section.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant cites the University of Milwaukee Center for [Community] Effectiveness (text was cut off an undecipherable - in both the electronic and hard copies) as its external evaluator, though it is unclear how frequently a formal evaluation (process or outcome) will be conducted. It states that the evaluator will assess its performance against its planned targets, using all of the metrics required by RTT-D. The applicant lacks a clear outline (such as a table) detailing what exactly will be evaluated, as well as how and when - as well as an overview of how RUSD will respond to the evaluations of the project that it receives.

While the incorporation of an external evaluator is laudable, the applicant lacks critical details about the evaluative measures, processes, outcomes, and improvements, and therefore scores in the middle range of available points for this section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) While it is not included in the narrative of the proposal, the applicant includes in the appendix an overview of all in-kind contributions that will support the project, including nearly \$1M (\$919k) from the district and its community partners..

(b) The budget seems reasonable and sufficient, with the exception of potentially high levels of personnel and travel for professional development expenditures. It lacks a clear breakdown of annual expenditures across all years of the initiative, and a differentiation between one-time expenditures (such as iPad purchases) and ongoing operational costs.

(c) The applicant does not adequately differentiate between one-time expenditures versus annual operational expenditures, which makes planning for sustainability difficult. While the applicant has secured district and community in-kind contributions to this initiative, it does not have other federal or state funding to support it.

Overall, the applicant provides a reasoned budget that scores in the high end of the middle range of available points for this section.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's strategy for sustaining this initiative is through seeking additional federal and other grants as well as private donations. While this may indeed keep the initiative afloat, it is still a temporary, grant-to-grant, uncertain vision for continuing this work. In order for this initiative to be truly sustained, the applicant would have to have RUSD's commitment to build it in to their general budget, or the state Department of Public Instruction commit to supporting it if the initiative proves to be successful. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide a projected budget for its sustainability.

As a result, the applicant scores in the low end of the middle range of available points for this section.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This section of the proposal was convoluted; the applicant did not clearly present its impressive list of partners and their services. Nonetheless, the array of social, behavioral, health, and academic services provided by RUSD partners could contribute greatly to the success of project RISE students.

The population-level desired results as described by the applicant are ambiguous - for example, stating that academic achievement will be improved, that social and emotional outcomes will be improved, and so forth - without stating target goals and the means for measuring progress towards those goals. Furthermore, the parent and family results are inputs-based, rather than outcomes-based - for example, *access to* classes and resources.

Extended learning time, the focus of scaling up of this model's afterschool program, has an extensive research base and numerous existing exemplars. The applicant fails to draw upon these to adequately describe why this model is important to Project RISE.

The applicant therefore does not present a *fully* coherent and sustainable partnership model - but it does put forth a feasible and appropriate plan that replies to all parts of this competitive preference priority and scores in the middle range of available points for this section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant meets this absolute priority, it does not (as was suggested by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in their letter to the applicant) clearly translate personalized learning practices into specific activities to be implemented in this proposal. It often parrots the NIA rather than providing helpful and descriptive detail about its plan across many of the sections. The applicant demonstrates an overall commitment to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards, but does not have a future-focused vision for a clear and credible approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through student support (as noted in section A.1).

Total	210	137
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0256WI-2 for Racine Unified School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD's proposal states that the proposed activities and outcomes with the district's improvement plan, reinforcing a coherent system of reform.</p> <p>The proposal describes the current data systems that that will provide teachers and administrators with access to timely information to inform student goals, progress and personalized instructional needs. Although these systems are intended to provide customized learning path, the proposal did not specifically address how these will be implemented to support students with the greatest needs. Professional development will be provided to teachers to create lessons integrating digital tools aligned with the CCR standards. RUSD did not clearly state how it will increase teacher and administrator quality, although the professional development seems likely to impact teacher quality.</p> <p>Although aligned with the district's improvement plan, RUSD's proposal was not clear about how the strategies within their proposal will accelerate or deepen student learning. RUSD did not describe how the proposal will impact teachers and administrator quality or how the project will turn around the lowest performing school.</p> <p>Overall, this places RUSD mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Based on the narrative and table submitted, it is not clear if the proposal meets all the requirements for the three selected schools with respect to the number of participating educators and students that are high needs and from low income families. Although RUSD addressed the process for selecting the pilot schools that meets the eligibility requirements, the</p>		

proposal provides insufficient assurances that the reforms will be fully implemented within one of the identified schools. The Approach to Implementation table indicates that only 100 students at the high school level will participate. Therefore, the overall number of students participating is only 1,357 and does not meet the 2,000 threshold for Priority I required in the notice for the receipt of funds. Further, only projected data for high needs and low income are provided, making it uncertain that the application meets the requirements for participating students.

The elementary and middle school have a representative number of participating teachers. However, the tables indicate that only 4 teachers at the high school will be impacted by the pilot. This may limit the systemic application of the reform effort at the high school level.

Because it is unclear that the proposal includes a sufficient number of participating students or that the high school will expand beyond the 100 identified for the pilot, RUSD did not sufficiently address the extent to which the applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation. Overall, this places RUSD mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Although the expected outcomes for the pilot reflect the district's theory of change, RUSD stated that they will wait to scale the project to other schools at the end of the grant period end. The proposal did not address a plan with key goals, activities, timelines, or persons responsible for implementing actions to indicate how the reform will be implemented across the district at the conclusion of the grant.

Further, RUSD suggests that additional schools will not be phased in until the end of the grant period after reviewing outcomes, suggesting ambiguity about district-wide adoption.

Overall, this places the proposal in a mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element since RUSD did not provide evidence of a high quality plan demonstrating how the reform proposal will scale up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

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

10

2

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal did not provide the required information adequately score this element. Although the targets provided are based on performance on summative assessment that include both status and the state's growth measure and decreasing achievement gaps, the goals provided were for the pilot schools and do not represent the LEA wide goals for improving student outcomes. The appendices do provide some LEA goals for achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment, but the data provided do not show targets up to 2016-17 or across all grades and content areas. The targets provided are set based on the ESEA targets and are achievable for all students and subgroups but do not appear to be ambitious enough to close achievement gaps.

