



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1292DE-1 for Seaford School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant outlined a clear and coherent vision that incorporates the four core educational assurance areas and presents a creditable approach to reach identified goals. The activities outlined in the project proposal are aligned with the state Race to the Top plan. Specific activities include the adoption of state standards and common assessment system, creation of a data warehouse to monitor individual student achievement, implementation of the statewide research based educator evaluation system, development of a theory of action centered on capacity building for teacher and principals, specifically in low performing schools. The district also adopted the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance which provides a comprehensive approach to system reform and educational improvements.</p> <p>Specific goals were also outlined to ensure success in increasing student achievement. The applicant also provided information on the Theory of Action and the focus on capacity building related to increased student achievement.</p> <p>The applicant addressed all criteria in this category and score's in the high category.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a. The applicant has selected all school within the district to participate in the project. It is the belief of the applicant that district wide implementation of key reform measures would be beneficial for all schools and students.</p> <p>b. The applicant listed all schools participating in the project and their grade bands. This consists of six schools, and includes four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.</p> <p>The applicant provided a chart that depicts the number and percentage of participating students in each school that come from low income families and students within the high needs. Information is also provided on the number and percent of educators participating.</p> <p>The applicant addressed the criteria in this category and the score will be in the high category.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To reach its goals, the applicant developed a Theory of Change, with the key component being capacity building of teachers and building administrators. Approximately 200 individuals were also involved in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the district. The plan outlines how reform initiatives will be implemented in all schools within the district.</p> <p>As part of this effort, four primary initiatives were created and align with the goals of this competition. This includes strategies to ensure students have the opportunity to engage in high quality teaching through personalized learning environments, creating rigorous, inquiry based classrooms, developing the skills of teachers and leaders using a personalized growth system, and strategies to engage families and communities in supporting the work of schools. The applicant has identified a clear focus on college and career readiness, and two key position have been added at each school. A Professional Development and Reading Specialist have been added at each school to support district initiatives.</p> <p>The applicant has addressed all key provisions within this category and scores in the high category.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has developed a vision for the school district. To ensure success in realizing the vision, with the likelihood of results in improved student learning and performance, the applicant provided ambitious yet achievable goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets, overall and by student subgroups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System is taken by students in grades 3-10 in the fall and spring of each year. The assessment is used to determine school and district accountability. Goals for proficiency status and growth are based on the reduction of non proficient students by 70% over the grant period.</li> <li>b. The applicant established the goal of reducing achievement gaps by 70% during the grant period. This goal exceeds the goal established by the state and is realistic given the reform measures identified in the project proposal.</li> <li>c. The applicant established a goal of graduating 90% of the students entering high school in 2014. In reviewing the current graduation data for each subpopulation, the goal established is attainable.</li> <li>d. The applicant established a goal of 85% of students attending college in the all students category. The applicant reported that this represents a 30% increase in the number of students attending college in each subgroup. However, the actual projected increase in each subgroup represents a 20% increase according to the chart provided in the application. The data is inconsistent which prevents an accurate assessment of projected growth and improvement in this category.</li> </ol> <p>With exception to the projected college enrollment rates, the applicant addressed all criteria in this category and is awarded a score in the mid range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided information that demonstrated a clear record of success that began in the 2009-2010 (three years ago) school year at the high school. While deemed a persistently low performing school, the district instituted programs aimed at becoming an innovative comprehensive reform model. Specific programs included the creation of smaller learning communities through academies, a focus on personalized learning, and changes in the school's infrastructure to support project based learning. The applicant reported student achievement growth on the state assessment for the past year.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Specific program have been implemented through the academies to improve student learning outcomes. This consists of the International Baccalaureate diploma, and advanced placement courses. Attendance rates have increased and disciplinary rates have decreased at the school. While the reforms have been initiated within the high school during past three years, the school has demonstrated success in advancing learning and achieving equity in learning and teaching. Information was not provided to identify a record of success beyond the high school. The applicant did not provide narrative information on the record of success in closing achievement gaps, increasing high school graduation, and increasing college enrollment.</li> <li>b. The applicant provided information on successful practices to advance student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching in its low performing school. The focus of all intervention efforts was the high school. The physical plant was re-structured, project based learning strategies were emphasized, professional development and coaching activities were implemented, and a Transformational Model Success Team was implemented to guide the work within the school. The reforms were ambitious and significant.</li> <li>c. To inform and improve participation, instruction, and services, the applicant makes student performance data available. Several methods were identified and include positing data on the districts website, with links to individual schools, direct mailings to parents, training for parents on ways to access the district portal, sharing data in parent teacher conferences, and use of the State Data Dashboard to disseminate information.</li> </ol> <p>The applicant's score within this category is in the mid range.</p>		

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reports that transparency in fiscal processes, practices, and investments takes place at the state and local district level. This includes information as part of state and local district reporting requirements.

- a. The applicant reports that actual salaries for school level instructional and support personnel are included in the Delaware Educational Statistics Reports published by the Delaware Department of Education and published on the state's website.
- b. The applicant reports that actual salaries for school level instructional staff are available in the Delaware Educational Statistics Reports. In reviewing the reports provided salaries are identified by budget category and worksite.
- c. The applicant reported that actual non expenditures at the school level are reported in monthly district financial reports as well as at the state level through the Delaware Educational Statistics Report and Annual Financial Statement.
- d. The applicant provided district level information.

Based on the information provided, the state does not provide information at the school level. Data is aggregated across all schools within respective districts. The applicant receives a score in the mid range for this category.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided several examples of district initiatives that are aligned within the state context for implementing personalized learning environments. This includes alignment with the state's Race to the Top grant award, utilization of a robust longitudinal data system, adoption of the common core standards and assessments, and obtaining fiscal support for infrastructure revisions. The state does provide local autonomy under legal statutory and regulatory provisions. The applicant has autonomy to implement curriculum and instructional models of their choosing. Teachers are employed through the state alternative preparation program. While the state has developed a teacher evaluation system, local districts have autonomy to develop an alternate system through statutory provisions. Additionally, the High School was the first and only charter school in the state to implement and be recognized for a personalized deeper learning model.

The applicant addressed the provision identified in the category and receives a score in the high category.

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

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provided evidence of broad stakeholder engagement in the development and support for the work as outlined in the application. The district initiated community meetings with diverse group to discuss the Transformational Model for the high school. These was followed by listen and learn events, meeting to identify community priorities, hiring and soliciting services of parent service providers for support and community engagement. Based on the community meeting plans were revised as needed to reflect community concerns. The applicant reported that multiple meeting were held at different schools to elicit feedback from teachers, parents, and community members. The applicant did not provide a description of how students and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal.

- i. Frequent meetings were held with the president of the Seaford Teachers Association. The President also signed the application cover in support of the plan.
- b. The applicant provided letters from key stakeholders acknowledging support of the project. This included letters from the Governor, Secretary of Education, Mayor, local and state legislators, educational groups, civic organizations, advocacy groups, and local businesses.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identified needs and gaps through a collaborative process involving a team of 8 teachers and administrators.

The group met over two years, examined the current state of the district and devised a high quality plan to address identified gaps. In their reviews the team examined the current status of the district in implementing personalized learning environments, the status of the K-12 system, methods to implement a Deeper Learning Model. Through a gap analysis two major needs were addressed and consisted of (K-12 system deeper learning models with an inquiry based curriculum and authentic performance tasks, and 2) Professional growth opportunities in order to systematically build teacher expertise around the common core curriculum. The latter was discussed in relation to the quality of the professional development and its transferability to the classroom for maximum impact.