RUSD's proposal lack sufficient evidence to determine the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup. Overall, this places the proposal at a low range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element since RUSD did not provide evidence of the LEA level annual goals up to 2016-17 that include increasing achievement, decreasing gaps, and increasing graduation and college enrollment rates.

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	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Although there are some grades where RUSD is able to provide a clear track record of success, RUSD does not provide evidence of sustained gains across multiple years and all grade levels.

While the district data systems are comprehensive and allow teachers, parents, and students to analyze student performance, progress, and instructional needs in multiple ways, only limited evidence was shown to suggest RUSD has impacted student achievement. The most consistent gains noted have been at the high school level, e.g. grade 10 writing, grade 9 Algebra, and high school completion rates. Participation rates for the ACT have been increasing, suggesting the district is focusing on college readiness for students. The evidence provided for college attendance patterns suggests that while an increase was seen up in the early cohorts, there is currently a declining trend.

Trends and patterns for achievement were difficult to discern with only three year results for one grade level at each grade span available. One year gains in achievement were noted as well as modest gap decreases but these were demonstrated for only a single year. The district scorecard indicates that there were no 2011-12 goals met across any of the indicators in the ALL student categories.

RUSD indicates that the reform strategies implemented in the lowest performing schools are the same that are outlined in the proposal. However, the evidence submitted lacked information about the specific interventions implemented, length of time, degree to which these strategies have been implemented or subsequent outcomes, making it unclear if these strategies are ambitious or significant or have been associated with any impact in the lowest achieving schools.

Overall, this places RUSD in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element. Although sustained gains were noted at the high school level, the evidence RUSD submitted does not indicate that the district has a record of success in maintaining achievement across years and grades or that the interventions implemented in the lowest achieving schools are ambitious or significant.

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

RUSD provided evidence that actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, and actual personal salaries at the school level for instructional staff only, teachers only, and non instructional personnel are posted and publicly available on the WI Department of Public Instruction website.

The RUSD proposal included evidence of a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. Overall, the proposal scores in the high range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element since RUSD was able to provide evidence that salaries and school expenditures for each subcriteria are publicly available.

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

RUSD demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy in several ways. The proposal provides the state statue citation giving local school boards have the authority to manage the affairs of the school district and to exercise supervision. RUSD provided evidence of the school board’s policy charging school staff with the implementation of the district’s improvement plan. RUSD’s proposal to implement personalized learning environments is directly aligned with the actions in the district’s improvement plan.

Overall, the proposal scores in the high range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element. RUSD provided evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments described in the applicant’s proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD clearly demonstrates that they included stakeholders in the development of the proposal. The DWSIC developed, revised, and provided continuous feedback to the grant development process, ensuring the alignment with the district's theory of change. The multiple letters of support from various stakeholders and community agencies, including the WI State Superintendent and the President of the district Educator Association, demonstrate that RUSD was committed to garnering stakeholder and community support for its project.</p> <p>Further, these partnering agencies committed additional services to the district to further support grant activities.</p> <p>RUSD indicates that a variety of stakeholders including families, students, and multiple organizations were included in the development of the grant. Yet the Grant Task Force Members representatives did not include parent or community members.</p> <p>In addition, The WI of Public Instruction provided feedback; however, there was no evidence of how this feedback was used to make changes to the proposal.</p> <p>RUSD's proposal provided evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. Overall, this places the proposal at a high range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element. While the evidence provided did not include and community members, the DWSIC included these stakeholders and RUSD was able to provide letters of support from multiple agencies.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD included a list of strengths and needs based on an assessment conducted within the three pilot schools to implement the personalized learning environment. However, the proposal does not include evidence of a high quality plan to address those gaps that include the key goals and the activities to be undertaken, a rationale for these activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.</p> <p>The logic behind the reform proposal was not addressed in the narrative.</p> <p>Although the proposal outlined the needs identified within the three pilot schools, RUSD's proposal did not include all elements of a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the applicant's proposal. Overall, this places the proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element since the proposal did not provide evidence of a high quality plan, including goals, activities, the rationale for these activities, or persons responsible, to address the gaps identified or the logic behind the reform proposal.</p>		
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C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

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

<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD has presented a number of clear, sequential steps aligned with the goals of the project but the does not clearly describe the plan, including specific activities, timelines, resources, and persons responsible, to ensure that the proposal results in a personalized, high quality environment for students.</p> <p>The proposal indicates a tracking system to ensure students are setting ambitious goals based on multiple sources of achievement data. The proposal also provides evidence of how data systems will inform the development of the customized learning plan (CLP), benchmarks for achievement, and progress measures.</p>		
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The narrative discusses how the project lessons will integrate technology to provide a personalized learning environment, the process to describe how this will be matched to students needs or involve students in deep learning experiences is ambiguous.

The RUSD narrative did discuss student's personalized instructional content and high quality content in the narrative, but the proposal does not clearly address how the personalized sequences of instruction will be designed or how quality, digital tools will be matched to student needs.

The information provided about accommodations is vague and does not specifically address how a personalized learning environment will be provided for high needs students.

RUSD provided sufficient evidence in multiple sections of the proposal that indicate the availability of data to students, parents, and teachers for planning and tracking and that student training was available to learn how to use the tools to manage the learning environment.

RUSD's proposal did not provide complete evidence to determine the extent to which RUSD has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. Although the proposal did provide a number of specific steps to address each subcriteria, RUSD did not include a detailed plan for implementation of the steps described, including specific activities, timelines, resources, and persons responsible, to ensure that the proposal results in a personalized, high quality environment for students to support student learning aligned with the criteria in this element. Overall, the RUSD proposal scores in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

RUSD has proposed an approach to personalized learning environments that relies on teacher-developed lessons that are delivered in a technology-based format. The RUSD clearly describes multiple goals and the activities to improve teaching and learning and to implement this approach. The proposal addresses the training for teachers and principals including the process to develop and adapt lessons, analyze student data to monitor progress, and use technology to create personalized learning environments. The implementation of the proposed training is thoughtful in the design, allowing for embedded coaching at the building level and the strengthening of principal evaluation of teacher quality.

The narrative also includes evidence that all participating educators will have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Information provided indicate that the current data systems are comprehensive, available to teachers, students, parents, and, and leadership teams, and inform multiple levels of learning and teaching.

Teacher-created, technology- enhanced lessons based on UbD and DI are key to the development of the customized learning plans. Although teachers will receive training to develop lessons based on these processes, the proposal did not address a process for reviewing lessons to monitor quality, alignment to standards, and rigor. RUSD also did not provide a rollout timelines showing a systematic process for lesson development across content areas. In addition the proposal did not include evidence of the steps RUSD will take to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals

RUSD has demonstrated most elements for a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. RUSD has defined goals and activities to address its approach to personalized learning environment. RUSD's approach is comprehensive, complex, and includes multiple steps to achieve implementation. Therefore it is critical to lay out a timeline to ensure that all steps are addressed within the scope of the grant timelines. RUSD's plan did not include timelines or persons responsible to ensure these actions are carried out in a timely manner. Overall, this places mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal indicates that RUSD has governance and leadership structures to support personalized learning. The narrative states that RUSD will organize central office support to the three pilot schools and will provide extensive flexibility and bottom-up autonomy for school leadership teams.

Each school will form a leadership team with a broad stakeholder representation; one of whom will serve on the DWSIC. The inclusion of a member from each school on the DWSIC will also likely be beneficial in providing a format for feedback at the district-level if implemented as planned.

The proposal indicates that students will be monitored on benchmarks for improvement to demonstrate mastery of standards and the CLP will be monitored annually and change made as needed. However, the narrative did not indicate how district policies and practices will impact student opportunity for credit based on their mastery or topics. Further, the narrative also did not address policies and practices and impact on allowing students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, making it difficult to determine if RUSD will be able to provide a personalized learning environment for students.

The proposal is vague with respect to the adaptable learning resources and instructional practices for students with diverse needs. RUSD did not address how instructional methods will be adapted to be fully accessible for special populations, such as the use of universal design in the development of lessons or technology applications or monitoring and adjusting language load so that students who are English learners have access. As a result, it is not clear how RUSD will be able to support their students with the greatest gaps in a personalized learning environment.

RUSD provided sufficient evidence of organizational and leadership structures that will facilitate the implementation of its proposal. However, based on the evidence provided, there was not sufficient evidence to determine if RUSD's policies and practices will allow for students to demonstrate mastery and earn credit at their own pace. In addition, although some of the strategies discussed for adaption of the instructional environment could benefit students, RUSD does not clearly describe how the instruction would be adapted for learners with the greatest needs. This places the RUSD proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal indicates that RUSD will ensure that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have access to the content and tools in and out of school, however, RUSD does not address how students that do not have computer or internet access at home will be provided with the tools and resources for out of school work.

The narrative states that technical support will be provided online, peer to peer, and through the website and social media. The budget includes technological support but the narrative does not identify how that technical support might be available to students, parents, and educators

The proposal indicates that students will be able to export their information in an open data format and that lesson plans and resources will be made available through open source. However, the proposal does not include information about how the district will monitor for security or impact and potential load on bandwidth.

The proposal provided assurances that the schools will use interoperable data systems.

RUSD describes numerous ways in which students, educators, and families will receive technical support and indicates that access to resources would be available through open source. However, RUSD did not indicate how students, parents, or teachers without internet access will be able access to materials. The proposal did not address about how the district will monitor for security. Overall, this places the RUSD proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD provided of a description of how they will plan for continuous improvement but the RUSD does not include a comprehensive plan with actions, outcomes, timelines, and persons responsible as evidence of when and how the steps or the process will occur. The narrative states that RUSD Continuous Improvement Team will develop a data collection and analysis system to measure, monitor, and publicly share information on the quality of the investment. The proposal describes some steps for a data collection system and development of quarterly progress reports to be shared with district and school-based leadership for feedback and to make changes. RUSD also indicates that an annual evaluation report will be for public dissemination. However, the proposal does not address how the progress will be continuously monitored to make corrections to grant activities as needed.</p> <p>While RUSD laid out some steps of the process, the narrative did not provide a quality plan to indicate the actions, outcome measure, timelines, and persons responsible to provide evidence of a well throughout approach to continuous improvement. RUSD also did not provide evidence of how the information would be analyzed and adjustments made as indicated to ensure the proposal results in desired outcomes. Overall, this places the RUSD proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD provided evidence of different formats and forums for information sharing that are likely to meet the needs of the district for communicating grant activities in an ongoing manner. However, the narrative did not provide a well throughout plan to demonstrate how the communication methods would engage both internal and external stakeholders, making it difficult to determine how RUSD will reach parents, students, educators, administrators, business, and community members through these forums or now these stakeholders will be engaged to provide feedback.</p> <p>Although RUSD presented a wide array of strategies for ongoing communication, the proposal does not provide sufficient evidence that the district has a plan for engaging internal and external stakeholders in ways that will provide communication about the grant and elicit feedback. Overall, this places the RUSD proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has proposed ambitious yet achievable performance measures. Achievement performance measures for reading and math for all students is targeted for a three percentage point gains for all students and at least a six percentage point gain for subpopulations resulting in gains that will meet or exceed the State set AYP targets by 2015-16.</p> <p>In addition to achievement gains, the proposal includes a number of multiple performance measures that affect student learning. The narrative and district report card suggests that students from minority populations are overrepresented in suspension and expulsion data, providing a strong rationale for these performance measures. RUSD set goals for each of</p>		

the pilot schools that will focus on decreasing these disciplinary actions while proactively increasing student’s developmental assets and provided specific instructional strategies aligned with these goals. The college and career readiness measures identified and rationale are likely to increase the number of students who are college and career ready, and specifically address a focus on subpopulations. The narrative provides a comprehensive description of how each of these measures will be monitored, including pre and post data collection to w provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action about concerns around achievement, behavior, and college and career preparation.