The applicant addressed all provision in this category and receives a score in the high point range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a high quality plan for improving the learning environment and by personalizing the learning environment. Based upon the success of the reform model implemented at the high school the district initiated plans for district wide reform. The plan incorporates multiple “deep learning” academies in elementary, middle, and high school. A chart describing the framework is provided and addresses four key areas critical to building successful personalized learning communities. Key components of the framework are rigorous, inquiry based curriculum and instruction, and development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, professional growth and development systems for teachers, and meaningful family and community engagement. Schools and communities will be able to select one of the identified deeper learning models for implementation in each school through a phased in process during the grant period.

(a)i. The applicant reported that students will understand how their learning helps them accomplish their goals by developing a curriculum framework with grade and content specific learning objectives in grades K-12 that align to the Common Core State Standards for math and English/language arts. Through the Learning Compass students, a personalized learning approach, students will be able to understand the framework and create a pathway and monitor their process. When developed, the system will also integrate an assessment component using multiple assessment measures to meet the needs of students.

(ii) The applicant reported that the Learning Compass framework and other models selected by the district will be aligned to the college and career readiness standards and will provide the structure for students to monitor and individualize their learning through an individualized approach to learning. Teachers will also work with students to structure their learning to meet the diverse needs of students.

(iii) Through the big Picture program is being considered for implementation in the district. The model focuses on real world authentic learning for students to engage in meaningful experiences. Students will also be engaged in interest generated internships two days a week to provide personalized learning experiences for students. The applicant also provided student centered assessment activities and projects that will allow students to engage in interest generated projects.

(iv) The applicant reported that through use of the Big Picture Learning model students will engage in deep learning activities and are exposed to cultures outside of their community, context, and perspective. Through use of technology students communicate with communities around the state and country. Specific activities were presented for grades. While a number of activities were presented the focus was students in high school. The applicant did not provide activities for elementary and high schools.

(v) The applicant reported that through use of the Learning Compass continuum at each grade level students will master critical academic content and develop skills. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills learning skills will be taught primarily through use of project based learning as the main instructional strategy, and by overlapping core content with deeper 21<sup>st</sup> century themes such as global awareness, articulate learning, and writing. Data from assessments will be monitored by the student and teachers.

(B)(i) The Learning Compass, when developed will ensure that each student is college and career ready by the time he or she graduates. The Learning Compass will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and will align specific learning targets for each grade level. Vertical and horizontal alignment will also be analyzed to ensure consistency in curriculum delivery.

(ii) To ensure success in obtaining personalized learning a number of instructional strategies will be used as part of the

instructional process. Multiple opportunities will be afforded through blended learning, the use of flexible grouping, field studies, Learning Through Internships, hands on investigations, work with the community. Through use of these and strategies, student learning needs will be addressed.

(iii) High quality digital content will be made available to students with extra support outside of the classroom. The digital content will be aligned to performance targets in each of the grade cluster. Through use of the Learning Compass students will develop their personalized learning strategy leveraging the power of technology to meet standards.

(iv)(A) To ensure that students are able to monitor their academic progress to determine progress towards mastery, the Learning Compass will allow students to monitor their progress on a daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. Students and teachers currently communicate through the Echo management system.

(iv)(B) The applicant did not address this criteria. The Learning Compass tool was identified as a data management system. It is unclear if the Learning Compass tool makes personalized learning recommendations based on the students current knowledge and skills as requested in the competition criteria.

(v) To ensure accommodations for high needs students, the applicant reported that students serviced under an IEP or 504 plans will have access to all curriculum and technological integrations. Students with IEP plans will be afforded all relevant procedures and will be monitored by a student support team or IEP team. Other high needs students would be able to participate in project based learning activities. They will also have access to the Learning Compass to ensure they are on track toward meeting college and career standards.

(C)(1)(c) The district has planned mechanisms to ensure students are provided training and support in understanding the tools and resources provided to them. As part of the program, the district has employed a digital content specialist who will coach all parties on the management system. This staff member will develop lessons for students to teach them about the online management system and how to use it. The content specialist will teach the teachers and they will with the teachers to teach students through specially crafted lessons that include modeling, think-alouds and student practice.

It is unclear whether each model will be implemented school wide or targeted for certain students in each school. Additionally, it is not clear if schools will be afforded the opportunity to change models if determined to be inappropriate or unsuccessful in participating schools.

The applicant addressed most of the items in this category and receives a score in the upper middle point range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
-----------------------------------------	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reported that professional development is central to its re-design efforts. Teachers and leaders will be expected to participate in professional development to support the model chosen for their respective school (s). A plan was also provided depicting the type of professional development activities teachers and leaders will be engaged in as part of the project. (a)(1) The applicant provided a professional development schedule of activities to support effective implementation of personalized learning environments. During their implementation year schools and leaders will participate in professional development centered on their model. In a phase two, school, specific professional development courses would be provided and encompass a different track, but centers on topics related to personalized learning instruction and supports. The purpose is to build teacher and leader capacity around the topic. By year three all professional development would be on track and everyone would take the same courses. Common Core Curriculum Training is embedded in all aspects of the training. This helps to ensure that students graduate college and career ready.

(a)(ii) The applicant reported that teachers will be trained on project based learning strategies. They will have ample opportunities to adapt content and instruction and for students to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their needs. The applicant did not identify specific instructional approaches to address individual learner needs and styles.

(a)(iii) The applicant reported that teachers will be provided professional development and will use formative and summative assessment measures in the classroom. Teachers will also utilize critical friends to improve individually as well as practice.

(a)(iv) The applicant reported that the district will use a Peer Assistance Review process as part of the teacher evaluation for

all professional development. Frequent feedback will be provided to teachers from peers in a supportive capacity. The applicant did not provide information on the process for evaluating principals.

(C)(2)(b)(i)

The applicant reported that teachers would be trained on the Learning Compass program and will have an understanding of optimal learning approaches for each student. Teachers will also receive training on data driven instruction to address diverse learning styles within the classroom.

(b)(ii) Teacher will receive training on high quality models selected at each school. This includes training on the tools to share and create new resources. Each model will be aligned to the college and career readiness standards. The models will be selected during various phases of the project.

(b)(iii) The applicant reported that all teachers will be trained on the processes and tools to support teaching and learning through personalized approaches. In addition, teachers will be trained on on-line resources available to personalize and customize the learning process.

(c)The applicant reported the district is currently working to align training, policies, tools, data, and resources to support effective learning environments. The work will continue in the years ahead.

(i)The applicant provided information on the tools currently used in the district to monitor student achievement and includes a dashboard, Delaware Performance Appraisal System, I-Tracker, and Identity Management system.

(ii) The applicant reported that training is provided on the Delaware Performance assessment system and data dashboard. Information is also shared in weekly professional learning communities.

(d)A plan was presented to ensure high quality teachers and principals. The district uses a peer assessment model as part of the teacher evaluation program. Plans also include use of existing pipelines to recruit teachers such as Teach for America or the Delaware Talent Management system. The district would consider the Delaware Leadership Project in the event of any principal vacancies.

The applicant provided coherent information that addressed most criteria in this category. The score will be in the mid range.

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

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The central office was re-organized with the hiring of a new school superintendent, as part of the re-organization positions was eliminated. Some were re-designed. The goal was to create a structure that supported teaching and learning. The applicant also provided a chart that outlined the key focus and new structure. The position titles and responsibilities are aligned with responsibilities tantamount to success with the Race to the Top Program.