While RUSD provides a clear and comprehensive description of the measures, offers compelling rationale for each, and addresses an array of measures to monitor progress, the proposal lacks sufficient detail about how the district will review and improve the measure over time. The narrative describes how the information will be used by the schools but does not describe a review process by the district of each measure and how implementation strategies will be addressed if progress is not indicated.

The RUSD proposal provides evidence for ambitious yet achievable and that performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets. Although the plan for improvement did not include specific information about a review process at the district level, the proposal provides a comprehensive design for ongoing monitoring of each measure. Overall, this places the RUSD proposal in the high range of score points in meeting the criteria

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

RUSD provides evidence of steps it intends to take to evaluate the project that demonstrate some elements of a high quality plan but the narrative lacks a comprehensive plan with specific project outcomes to be addressed, activities, rational, specific timelines and persons responsible. RUSD intend to contract with an independent evaluator and the narrative addresses the evaluation of some of the key activities proposed (i.e. professional development, fostering school leadership teams) and how these will be formatively evaluated and will result in quarterly progress reports for the district and project management and the school board. However, RUSD’s plan does not include a number of the funded activities within its plan essential to the proposed reform. This includes distribution and impact of the technology resources, sufficiency and impact of staff to organize and carry out grant activities, effective use of teacher time funded through stipends to create lessons, etc. that are included in the budget.

RUSD also describes steps to evaluate project outcomes (i.e. student achievement, closing gaps, and increased graduation rates) and report to all stakeholders through quarterly and annual reports that will be used to change the operating plan, if indicated.

RUSD evaluation plan does not sufficiently detail how the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities will be evaluated. Overall, this places mid range of score points in meeting the criteria

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

RUSD’s proposal identifies all funding sources that will support the project over a four year period, including district and community partner in-kind funds. The budget provided appears to be reasonable and adequate for costs associated with

key activities. However, there were major budget items that were not addressed in the body of the narrative. In addition, RUSD did not clearly address long-term costs that may be involved to sustain the project and how RUSD will fund those outside of reserves and grant options or donations.

The budget lacks a number of components that would strengthen the readers understanding of the reasonableness and sufficiency of requested funds. Although some information is detailed in the cost description, there was no evidence of a budget narrative in the evidence submitted. A number of budget items, such as teacher training and data systems, were addressed throughout the narrative, providing a clear rationale for the investment. However, the proposal includes a number of personnel whose roles are not described within the body of the proposal and a large travel budget. As a result, it is difficult to determine if the rationale RUSD is using to invest in these positions and if costs are reasonable and sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Further, there are a number of ongoing costs associated with maintaining or expanding the technology that were not addressed in the budget that could potentially impact sustainability of the project, such as refreshing of computers and technical staff.

The letters of support strengthen the district's ability to garner outside funding from wide array of external agencies. However, the budget proposal does not address ongoing funding sources other than reserves and outside grants and contributions. Therefore, it is not clear how if the district will have sufficiency of funds to scale beyond the pilot sites since there was not plan to do so within the scope of the grant funding timelines.

RUSD indicates funding sources for the four years of the grant but the evidence that the investments are reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation are vague. Funding sources to sustain the project beyond four year grant period rely heavily on reserves and potential grant award, making scaling the project district-wide questionable. Overall, this places RUSD in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal narrative and appendices provide evidence of State and local leader support as well as in-kind financial support from community partners. However, RUSD's proposal does not include a high-quality plan, including sustainability and scaling costs related to the project, or a budget that includes budget assumptions, potential sources and uses of funds.

Although RUSD's proposal addresses potential funding sources beyond the life of the grant, the proposal does not include a high-quality plan for sustainability after the term of the grant. Overall, this places the RUSD proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria for this element.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The district has a number of established partners that include both student and family focused supports to address social, physical, emotional, and behavioral needs of students, who have committed to supporting the district in the project efforts.

While the narrative includes outcomes for these previously developed partnerships, RUSD does not clearly define the expected outcomes that will support the partnership as related to the proposal.

Five broad, population-level desired results are described, such as improved social and emotional outcomes. Since the results are very broad, the ability to evaluate the impact of the partnership will be difficult. Information about how the selected indicators would be tracked was sparse. The collection of data and methods for analysis were vague. There was no evidence of a strategy for scaling the model. Many of these programs are already established in RUSD schools and provide tutoring or social/emotional and family support. Further, there were no specific strategies identified to demonstrate

how the programs would scale to other schools and how they would continue to support student needs since most of these programs were already evident in other RUSD schools.

RUSD did not provide a description of how the partnership would, within participating schools integrate education and other services for participating students

RUSD did not describe how the district and the partnerships would build the capacity of staff in participating schools to assess student needs aligned with the partnerships goals for improving education to family and community supports, identify and inventory needs and assets of the school and community aligned with those goals, or the process to create decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students. RUSD also did not provide evidence for how they would engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs or how they would assess progress in implementation of the plan to maximize impact.

RUSD did not provide evidence of annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students.

While the district demonstrated numerous partnership to integrate public or private resources in a partnership to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, the proposal did provide a clear plan for how the partnership would integrate with the project goals, build school staff capacity, how families would be engaged, and how results would be evaluated and monitored. Overall, this places the RUSD proposal in the mid range of score points in meeting the criteria

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

RUSD's proposal provides evidence that the district is committed to building upon current district implementation of the four core educational assurance areas.

The proposal aligns activities and outcomes with the district's improvement plan, reinforcing a coherent system of reform.

The current data systems adopted by the district are designed to provide teachers and administrators with access to timely information to inform student goals, progress and personalized instructional needs outlined in the proposal. Students will develop custom plans to create and access personalized learning environments through lessons integrating digital content based on student needs that address the CRRs standards and that can be adapted to meet individual student needs.

The lessons to be developed are differentiated and will require intensive teacher time to create. The proposal describes an embedded professional development model to train teachers and administrators to create these lessons integrating digital tools aligned with the CCR standards that is likely to impact teacher quality.

Overall, the RUSD has provided evidence that meets the requirements of Priority 1.

Total	210	125
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0256WI-3 for Racine Unified School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Comprehensive and Coherent Reform Vision

Project RISE (Racine Initiative for Student Excellence) outlined in this RTTT-D application includes a comprehensive plan and coherent reform vision. The school district plans to expand an existing *successful* program, RUSD *North Star District Improvement Plan (DIP)*. RUSD is a dynamic initiative that includes a detailed assessment and instructional plan that focuses on individual student progress. The plan focuses on academic success for individual students in "three severely economically disadvantaged and largely minority Inner-City Racine schools" (Elementary, Middle and High School). The plan includes professional development for teachers, collaboration throughout the district and community, the integration of technology (iPads) and individual instructional plans for students based upon research-supported strategies.

While this plan is **ideal** in that it would serve low-socioeconomic and minority students by providing personalized learning plans for each student using research-supported strategies. The solution is not so simple, it requires intensive training for teachers and a comprehensive "buy-in" plan for parents and students.

Clear and Credible Goals

The goals identified are listed in quantitative and qualitative measures and based upon the success experienced with the RUSD *North Start District Improvement Plan*. Goals are clear and seem easy to measure. One weakness that was noted was measures for "making adjustments" in the overall plan if success is not being realized.

While the goals for this project are ambitious and have produced somewhat successful results for the RUSD North Star District Improvement Plan, there is limited support that the goals are appropriate for the schools included in this project.

Personalized Student Support

This plan clearly states that instructional will be personalized including Culturally-Relevant Pedagogy Strategies with additional support provided by afterschool and online (Study Island, Wisconsin Standard Mastery Program) support systems. School Net (an assessment system) will be used to report academic progress, using the "Results Now" philosophy.

A clear plan for addressing the needs of students who are reluctant or apprehensive to embrace a personalized learning plan is not factored in the equation. Students in inner-city schools often lack the motivation and desire to complete assignments and tasks in which they are working with other students. Given that K-12 students are very social beings, the plan does not address how it will meet the social needs of students to collaborate and work together.

The Applicant earned a score in the high range for this criterion, however in regard to fully implementing this project concerns as noted above resulting in a deduction of a single point.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a. Three feeder (elementary, middle, and high) schools have been selected to participant in the reform project outlined in this proposal. The schools were purposefully selected for this project based upon an analysis of all the schools in the Racine United School District (RUSD) conducted by the school district staff and a 40 -member coalition of multiple stakeholders, the District-Wide School Improvement Council (DWSIC). While this trio- of feeder schools have historically been rated as underperforming schools, they have recently made stride in improving student outcomes. The three schools meet the competition's eligibitiy requirements in that the schools are Inner-City schools comprised of severely economically disadvantaged and largely minority students. While the overall number of students in the LEA was not noted, The application states that 465 elementary (438 low-income), 792 middle (597 low-income), and 2076 (1206 low-income) will be served by this proposal, thus exceeding the requirment for the eligibility for number of students served and 40% of the students from low income families.</p> <p>b. A list of schools was clearly stated and provided in the application, see noted above in "a".</p> <p>c. Total Number of participating students = 465 elementary (438 low-income, 445 - high need), 792 middle (597 low-income, 674 high need), and 2076 (1206 low-income, 1335 high need)</p> <p>Number of educators: Elementary (48), Middle (68) , High (159)</p> <p>The schools to be served in this proposed plan seeks to address the schools and populations of greatest concern in our country. Students who live in Inner-city schools have a enormous need for individualized instruction to support their lagging literacy development as well as the development of academic skills across the curriculum. This proposed plan is of high quality in that it seeks to support students in feeder schools from the elementary to high school level opposed to some plans that only support individual school levels. By establishing consistent individualized instruction from elementary to high school, the LEA should be able to track changes in academic development using longitudinal data for each individual student as well as across the 3 schools (elementary, middle, and high).</p> <p>Overall the Applicant scores earns all points for this criterion.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed plan for <i>Project RISE</i> (Racine Initiative for Student Excellence) is a pilot effort that will build upon a successful existing reform effort through the North Star District Improvement Plan. The North Star District Improvement Plan has demonstrated four years of academic improvement. The reform is high quality in that it brings together a vast number of stakeholders and is supported by the focus on change being placed on professional development training for teachers (based upon research supported pedagogy and strategies), personalized plans for students, and remediation as needed for students. The current vision includes a five year LEA-wide reform for change that will increase the number of participating schools by six (schools) as the project is further supported by the District Wide School Improvement Council.</p> <p>This high-quality plan encompasses the most current research supported philosophies in educational reform by integrating current technology with individual student assessment and customized instructional planning. In additional an emphasis is placed upon teacher training, "the single most determinant" in student academic success is the teacher. This plan does not depend on a prescriptive program but rather focuses on training teachers to plan, implement, assessment, and develop individual instructional plans to meet the needs of individual students. The plan also includes a clear focus on delivering <i>Culturally-Relevant Pedagogy Strategies</i>. This is important due to the high number of minorities within the population to be served by this project.</p>		

The applicant does propose and present a high-quality, doable plan, yet there seems to be a lack of adequate teacher professional development (30 hours of PD with 4 days of refresher PD). Because the application does not clarify the proficiency or experience of the teachers in the district who will be involved in this project, it is difficult to judge if the PD training will be sufficient resulting in the loss of a few points. The professional expertise of the teacher will make a significant difference in realizing success of this plan.