(b)To ensure support and buy in regarding improvement initiatives the district developed a policy to provide clarity re in staff relations and responsibilities. School leadership teams are critical to the improvement process and are afforded sufficient flexibility and autonomy over most school matters. The board policy incorporates all key provisions identified in the competition criteria.

(c)The applicant reported that the state does provide flexibility to local school districts that will allow students to earn credit to progress and earn credit based upon mastery. At the time the application was written the district had not sought the waiver from the State Department of Education to implement this practice. A task force will be established in the district to review this option and develop new procedures, inclusive of a state waiver, allowing the local board to determine the policy.

(d) To ensure students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times the district has initiated a review and planning committee, with plans to implement a new standards based grading and reporting system. The applicant did not meet the requirement of this criterion.

(e)The applicant has identified plans to scale up reform models district wide. The district has polices, practices, and rules that facilitate personal learning for all students. The applicant did not specifically address learning resources and instructional

practices for students with disabilities and English learners, noting that IEP's are provided for special needs students.

The score for this category is the mid point range.

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

10

4

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Stakeholder engagement is an essential part of the improvement process. To ensure parent engagement in the process the applicant identified a vision to transform Parent and Family Resource Centers into a community of earners who value education. Personalized resources are currently provided for students. The applicant did not provide information regarding the extent to which parents, educators, and other stakeholders have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school.

(b) The applicant did not provide programs or strategies to ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have technical support needed to be actively engaged in the educational process, supporting personalized learning initiatives.

(c) The applicant provided reported that through the Home Access Center parents can access their child's records, assessment scores, and grades. Information was not provided on electronic systems and tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores records.

(d) The applicant reported the Identity Management System is the overarching state data system that links across multiple data warehouses in order to link student achievement, evaluation data, professional development and other data sources. The applicant did not provide information to ensure that all schools use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement data.

The applicant provided information on program components but did not specifically address the criteria in this section. The score in this category is in the low range.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a plan for continuous quality improvement within the six schools in the district. A chart was also provided to present a graphic of the essential components in the model. Each school will have a team of 6 staff members leading the improvement efforts within their particular school. School based leadership teams will monitor ongoing corrections and improvements. An external evaluator will play a key role in the development and evaluation of the plan. This will also consist of conducting surveys and focus groups to ensure stakeholder engagement. Regular feedback on progress towards goals will be obtained from the leadership team, through student surveys, and through program evaluations. Information will be publicly shared through the project website, newsletter, and an annual best practices forum.

The applicant did not specify how ongoing corrections and improvements will be handled after the grant period. Moreover the effectiveness of investments is identified in the Continuous Improvement chart but is not discussed as part of the narrative. It is unclear how the applicant will measure, monitor, and share information on the quality of its investment in professional development, technology, and staff.

This category scores in the mid point range

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided several strategies to communicate with internal and external stakeholders. This consists of the project website, newsletters, annual best practices forum, lunch and learn webinars, and conference calls. The applicant addressed the criteria in this category and scores in the high category.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>E)(3) The applicant provided charts with baseline and projected scores in each category for the required performance measures and additional performance measures to include the Kindergarten Observational Tool. The proposed goals are ambitious and achievable.</p> <p>(a) The GOLD Kindergarten Observational tool will be used to assess students from PK-3 through authentic assessments to identify assist in getting to know the students. Baseline data will be established during the initial year of the project.</p> <p>(b)The instrument will also assess each student's developmental level and assist teachers in determining personalized learning supports in early childhood.</p> <p>(c) The applicant did not describe how it would review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p> <p>The applicant addressed the criteria with most responses and is awarded points in the mid point range category.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>To ensure effectiveness of Race to the Top investments it is necessary to evaluate key program components. The applicant provided descriptive information related to program evaluation based on several program models. More specifically, the applicant noted that the evaluator will be using methodology similar to the University of Pennsylvania Center for High Impact regarding cost per impact. A cost effective analysis will be performed on all major components of the project. The applicant will be able to make informed decisions based on the data provided related to program cost effectiveness.</p> <p>The score in this category falls in the high point range.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant provided a comprehensive budget to support activities identified in the project narrative. Funds from various sources are included in the project proposal and consist of LEA, state, and other federal funds. The applicant has purposely aligned existing and future federal funds to support district initiatives. This provides leverage in implementing project funded activities.</p> <p>(b) The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. The district has committed funds to support the project and all costs are reasonable.</p> <p>(c)(i) A detailed budget narrative was provided with the proposal and provided a description of all funds, including resources from external support organizations.</p> <p>(ii)Based on the information provided in the narrative the reviewer was unable to determine funds that will be used as one time investments versus those that will be used in the ongoing operation.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant reported that the cost to maintain the program in its current form would be cost prohibitive without grant funding. The plan for sustainability consists of capacity building of teachers and staff. Moreover, the applicant noted that it would cost approximately \$1.5million dollars to sustain the key provisions as outlined in the sustainability plan, specifically the Peer Assessment Reviews. The cost is manageable given the reported federal funds within the district, community commitment and support.</p> <p>The score for this category falls within the mid point range.</p>		

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1)The applicant has successfully partnered with several community based organizations, businesses, and service providers to support school, family, and community concerns. This resulted in the creation of Family and Community Partnerships unit within the district. The purpose of the partnerships is to support family friendly initiatives and to provide personalized learning supports for students throughout the school district.

(2)A c hart was provided and included all population level desired results, population group, type of result, and desired results. The applicant identified population level desired results in early childhood (ages 3-5), all high school students, all families, high school students, and students in grades K-12. The desired results include indicators in the following areas, academic, health and wellness, and preparation for careers and college.

(3)(a)The applicant identified measures to track the results at the aggregate level for each category. Benchmarks will be established at the onset of the project.

(b). The applicant did not address this criterion.

(c)The applicant did not address this criterion.

(d) The applicant did not address this criterion.

(4)The partnership would strengthen the level of supports currently provided by the school. The school district has established parent Education Centers to support family and student concerns. There is currently a wellness campaign currently underway focusing on support and intervention for students in addressing academic and non academic challenges. The partnership is with the Center for Mental Wellness. A comprehensive wellness center would be established at the middle school. The district has also partnered with Headstart and Childhood Educational Assistance Program to provide support during the early childhood years. This support addresses social and behavioral needs.

(5)(a) The district identified plans to establish a district advisory council, to include student and parent representation, with the emphasis on the focus schools.

(b)The partnership would collect and review data, examining the delivery and outcomes of student services needed and provided.

(c) The advisory committee would coordinate all activities of the partnership to ensure services are provided to students most in need.

(d) Parent input will be solicited through the Parent Centers within the district.

(e. )The applicant did not address this criterion.

The applicant provided a chart with the performance indicators. Baseline data will be established at the onset of the project.

While the applicant provided information on several key partnerships, the plan is not cohesive, and the performance measures are not clearly identified. The score for this category ranks in the mid range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the application the applicant has provided a comprehensive narrative that discusses how it will adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to graduate college and career ready, build data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction, increase the effectiveness of educators, and turn around low performing schools.

Total	210	148
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1292DE-2 for Seaford School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Seaford School District application states

1) *The Seaford Advantage is the comprehensive vision for personalizing learning of students and teaching of teachers by*

a) *Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) adopted by the state of Delaware and the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS).*

A strength of the assessment system is the provision of computer-adapted formative assessments as well as the yearly summative assessment.

b) *Implementing a data system that measures student growth and success and informs teachers and principals with data to improve instruction. The district uses collaborative monitoring practices as well as monthly monitoring calendars to make sure data is used appropriately.*

Making sure not only that the data is available but that it is being used appropriately is a strong point of the plan.

*c) Developing effective teachers and principals through the use of an evaluation instrument with student growth a minimum requirement for an educator to be rated effective.*

By adopting Delaware's rigorous standard of evaluation the district is appropriately making student growth a priority. The evaluation is "... driving professional development, rewards and consequences."

*d) A commitment to turning around low-achieving schools by hiring a new superintendent and focusing on a hands-on approach to school improvement. They have determined that building human capital, teachers and principals, will result in increased student achievement.*

The strong leadership from the superintendent in committing resources to turning around these schools is a key to a successful initiative.

*2) Seaford articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests through*

*a) Pervasive technology access*

*b) A data system to inform decisions on student needs and provide individual learning experiences.*

*c) Provide educators professional learning opportunities on blended instruction and use of data.*

*d) Provide support and choice for families to ensure their child's success.*

*e) Set ambitious academic goals of decreasing the number of students, in all subgroups, not proficient by %70 on (DCAS), closing the achievement gap by 70% for all subgroups, and increasing graduation rates to 90% for all students.*

Seaford's vision for reform has a laser focus on accountability for student success and ambitious goals to make the vision a reality. The four educational assurance areas are addressed and goals aligned to those areas. This is a feasible plan.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) A description of the process that the applicant used or will use to select schools to participate. The process must ensure that the participating schools (as defined in this notice) collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements;

Seaford has selected all schools in the district and all students to participate in the grant. Their rationale for this decision was that they want to create a K-12 continuum of deeper learning models. This exceeds the competition eligibility requirements.

(b) A list of the schools that will participate in grant activities (as available);

A list is provided of four elementary, one middle and one high school.

(c) The total number of participating students (as defined in this notice), participating students (as defined in this notice) from low-income families, participating students (as defined in this notice) who are high-need students (as defined in this notice), and participating educators (as defined in this notice). If participating schools (as defined in this notice) have yet to be selected, the applicant may provide approximate numbers.

3,419 students will be participating. The 80% of students from low income families exceeds the 40% threshold for participation.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
---------------------------------------------	----	---

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the application includes a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools (as defined in this notice), and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals (e.g., the applicant's logic model or theory of change of how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served by the applicant).

1) All schools and students will be served.

2) A transformation model of school reform in Seaford has four initiatives which closely align with Race To The Top:

a) *Provide students with the opportunity to engage in high-quality teaching and learning focused on developing their 21st century skills in personalized learning environments.*

The partnership with Innovative Schools will be leveraged to engage the community to research, visit, and identify deeper learning models that would connect inquiry-based learning K-12 to extend the high school model of inquiry based learning to the middle and elementary schools. This is a sound practice which will assure that all students in the district have access to engaging, rigorous, personalized learning environments.

b) *Create rigorous, inquiry-based classrooms where teachers set high standards for college- and career-readiness, and measure progress with high-quality assessments and excellent data systems.*

Seaford teachers create thematic frameworks connected to student interest based on the Common Core State Standards. A focus on college readiness involves emphasis on AP and joint enrollment courses as well as access to the PSAT and SAT. These are best practices for increasing student mastery of rigorous standards and ensuring college readiness.

c) *Develop the skills of teachers and leaders using a personalized professional growth system.*

Seaford has added a staff development teacher and a reading coach to each school to build the capacity of teachers and leaders to fulfill the goals of the school improvement plan and for all teachers to become teachers of reading. Putting these and other supports in place for educators to improve instruction should impact student learning in a positive way.

d) *Engage families and the community in supporting students before, during, and after school.*

Seaford has focused on engaging the community in school reform and creating energy to support these efforts. A current expense referendum is planned to increase local financial support to sustain efforts initiated with grant funds. This effort is important as parent and community support is a crucial component of a successful ongoing school improvement initiative.

The plan narrative supports the logic model vision in section A1. However, specific activities, deliverables and persons responsible for each element of the plan are not always provided.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a) Seaford has provided performance data on summative assessments with very aggressive targets over the life of the grant for a 70% reduction in all students who are not proficient on the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS). Though Seaford admits this goal will be very difficult to achieve they are committed to reaching it. Though there is a strong vision and determination to make this happen, It is likely to be unachievable.

Performance measures should be provided for all grades being assessed which would be grades 3-10, however only aggregate, all grades, data is provided. Targets by grade level are needed to measure performance accurately and provide educators with targets and goals applicable to their students.

b) The district has set a goal of decreasing achievement gaps by 70% by the end of the grant period. This goal is overly aggressive and exceeds by a large margin the state ESEA target of reduction which is 50%. Data is provided for all subgroups and their comparison groups as required.

c) The district has a goal of 90% graduation rate for all students with a breakdown of yearly targets by all students and by subgroup. There is no explanation for how yearly targets were determined. Though the district notes that the graduation rate for the state is currently 82%. Baseline data for subgroups shows wide gaps for some subgroups with Special Education students having a baseline of 46.2%. Comprehensive intervention will be required to bring this group to the 90% goal.

d) The district has established a goal of increasing all students college enrollment rate to 85%, however, targets and goals for each subgroup are below the 85% number. There is no explanation for how this was determined. It seems to be impossible. The state college enrollment rate currently is 59% and the district is at 51.7% for all students. The strategies in the district vision if implemented well should lead to increases in the rate and meeting yearly targets with most subgroups. The special education population will need to be a strong focus as they have a baseline of only 9.1%.

The score on this criteria is at the high point of the midrange due to the failure to disaggregate performance data by grade level assessed on summative assessments.

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	10
------------------------------------------------------------------	----	----

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

1) A clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching, including a description, charts or graphs, raw student data, and other evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to—

a) Improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps:

The application cites its record of success in creating the Delaware New Tech Academy (DN TA) within Seaford High School and Sussex Military Academies. Because Seaford High was one of the three lowest performing high schools in the state the district was able to secure a Title I School Improvement grant and chose to implement academies within the school. Important to note is that students were selected from the first applicants who applied rather than being selectively chosen for inclusion. Though data is not provided to show a positive trend over time the table provided shows 2011-12 data with improvements from fall to spring in reading and math on the state assessment. 9th grade reading scores exceeded the state performance of 66.79% with a 71% an important milestone toward improvement. No information was provided on achievement gaps with comparison subgroups. In fact no data on subgroups represented in DN TA was included in the application.

Though the work with academies at Seaford High is a positive step toward increasing student achievement there is no information to indicate positive results in the rest of the district toward meeting the criteria.

b) Achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) or in its low-performing schools (as defined in this notice):

The district sites the work at Seaford High begun in 2009-10 with physically transforming classrooms, equipping them and adopting the New Tech learning model providing a framework, support and mentoring to change instructional methods and student focus. The results as described in B.1a are not comprehensive but show a one year trend toward improvement due to the reform model being implemented.

c) Make student performance data (as defined in this notice) available to students, educators (as defined in this notice), and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services:

The district provides information linked from the website that includes district information. There is a parent portal for grades, attendance, etc. which seems to function like a typical student information system. DCAS assessment data is mailed to the home. This year educators will have access to the State Data Dashboard which provides educators climate and achievement data which they can share with parents during conferences. Communicating information to parents in multiple ways is an effective practice and meets the requirement for making performance data available.