The Applicant earns a high range score with a few points deducted for lack of sufficient training for teachers and for lack of evidence to support scaling up the project.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a. Annual proficiency status and growth data is collected by Wisconsin Knowledge Concepts Examination (WKCE). To support the ambitious annual goals of this project, an additional start of the year assessment will be conducted and used to create Customized Learning Plans (CLPs) for all students. Using this individualized approach supports the notion that increased equity in student learning and performance will be achieved. Students who struggle academically would greatly benefit from educators evaluating their specific needs and then working with students to design instruction to "fill the gaps". Diagnosing academic needs of students is similar to diagnosing health issues for patients, teachers need to receive extensive training to effectively design such instructional plans. On the elementary level, this may not be as difficult as on the middle and high school level where academic concepts become very complex and more difficult to analyze. To improve performance on summative assessments, teachers must be able to effectively evaluate skills and specific deficiencies as well as misconceptions in regard to academic content knowledge. This plan does ask teachers to properly evaluate students skills and performance all the way and to design instruction to help students meet the learning expectations.

The overall goals identified seem low and accepting of decreased performance among groups.

b. The district has a record in recent years of closing achievement gaps between groups, but not across group (sub-cohorts). While the plan does support improvements through interventions for 3 feeder schools in the most economically and high minority schools in the district, the overall goals are low and do not adequately decrease the gaps across all groups.

c. Graduation rates noted as 73.2% for 2010-2011, but lacking evidence for the past 4 years to support a decrease in achievement gaps.

d. College enrollment rates not clearly identified in (A)(4). It is difficult to infer if the applicant's vision will achieve increased college enrollment rates.

Overall, for this criterion, the Applicant failed to address several of the points as noted above: 1. evidence of closing achievement gaps across groups and 2. adequate graduation rates. A high mid-range score was earned for this criterion, points were deducted for missing evidence as required and stated in the sentence above.

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:

The application provides evidence to support a record of success in student learning and achievement and an increase in equity in learning and teaching in the narrative and demonstrated through tables/charts in Appendix 2, Scorecard for the North Star 2011-2012 District Level. Data are aggregated to show comparisons of achievement gaps between student groups.

- a. Within the narrative and/or in Appendix 2, the learning targets and outcomes for each group are presented. Areas/grade levels where student achievement is noted as well as areas where scores remained the same and scores decreased. In some areas, particularly within the African American and SwD groups there were slightly decreased levels of achievement noted. Overall the data does support that student learning outcomes have improved and the achievement gap between groups have decreased, but **some groups regressed influencing a decrease in overall points for this section.**
- b. An increase in Career & Technical Certification was noted across all groups, yet there was a decrease in African American, Hispanic, LEP and Low SES students, but there was a clear increase for SwD students. The decrease may be explained in the area of Career & Technical Certification Completers by the increase in ACT Examination scores. ACT scores overall decreased slightly, but scores for African Americans and SwD. Most importantly, the number of students taking the ACT exam increased by 20%. **This decrease influenced a slight decrease in points awarded for this section.**
- c. Ambitious and significant reform efforts noted in the following areas: Technology Deployment, School Improvement Plans, Personalized Learning Environments, Parental Involvement, North Star Foundation for Instruction, Foundation for Instruction, Foundation for Instruction Framework. This plan focuses on the use of personalized learning systems that provides a dynamic curriculum individually based with students involved in the development of their learning path. This model is unique and offers significant opportunities to meet the needs of individual students, rather than populations or groups of students. The North Star Scorecard is released to provide an district overview, but within the personalized learning system, a varied assessment system is used to track, illustrate, and translate student performance data within an ePortfolio. "Feedback occurs in rapid cycles and is objective, connected to learning goals, and suggests the next step in the learning process."

Overall for this section of the application, the applicant demonstrated evidence of the qualities required, slight decreases in specific group populations achievement resulted in a decrease in overall points awarded. The Applicant failed to meet the goals for this criterion which required a record of success for the past 4 years resulting in a loss of points for this criterion. Because the three of the past 4 years were demonstrated achievement the Applicant earns a mid-range score.

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

The applicant shared the Dept of Public Education for the State of Wisconsin which does provide averages for personnel salaries, non-personnel expenditures were not available.

The Applicant meets the criterion for this section by providing the website link, but there is not evidence to support a *high level of transparency* resulting in a 1 point deduction.

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

Evidence provided for support of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy through the Wisconsin Dept of Public Instruction Website and the Foundations for Continuous Improvement Handbook.

Legal and Statutory Authority and Regulatory Requirements met.

The Applicant earn full points for this criterion based upon their demonstration of the following:

- The district has implemented the proposed plan in another set of feeder schools which demonstrates that they have the autonomy to repeat the project.
- The proposed plan is to expand and extent and existing plan.

- Letters of support and documentation provides additional evidence to support successful conditions and autonomy for this Applicant to move forward with this proposed project.

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

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a. **District-Wide School Improvement Council (DWSIC)** -A 40-member coalition of multiple stakeholders was established in 2007 to examine and prioritize existing programs, oversee implementation and assessment of new projects, review school improvement plans, and enhance teaching and learning in the District. Ideas that receive support from DWSIC, move to the District Cabinet and then to the Board of Education for Review. This process was used to develop this proposed project.

Stakeholders included in the development of this proposed project are administrators, educators, the union, parents, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, elected and appointed officials, students, another agents for educational reform. This District is a collective bargaining district and evidence of support from the collective bargaining representative is included.

b. A list of letters of support and collaboration is included on page 31 of the application as well as the letters are included in the appendix. This list includes a variety of community leaders and educational agencies.

The organizational diversity and number of stakeholders directly engaged in this project serves as clear indication that this project is well vested in the community across various types of organization. This investment of the community provides a significant indication that this project well-supported, all points awarded for this category.