Scoring on this criteria is in the high midrange due to a lack of district-wide information on advancing student learning and achievement over the last four years as well as increasing equity in learning and teaching.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

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:

Seaford provides information in the narrative regarding sources of expenditure data. Included is a source of information for school level data in the Delaware Educational Statistics Report included in Appendix T. However, Appendix T shows only district level data.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
-----------------------------------------------------	----	---

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal:

*The district notes that Delaware state policy provides sufficient local autonomy in selecting curriculum and instruction programs in order to implement personalized learning models that are aligned to accelerate college and career readiness for all students.*

*While Delaware has officially adopted the Common Core Standards as the state content standards as noted in Delaware Administrative Code, Regulation 501 (State of Delaware, n.d.), state regulation provides autonomy to local districts in terms of instructional models and does not require specific programs or curriculum. The personalized deeper learning models which Seaford is pursuing in this grant are all operational in at least one other school across the state, thereby providing evidence that artificial seat time requirements or other regulatory means have not been a barrier for the implementation of these models; i.e., New Tech, Big Picture, Expeditionary Learning.*

The information provided above regarding local district autonomy regarding instructional models seems to justify the personalized learning environments proposed. However, the assumption that seat time requirements can be ignored because another school in the state is operating personalized deeper learning models such as Seaford is proposing is not proof of legal authority.

Scoring on this criteria is in the high midrange due to lack of information on receipt of official permission from state authorities to disregard seat time requirements.

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

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) A description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools (as defined in this notice) were engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback:

Seaford engaged the community, students, families, teachers and a collective bargaining representative in the process of developing and revising this proposal. Letters of support provide evidence of many revisions and quick responses to questions. There were multiple meetings and webinars.

Minutes included in the appendix of the application indicate thoughtful discussions about the district direction. The process was inclusive and rigorous.

b) Letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education:

Many letters of support from the community were included in the application appendix including businesses, non-profits, parent organizations, student support organizations, civic groups, early learning programs, etc. The governor, state legislators and other state supporters also provided letters.

It is clear the school district is well supported in implementing this project.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

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, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address:

Regarding current status the district proposal states that *after the first full year of implementation of the DNTA students have outpaced their traditional pathway peers in 9th grade reading by 29% and in math by 20%. Similarly, in 10th grade, students in DNTA outpaced their counterparts by 12% in 10th grade reading and 14% in 10th grade math. Leading indicators of a positive school climate reveal that Delaware New Tech Academy is providing a productive learning environment for students. Average Daily Attendance for DNTA students was 93.23% as compared to 89.80% for all other students. Furthermore, student discipline referrals from DNTA students only account for 14% of referrals while academy enrollment comprises 26% of the school population.*

*An analysis of the the DNTA implementation using the New Tech Network's School Success Rubric, the Delaware New Tech Academy (DNTA) can best be described as "Emerging" in terms of fidelity of implementation with many applicable descriptors from the "Advanced" descriptors even though it is only in its second year of implementation*

Performance gaps were identified in the narrative for the other grades as well as high school.

Information in the application shows a successful implementation of the academy model embedded within a low performing high school showing promise at the early stages. The success rubric in appendix O provides detail on the activities needed to move from at risk to the advanced level. The district plan to build on this model for district wide reform is feasible.

*The proposal states that through a gap analysis conducted by district administration Seaford teachers and administration identified two major needs that must be addressed in order to accelerate student performance: 1) K-12 system of deeper learning models with an inquiry-based curriculum and authentic student performance tasks; 2) Professional growth opportunities in order to systematically build teacher expertise in the development of rigorous and relevant curriculum aligned to Common Core State Standards.*

*There have not been sufficient structures and systems in place to fully provide a vehicle for systemic development of teacher capacity and expertise to meet the needs of all students.*

Making strengthening the capacity of its teachers a primary district goal is appropriate. It is clear that there is a realization that having an effective teacher has a great impact on student learning.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

**Learning:** An approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner such that:

(a) With the support of parents and educators, all students—

(i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals;

*Seaford's plan is to expand its deeper learning plan to all schools K-12 with focus options available for adoption by each school. Seaford schools will be able to help students understand how their learning helps them accomplish their goals by developing a curriculum framework with grade and content specific learning objectives in grades K-12 that align to Common Core State Standards for math and English/language arts, Next Generation Science Standards, Delaware Standards for social studies, and 21st Century Learning objectives. The student learning objectives (SLO) will be written so that they are understandable to students and their parents and will articulate the K-12 continuum of the Seaford Advantage.*

Replicating the model from the high school district-wide is an ambitious undertaking. There is no clear, cohesive plan for the expansion of the model to all schools. The models proposed all have components that would require students to understand that what they are learning is key to achieving their goals. They are responsible for their own learning

(ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals;

*The district has designed a curriculum framework that will contain each grade level's learning objectives and will be called a "Learning Compass," because as students journey through their personalized learning experience, they will use this framework to understand their end goal, create a pathway forward to reach their goal, and monitor their progress using what the District has named the Learning Compass. When developed, the Learning Compass will have a standard format for each grade level so that as students are taught to use the Learning Compass, their skills in using the tool can transfer from grade to grade. It will also provide the framework for articulating to parents and students how the college and career readiness standards will be addressed at each grade level and will provide the structure to monitor and individualize which standards or learning targets students have mastered and which still need to be addressed.*

The learning compass should be a unique tool that provides organization and standardization as the student moves along their learning pathway through the grades. However, since it has not yet been developed it is difficult to envision what it will look like and exactly how it will work.

(iii) are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

*The proposal states that opportunities for deep learning that align with student's specific academic interests is a key element of all deeper learning models that Seaford is exploring and will be reflected in each student's Learning Compass.*

Through projects, internships and other experiences that students can choose all of these models are valuable because they foster engagement and interest in students due to real life, authentic learning that makes sense and has value.

(iv) Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning;

*Seaford notes that student learning and exposure to global issues and diverse cultures outside of the community, context, and perspectives will be further broadened through the use of technology and cites a successful example from DNTA.*

Technology will be a valuable tool as students explore global issues as part of their projects and then use technology tools to communicate, create and share.

(v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving;

*Seaford notes that in order to prepare students from an early age to meet global challenges, 21st Century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, will be included in the Learning Compass continuum at each grade level. In each of the deeper learning models, 21st Century skills are taught and assessed intentionally through the use of project-based learning as the main instructional strategy, and by overlaying core subject content with deeper learning and 21st century themes.*

These models are designed to allow mastery of academic content in nontraditional ways that allows for the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to be reinforced. Increases in performance on state assessments will be the ultimate proof. Early gains were made at Seaford High, however, a clearer, more cohesive plan would need to be developed to make sure it can be successfully implemented K-12.

(b) With the support of parents and educators, there is a strategy to ensure that each student has access to—

(i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready;

*As noted in the narrative the development of the Learning Compass for each grade level is the foundation to ensure that each child in the Seaford School District is college and career ready by the time that he or she graduates. As described in earlier sections, each grade level's Learning Compass will be aligned to Common Core, State Standards, and will define a specific list of learning targets for that grade level that will be consistent across the district, creating horizontal alignment.*

Working through the standards progression with the learning compass and supports built into the models chosen could be a feasible plan for student success toward graduation and college and career readiness.

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;

*As described earlier, to ensure that all students in Seaford have access to personalized learning environments, Seaford Schools District will undergo a complete redesign, implementing a K-12 system of "deeper learning" small learning academies in place of its current traditional academic programs. This strategy will be implemented in all six schools served by the District, giving Seaford families access to a variety of of new, engaging, and personalized public school programs to choose from within one district.*

The variety and quality of the models Seaford has chosen is a main strength of this proposal.