The Applicant scores all points for this criterion.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant included a high-quality plan for assessing its current status in implementing personalized learning environments and provides clear evidence to support the logic for implementing this plan.

The high-quality plan is based upon the needs analysis conducted by the Applicant. The needs analysis clearly demonstrates the gaps in overall student achievement, between student groups, especially African American, Hispanic, and SwD students. The schools that this proposed project will serve are the "most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the State of Wisconsin and is the historic home of the African American community in Racine". Additionally, the analysis of needs and gaps presented in this application provide clear justification for the proposed high-quality plan as outlined for this reform initiative. Selecting the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the State/District and then providing the students in the feeder schools (elementary, middle, and high) with personalized instructional plans to meet their specific needs seems the perfect place to start with true reform. The most difficult to reach students are the ones with the greatest needs, those in Racine Inner-City need intense attention to improve academically. Meeting the students where they are socially, emotionally, and academically with personalized learning environments as described in this proposed plan is forward thinking on the part of this district.

The Applicant earned all points for this criterion for the high-quality plan for assessing its current status in implementing this educational reform.

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

	Available	Score

(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
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(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1) Racine Unified School District is proposing to expand a successful, Project to 3 (additional) inner city schools in the district. The plan outlines a plan to engage students in 3 inner city schools using the existing North Star Education reform initiative. The North Star Ed reform initiative has demonstrated slight gains for preparing students for college and careers.

Students will be involved in setting academic and personal goals based with the use of annual assessments, customized learning plans, technology, lesson plans, and pedagogy designed to meet their individual needs. The use of technology, i.e. specifically iPads for students and MacBooks for teachers is noted in the plan but specific plans for how they will impact the project is not clearly stated in (C)(1)a . While the plan states "...every effort to ensure that participating students are involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest", **the plan does not clearly state how RUSD will get student buy-in for those who do not willingly participate.** If the students are not willing to buy-in to this movement from traditional instruction to digital instructional methods, it could greatly influence the students ability to identify "what they are learning". The application does state many of the issues that must be addressed to dispel culturally specific challenges for African American and Hispanic students however does not provide evidence as to how this will be addressed. **NOTE: parental involvement (support) and ways of getting parents involved is not specifically stated in (C)(1) of the application.**

RUSD outlines ideal research supported, instructional approaches and environments. However there is little mention of how parents will be demonstrate their support. The application states ways to engage students in the process but lacks ways to get the parents of students who struggle most involved.

Overall, the instructional plan for increasing preparation for students to progress into college and careers is ideally supported by current research-supported instructional approaches and practices and ranks in the high category. Points were deducted from the score for this section because student "buy-in" is not fully addressed. Inner-City students are often resistant to change. The change, improved academic success pushes students beyond the norm of their family and friends. While this application addresses some of the beliefs, it does not provide ways in which the project will combat the adversity of the resistance to change for Inner-City students. Because the lack of "buy-in" by students (and their families) can significantly influence the outcome of this project, a reduction of points resulted.

The Applicant scores in the lower end of the high range for this criterion, points were deducted for the lack of evidence to support how this plan will fully engage and empower all students (and parents). As noted above many students and parents may be resistant to this plan. The plan for accommodations was not clearly noted to support student and parental who may not be fully engaged in the learning process. Additionally, the Applicant did not provide a clear high quality plan for accommodating students of high-need.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

RUSD application outlines a process for training all educators to meet the proposed project goals.

While the application states that educators will receive 30 hours of pre-implementation training and at least 4 hours of refresher training, this does not seem to be enough training. The initial training equates to a little over 3 days of training. Three days is not adequate to prepare teachers to develop individualized plans for all students using the proposed UbD and RtI framework. Training for UbD and RtI requires extended time and concentrated feedback and support from trainers.

Additional training for technology integration and assessment for monitoring student learning is noted in the application. The plan is detailed yet, the frequency and length of time for training and meetings is not sufficient.

A comprehensive plan to include school leaders and leadership teams "including principals, PTA representatives, union representatives, and Family School and Community Partnership teams and other school personnel will be provided training, policies, tools, data, and resources" is proposed. Similar to the previous criteria, adequate time and training is not clearly presented to support success of this project to achieve increases in academic success.

The Applicant earns a high range score with points deducted for providing support that demonstrates sufficient training for teachers and other stakeholders are noted in the application who is slated to receive training. Lack of training could significant influence the outcomes of this project.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Project RISE has outlined an extensive plan that is supported within a single LEA, Racine Unified School District. The district uses a flexible, bottomup autonomy for school leadership which provides the optimal opportunity for this plan. Without tight restraints for following set pacing guides, the district has the flexibility to design personalising learning environments to meet the individual needs of students. Mastery of learning objectives is the focus of student learning not actual time spent at school or the need to follow a set "timeline" for instructional plans. A baseline for mastery of standards will be used to determine the plan for each student. A clear organized plan is in place for re-assessment of skills through out the year. As well as multiple adaptations are planned to enable flexible individualized instruction. Modifications noted for ESL students as well.

The Applicant meets all criterion for this section, earning full points.

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

RUSD seeks to ensure that all stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school. However, there is little mention as to how Project RISE will "encourage" parents with limited resources to take part in this initiative. The word "encourage" seems to vague. More details regarding how parents of low income families will be "encouraged" to be involved in supporting the initiative is needed. Interestingly enough, the Project RISE encourages and support technical issues with regard to social media as well as peer and online support. This is a novel idea that may help to encourage parents and students to engage in social media literacy opportunities. However, it is not clear how the social media application of Facebook and Twitter intertwine with the project. (c)(d) Two informational systems will be used to communicate the progress of this project: Skyward (includes parents and students) and Schoolnet (limited to school personnel). Both systems are sophisticated and useful for housing and communicating data. Parents and students will be able to export the information in an open data format. Interoperable data systems will be available for LEAs and schools as well.