(iii) High-quality content, including digital learning content (as defined in this notice) as appropriate, aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice);

*Through this grant opportunity, the Seaford Advantage will make digital content available and accessible to all students by making it more portable, searchable, customizable, and durable. To effectively provide these resources, the district's digital content specialist will work with each grade cluster, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12. This person will be responsible for working with teachers to maintain the Learning Compass on the online management system for that grade cluster, aligning digital content to those learning targets, coordinating professional development with the Deeper Learning Model trainers and coaches, and developing lessons to use with students to teach them about the online learning management system and how to use it.*

The use of a cloud-based online management system for access to digital content is a sound approach. A number of high quality digital resources are mentioned. A strength of the system when completed is that digital content will be aligned to learning targets in the management system so that students can pick from a wealth of resources. It is important that an employee will assume responsibility for managing these resources in order to resolve issues that arise as well as working with teachers and students.

(iv) Ongoing and regular feedback, including, at a minimum—

(A) Frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice), or college- and career-ready graduation requirements;

It is not clear in the narrative how often data will be updated district-wide. There is a focus on students examining their own

data in support of mastery of learning targets from the learning compass. This is a sound practice as students progress to managing their own learning.

(B) Personalized learning recommendations based on the student’s current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), and available content, instructional approaches, and supports;

*The district notes that the combination of the K-12 vertical alignment of Seaford’s Learning Compass, the learning management systems like Echo, Big Picture Online, and Schoology which can facilitate students acquisition of learning targets and digital content will provide the tools needed to personalize each student’s learning progression, engage students in powerful learning experiences through multi-media and interactive activities that are aligned with classroom activities and make learning a more powerful experience for students so that they graduate on time – college and career ready.*

The resources planned for implementation appear to meet the criteria. Supports are provided both online and by teachers and peers.

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students (as defined in this notice) to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice);

*The district states that accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students is inherent in deeper learning classrooms through the use of project based learning, differentiated instruction through the use of technology, flexible grouping, “field work” and through a focus on personalization through the use of the Learning Compass. Any student serviced under an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan will at all times have equal access to all curricula and technological integrations into those curricula whether it is for instructional delivery or supplemental support of content acquisition. Student support and IEP teams will look at each student individually and decide which accommodations within the classroom and modifications to instructional delivery or integrated technology tools have to be made based on that individual student assessment. Accommodations and modifications will be imbedded into the student IEP or 504 Plan, dictating what strategies and interventions must be put in place for students to have equal access to curricula.*

Personalized learning lends itself to special needs populations. The IEP is a personalized learning plan. If the Seaford Advantage project maintains its focus on personalization and deeper learning models and acknowledges, as stated above, that accommodations and modifications must still be made then this criterion will be met.

(c) Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

The district plans to provide training to teachers so that they can train and support their students on use of tools and resources provided to them to track and manage their learning. This is one more responsibility for teachers that might be hard to do effectively, in a timely manner.

Scoring for this criteria is in the midrange due to the lack of evidence of a timeline that is manageable. A large number of new initiatives and responsibilities will be implemented with and by teachers. A clear, cohesive plan for aligning and coordinating tasks and responsibilities is needed so that the plan is feasible.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) All participating educators (as defined in this notice) engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to—

(i) Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student’s academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready;

The district has a two track training plan for teachers and leaders that is not coordinated. A complete plan for professional learning with all training activities, timelines, and responsible person(s) is needed.

A strength of the deeper learning models is that they have learning communities built in composed of other schools, teachers and leaders using the model. Seaford teachers and leaders will collaborate as professional teams using the same model. Annual conferences are held and provide learning opportunities and a chance to network with educators in other districts. A valuable resource is the ability of teachers to submit projects, etc. to the model coaches for evaluation.

(ii) Adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches (e.g., discussion and collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio, manipulatives);

The extensive use of project based learning in the district will give students the ability to engage in common and individual tasks. Teachers will be trained to use project based learning. Training and support for PBL should build capacity for effective implementation in the district to meet student needs.

(iii) Frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice), or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice) and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators;

Because of the nature of the instructional models much of the student work will be self-paced and teachers will be facilitators. Training will be provided on embedding formative and summative assessments into daily instruction. Additionally teachers will learn to craft rubrics to align with school-wide learning outcomes and student learning targets. This is an effective plan to ensure teacher effectiveness in measuring student progress.

(iv) Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems (as defined in this notice), including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

To provide frequent feedback on both professional learning tracks the district is implementing the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process for teacher evaluation in conjunction with the teacher's union. This is a collaborative process to have expert teachers mentor and evaluate their peers and an effective plan to improve teacher practice in a collaborative way.

(b) All participating educators (as defined in this notice) have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice). Those resources must include—

(i) Actionable information that helps educators (as defined in this notice) identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests;

Teachers will have access to annual student interest surveys and learning style inventories as part of the learning compass to design instruction. Teachers will have coaching on data driven instruction and use of the data system, DCAS. Administrators have opportunities for training and serving on data teams. The district plans to link interventions to learning targets so that after analyzing student data teachers can guide them to the appropriate intervention. Progress on intervention software can be analyzed by teachers. This is a feasible plan since it not only provides a wealth of data but a clear, actionable plan on what to do with the data to assist students.

(ii) High-quality learning resources (e.g., instructional content and assessments), including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), and the tools to create and share new resources;

Teachers have these online resources through their deeper learning model. They will have the ability to assist students with projects using technology tools such as Smartboards, tablets and productivity software as needed in the New Tech model. Evidence is provided that high quality content is available to teachers and students as part of the Seaford plan that will meet the criteria.

(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs (see Selection Criterion (C)(2)(b)(i)) with specific resources and approaches (see Selection Criterion (C)(2)(b)(ii)) to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

Through the deeper learning models teachers and students will have access to a variety of learning approaches. By year three all teachers and leaders will be trained on the learning models and have access to a large number of tools and resources to customize and personalize student learning. This is a feasible plan. The plan to hire additional technology specialists is important to assure support in integrating technology tools.

c. The training, policies, tools, data, and resources must include:

(i) Information, from such sources as the district’s teacher evaluation system (as defined in this notice), that helps school leaders and school leadership teams (as defined in this notice) assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement;

The proposal states that the district will implement the PAR program to help evaluate both veteran and novice teachers understand how they are performing and help develop plans for improvement. This coupled with intensive professional development will provide ample opportunity for teachers and leaders to accelerate their performance within the districts new learning framework. This should be an effective approach.

(ii) Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps (as defined in this notice).

*The proposal states that Seaford’s teachers and administration currently participate in all Delaware Department of Education training opportunities to ensure that they are using the full power of the Insight Data Dashboard and the data analysis processes of DPASS II. In addition, the district will provide training in data driven instruction. Each of the deeper learning school designs also provides extensive training on the use of their technology and understanding data.*

Teachers ability to access a data management system facilitating response to intervention processes to identify and monitor appropriate tiered academic interventions for students is important step in the intervention and acceleration process toward meeting academic goals.

A unique and effective practice is having the Seaford superintendent meet with school leadership teams for their weekly data review meetings. This emphasizes the importance of the process and keeps the superintendent informed. Keeping the goal of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps is more likely to occur with practices such as this one in place.

(d) The applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals (as defined in this notice), including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).

The proposal provides information on the district focus of increasing numbers of effective and highly effective teachers and principal. This should be achievable by improving effectiveness of current staff through professional learning, using the PAR process to remove ineffective teachers who are not improving, and accessing human capital pipelines made available through Delaware’s Race to the Top plan.

Scoring for this criteria is in the high midrange due to the lack of a comprehensive, coordinated professional learning plan with with timelines, activities, audience, and responsible person(s).

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

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by—

(a) Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure (as defined in this notice), to provide support and services to all participating schools (as defined in this notice);

The new superintendent restructured the district office to better support the schools. The inversion of the structure with the superintendent on the bottom and the schools at the top with support flowing upward is a graphical depiction of the organization as described in the narrative here and throughout the application. From the superintendent’s meeting weekly with leadership teams to the human resources director managing leadership professional development for administrators, the necessary support structures seem to be in place. A high level of support is being directed to the schools both academically and operationally and the leadership structure is sound.

(b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools (as defined in this notice) with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets;

Board policy in Seaford gives the school leadership teams the flexibility and autonomy they need to manage the key factors

listed in the criteria as long as their decisions don't conflict with board policy. These leadership teams have increasing responsibility for driving school improvement and are able to look at new models and support to improve student achievement which is key to the plan proposed. There is a strong plan in place to continue to build the capacity of these leaders.

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic;

Seaford states that state policy allows districts the flexibility to create policies that will allow students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. Though they recognize a policy is needed it appears from the narrative that they do not have one in place.

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways;

The district notes they are planning to implement a standards-based grading and reporting system which will give students the opportunity to demonstrate master of standards in a variety of ways. They have a comprehensive plan to implement the change which includes developing a grading and reporting committee which includes parents and community stakeholders as well as educators. An important part of the plan is that it is based on recommended principles for effective grading and reporting systems.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners;

The deeper learning models are accessible to all students including students with disabilities and English language learners. The district states that accessibility for all instructional programs district wide is assured through the development of standards-based Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities and Individualized English Learner Plans (ELPs) for students who are English language learners. This inclusion model is critical to achieving the goals of decreasing achievement gaps and improving performance toward standards. Another reliable practice is the use of research based interventions such as Scholastic's Read 180 and Compass Learning.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
--------------------------------------------------	----	---

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Ensuring that all participating students (as defined in this notice), parents, educators (as defined in this notice), and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning), regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal;

The district meets this criteria due to The Parent and Family resource center established in 2011 for student and family access to homework help and tutoring, a computer center with classes available offered in both English and Spanish in order to assist families in accessing the Home Access Center and other district internet-based resources focused on student learning.

Though this is an excellent resource for families the best practice would be to provide home access where it is not available especially when there are transportation or other issues prohibiting access to the center.

(b) Ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning) have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies (e.g., peer support, online support, or local support);

The narrative does not adequately address technical support.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format (as defined in this notice) and to use the data in other electronic learning systems (e.g., electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores personal records);

The application states that currently Seaford is one of only two districts in the state to pilot a data link between the statewide assessment the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) and the student support program Odyssey a Compass Learning product. This linkage provides each student with an individualized learning plan based on the initial fall assessment. This appears to meet the criteria and adds to the effectiveness of the intervention. However, there are no other applications listed that have this capability and no mention of plans to explore developing it.

(d) Ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems (as defined in this notice) (e.g., systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data).

Not all data systems used in Seaford are interoperable. However, the Identity Management System provides teachers and leaders the ability to access all state-wide data systems with a single login. There is no mention of budget data being

included.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: Through the work of an external evaluator and a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process the district has a strong plan for keeping the project on track, solving any problems and eliminating roadblocks through the implementation of school-based CQI teams. The creation of a planned project website will be an effective method of communicating CQI status to all stakeholders.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district has a multi-pronged approach for communication and engagement with stakeholders that should be effective. The project website, an online and printed quarterly newsletter, an annual best practices forum and other avenues used by the district for engaging and informing stakeholders are appropriate strategies.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:  All performance measures required have been provided with annual targets except for measures/assessments that are new to the district and have not been administered or assessments that have been administered but results are not yet available. Disaggregated SAT data is not yet available. In all cases the district plans to complete the tables when information is available. When results are not available percentage of increase in targets projected is provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Rationale is provided for selection of applicant- proposed measures.</li> <li>b) Some information is provided on 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</li> <li>c) No information is provided on how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress</li> </ul>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: Seaford plans to use a professional external evaluator and the CQI process to evaluate all facets of the Race to the Top – District funded grant. Additionally, with the assistance of the external evaluator the district plans to use a model to determine cost per impact and do this type of cost effectiveness analysis for each major program and as many performance measures as possible. This is a comprehensive evaluation approach that should provide a complete picture of effectiveness of investments.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant's budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identifies all funds that will support the project.</li> </ul>		

- b) Seems reasonable and sufficient to support the proposal and is aligned with the goals of the project.
- c) The rationale for budget items is clearly defined
- i) Describes all funds and total revenue from those sources.
- ii) Identifies funds that will be used for one-time investments versus for ongoing operational costs. The budget narrative and budget provides evidence of a coherent plan of funding to reach and sustain project goals.

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

10

10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Seaford has a high quality plan for sustainability after the grant term. A budget is included clearly indicating how funds will be reallocated to continue funding those items that will require ongoing funding such as licensing for the deeper learning models, the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program and increased staffing.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- 1) The district has provided a list of partnerships it has established to support the plan described in this application. The narrative provides descriptive information about partnerships. The support of these types of partnerships is important to the district.
  - 2) Seaford has identified five population-level desired results that align with the district proposal.
  - 3)
    - a) Tables provided track the selected indicators that measure results for all students and for subgroups.
    - b) Tables provide targets based on data collected to improve results. Subgroups targeted are low income, English language learners, special education, and African American, Hispanic and white ethnicities. This emphasis correlates with the goals of the project.
    - (c) An implementation plan is not provided for scaling this model beyond the participating students.
    - d) Targets are provided to indicate a plan to improve results over time. The district has invested in a business liaison employee whose job it is to obtain internship opportunities for students and coordinate activities between the business community and the schools. This is a positive step toward sustainability of partnerships and opportunities for students.
  - 4) The narrative describes how the partnerships integrate education and other services such as intervention for health and mental health services.
  - 5) The plan provides information on how staff capacity would be increased such as training to identify at-risk behaviors and the plan to establish school based intervention teams.
  - 6) Tables provide the annual performance measures. Population-level desired results are included for the populations targeted.
- Scoring for the Competitive Preference Priority is in the high midrange due to the lack of an organized, coordinated plan.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Seaford has a high quality plan for personalized learning environments so that students graduate on time college and career ready. The plan to use deeper learning models seems feasible to accomplish project goals. Focusing the district on this

model with leadership taking a hands on approach to school improvement is important. Reallocating existing funds to continue the project is an effective strategy. Creating a more focused, cohesive plan for the project with all components included would be a more comprehensive, feasible approach to communicate with internal and external stakeholders and would increase the likelihood of success.