However, there is concern for the usefulness of the SKYward software in communicating with parents who do not have access to technology and lack the necessary skills to "use" the technology.

The Applicant scores in the high range for this criterion, with only a few points deducted for not addressing how parents who outside the digital world will gain the access the information and resources.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that the district consistently uses the PDCA approach for all educational reforms. The Plan-Do-Check-Act model guides implementation by establishing a clear plan, putting it into motion, checking it (evaluation), and then taking action by making adjustments if needed. Within this model, continuous monitoring, feedback, and analysis takes place. This approach is highly recommended and recognized as an effective evaluative model. The described methods of continuous improvement process highlights all the components of the PDCA approach. The information provided in the application outlines the implementation of a use of a Continuous Improvement Team that will develop a detailed data collection, analysis system to monitor and share information. The application states that this project will use a similar approach for communicating the progress as they have used for the North Star DIP, which has demonstrated successful process.

The applicant scores strong for this criterion.

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The multi-faceted ways for communicating is strong for this applicant. Communication with stakeholders will include the following techniques: mailings posters/flyers press releases web site and blogs including social media (Facebook, Twitter) Presentations Community workshops information sent home to parents and students

The applicant scores in the high range for this criterion for noting the use of comprehensive ongoing communication and engagement and the ways for communication with internal and external stakeholders is clearly evident. However, a single point was deducted for not providing a clear plan (timeline and frequency).

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

There are 12 performance measures noted in the application, yet they are not presented in an easy to identify format.

The applicant states rationale for each of the measures, how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern and ways the project will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress. The performance measures target reading and mathematics, behavior, and at-risk subgroups for various grade levels and groups.

The details provided with each of the measures seems very plausible and appropriate as does the rationales and measures for making changes as needed.

Overall the applicant scores strongly for this criterion. Tables for each performance measure was included to show targets and measures.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

An outside agency, The University of Milwaukee Center for Community Effectiveness will be contracted to conduct an comprehensive evaluation of the project. Data gathered and analyzed will be used to determine the effectiveness of the project and will guide adjustments and revisions during the implementation.

Samples of a progress report and the evaluation report based upon the previous project implemented for this Applicant are provided in the appendix. A review of these documents provides strong support for the criterion in this section. The Applicant provided a sample of the Teaching and Learning Framework and Template and the Professional Development Plan to further support the plans for evaluation for this proposed project. Overall, the Applicant scores all points for this criterion.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Budget narrative provides a brief overview of the budget needs with the budget included as an appendix. The applicant did identify all funds that will support the project as well as funds that go beyond the Race to the Top-District funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All funds appear to support the project b. The funds seem reasonable and sufficient, clearly linked to the reform vision outlined in the application. Cost seem reasonable based on current cost estimates and the number of students to be served. c. Funds are clearly described including funds from RTTT-D, RUSD, and Community Partners with zero funds from other state or federal agencies. One-time investments are clearly noted and stand alone from operational costs. All expenses are clearly aligned with the development of personalized learning environments. <p>Budget is strong and well-thoughtout. Some items that were not clearly "stated" in the narrative of the application, appear in the budget. The extend of travel for professional development by leaders was not as clear in the narrative, but seems heavy in the narrative. Furthermore, concerns are noted in regard to the time allotted for teacher training as opposed to the extensive time needed for "leaders" training. The extensive leaders training was not evident in the narrative.</p> <p>For the discrepancies between the outlined reform vision and the budget provided 2 points are deducted for this criterion. The Applicant scores in the high range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>RUSD will seek to use reserves and operating revenues as well as additional grant writing opportunities to seek funds to support this project after the funding from RTTT-D has ended. RUSD will also rely on donations of cash and in-kind support from individuals and businesses.</p> <p>The sustainability of this project is not clearly supported within the application. There is not a plan within the budget for the 3 years after the term of the RTTT-D is completed. The cost of sustaining the Project after the completion of the RTTT-D is not noted. The cash and in-kind support from the community does seem to be a viable source based upon letters of support and partnerships with local agencies.</p> <p>The Applicant scores in the low range for this criterion. Evidence provided does not support sustainability of this project for 3 years after the funding period for RTTT-D has ended.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed competitive preference priority would further support the overall Project RISE by included an Extended Day Program to Horlick High School, the high school included in this grant proposal. The description is clear with many public and private organizations providing support. A table is provided describing the organizations involved. 5 major population results are clearly noted each of which are equally important for the population served. The description of the how the partnerships will track indicators, use the data, develop strategies, and improve results overtime, while implied and seem</p>		

to mirror other extended day programs that the district has in place currently, given that the high school level is involved, the partnership information is not clearly stated.

While the applicant does show many public and private organizations that are currently providing support and a evidence through letters of support and partnernship, the applicant failed to provide annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures.

The Applicant scored very low on this criterion due to missing information and for reasons as stated above.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Project RISE, addresses how the Racine Unified School District will build upon the 4 core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. The use of personalized instructional strategies, appropriate tools, and support systems for students and educators will be used to support college and career-ready standards AND college and career-ready graduation requirements.

1. The personalized learning plans described in the plan will help to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student.
2. The professional development and concentrated effort for analyzing student learning will increase the effectiveness of educators.
3. This plan seeks to expand student access to the most effective educators, by increasing professional development and monitoring the success of the students in which they teach. Teacher evaluation's will be used to assure that teachers are effective.
4. By providing personalized learning plans for each student, and meeting the specific needs of these inner-city students, a decrease in achievement gaps should be realized across student groups.
5. By accommodating each student's needs with a personalized instructional plan, this plan will serve to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Overall, RUSD fully met the requirements of this absolute priority 1 to a very high degree. The focus of the project completely hinges on the implementation of personalized learning plan (learning environments) to increase student achievement levels to the point of preparing students for college and career, increasing graduation rates.

Total	210	172
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