Total	210	172
-------	-----	-----



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #1292DE-3 for Seaford School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative provides convincing evidence that Seaford has aggressively addressed the four core assurance areas through its own work (e.g., Seaford Advantage; data warehouse and reporting system; MAP assessments; Baldrige adoption) in conjunction with the State of Delaware’s assessment, standards, and educator evaluation systems.</p> <p>The use of additional assessments beyond that required by the State and use of an extensive collaborative data monitoring process indicate the applicant is serious about meeting its ambitious student achievement goals and following through on its theory of action of building capacity of educators to increase student achievement.</p> <p>Overall, the narrative provides a compelling description of an LEA serious about reform, with a history of attention to each of the four core assurance areas. This supports a rating in the upper range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative includes a thorough and reasoned explanation of the process used to select schools to participate in the project. Based on the LEA’s success in an earlier project, the application includes all LEA schools in the project.</p> <p>The narrative includes a complete and thorough table of participating schools, students, and educators, the number of students who are high need, and number and percent of students from low-income families.</p> <p>This inclusion of all schools and students in the LEA supports the applicant’s commitment to their vision and theory of action, and is evidence of a systemic educational reform approach.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant fully addresses the criteria in a high quality manner, which supports a rating in the high range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative presents a comprehensive set of activities and strategies (e.g., assigning staff development teachers to all schools) that the LEA has undertaken to address their districtwide reform plan. Individually, each strategy addresses an important improvement focus area: student engagement in learning; rigorous instruction; measuring student progress with high quality assessments; sufficient and appropriate data; developing great teachers and leaders; engaging parents and public. Each component aligns with one of the four primary LEA initiatives, which focus on building educator skills and knowledge to increase student achievement.</p>		

The programs and initiatives selected by the applicant have proven to be successful in other settings (e.g., peer assistance and review) in strengthening educator skills and raising student achieving, so it is reasonable to believe they will have similar impact in Seaford.

Overall, the narrative present an ambitious set of high quality strategies and initiatives that align with the LEA's outcome goals, which support a rating in the high range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
-----------------------------------------------------------------	----	---

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set ambitious performance goals overall, for status on the DCAS, and for growth. Some of the subgroup goals are very ambitious (double or triple the current proficiency level), but appropriate given the historical low performance of students in those subgroups.

The narrative presents a reasonable and convincing argument concerning the LEA's achievement gap goal (70% reduction), which is substantially above the State target (50%).

It is not clear from the narrative whether the graduation rate target (90%) and college enrollment target (85%) meet or exceed State targets. These are ambitious, and for graduation rates, reasonable and achievable. The overall post-grant target in the table is 15 percentage points (85% vs. 70%) higher than the previous year, which is an unrealistic increase.

Overall, the narrative provides a convincing argument that implementation of the plan addressing their vision would result in meeting their student achievement goals, all of which meet or exceed the State ESEA targets.

The lack of clarity regarding graduation targets, however, supports a rating at the low end of the high range.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The data provided in Appendix D do not support the narrative assertion of increased achievement at DNTA, as the table provides only one year of data and does not indicate the results reflect growth on the DCAS from fall to spring.

The Appendix D table and chart are unclear as to what they represent in terms of student achievement. The presentation of only one year does not enable determination of change. The differences in attendance rate between academies may be significant, but statistical analyses on the data must be provided to support that assertion, and no statistics were provided.

The number of students in each academy is needed to determine if the percentage of discipline referrals at the Military Academy is higher or lower than should be expected based upon enrollment, compared to the other academic programs. The data presented in the narrative and appendixes do not support the assertion of improvement in attendance due to participation in the two academies.

The narrative states, justifiably, that the impact of the new academies on graduation and college enrollment cannot be measured at this time. The narrative did not include, however, documentation of increasing graduation rate over the past four years. Two year data from 2010 and 2011 indicate lower graduation (71.8 vs. 65.4).

The narrative indicates the LEA is willing to make significant reforms at the high school level, including physical plant restructure, classroom renovation, and changing the instructional model to project-based learning. These substantive changes support a conclusion that the LEA will make other changes needed to fully develop a personalized learning model, not only at the high school, but K-12.

The narrative provides a brief description of how student performance data are shared with parents and students through links to State and LEA web sites.

The narrative provides minimal information on what student performance data are available to educators. Educator access to a new State tool is noted as being available in 2012-13, but there is no information provided on what was available to educators in prior years or from the LEA data systems.

Overall, the application does not provide evidence of a clear record of success over the past four years of improving student

learning outcomes, closing achievement gaps, raising graduation rates and raising college enrollment rate. However, the narrative provides evidence that the LEA has made substantive changes in structure and program in its lowest-achieving school, and has taken numerous steps to implement personalized learning strategies.

In total, the evidence supports a rating in the middle of the middle range.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative and appendices indicate that Seaford provides links to State reports, for both budgets and expenditures, by district. These State reports include aggregated totals of school-level personnel salaries for instructional and support staff, teachers, non-personnel expenditures.

In addition, the applicant provides evidence that the LEA, on a quarterly basis, informs its public about its finances.

However, the evidence provided in the application does not indicate that State reports provide expenditures by school, which is required in this section. Although the data are provided for the school level (as compared to district level), there is no indication that the LEA provides expenditure data disaggregated by school.

Overall, the evidence presented indicates the applicant has not met completely the requirements of B2, so a rating in the middle range is supported.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative documents several ways in which the State provides support for implementation of personalized learning environments. These include the RTTT initiative (teachers meet in professional learning communities for 90+ minutes a week), a longitudinal data system and dashboard, local autonomy in selection of curriculum and instruction programs, alternate routes for teacher certification, a statewide educator evaluation system, allowing waivers of statutory provisions, and support for capital infrastructure.

The applicant has already taken advantage of some of these State supports, including use of professional learning communities, employment of teachers completing alternate certifications, and construction of the DNTA through state and local funds. The LEA has also joined relevant networks for support, including the Alliance of Model Schools, Vision Network, and Delaware Leadership Project.

Overall, the narrative indicates that the State has created supports for personalized learning environments, and the applicant LEA has taken advantage of appropriate ones to implement their vision, which support a rating in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
-------------------------------------------------------	----	---

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes examples of stakeholder engagement for personalized learning environments prior to the RTTD NIA as well as during the RTTD proposal process.

The narrative noted that changes were made in the plan to incorporate views of participants in meetings, but no examples of revisions were included in the application.

The applicant included 21 letters of support in an appendix, with respondents representing local businesses and community organizations. In addition, the application included letters of support from local and state officials, the LEA Board of Education, and teacher organization. The application did not include any letters of support from institutions of higher education or local parents or parent organizations.

Overall, the stakeholder engagement both before and during the RTTD proposal process demonstrates that grant implementation and sustaining programs post-grant should have an acceptable level of support from a wide variety of stakeholders.

However, the application is not clear on the level of parent involvement in the proposal development process, as there is no letter of support from a parent organization, and the narrative does not summarize feedback by stakeholder group (except teachers). Parents are a key group needed for implementation and sustaining the programs over time, so a lack of information on the level of parent support is disconcerting.

Overall, the evidence supports a rating at the high portion of the middle range.

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

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The data on student success at the DNTA as presented in the application do not provide compelling evidence for success of the DNTA, as there may be other reasons for the performance differences described instead of participation in the DNTA. The application does not include the results of any statistical analyses that would partial out prior achievement and other factors that might be the underlying reason for performance differences between DNTA students and other students.

The results presented in the Status of the K-12 System portion of the narrative are not compelling, as the data are not provided in a table or appendix. Also, the data provided in Appendix D are not sufficiently clear to support the narrative statements on student growth.

Because the data are unclear in Appendix D and the conclusions in the narrative are not supported by the data, the gap analysis results based on these data is compromised. Thus, a rating in the lower part of the middle range is supported.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides substantial information about the applicant's plan for implementing deeper learning models in all of the LEA's schools. This includes the process each school will use to select a model and the overall timeline for implementation. This model selection process and timeline seems reasonable for a phased in implementation approach.

The application is not clear as to how the deeper learning models are used at the four high school academies, and is not clear where the IB and Sussex Military Academy fit within the deeper learning models.

The narrative describes development of a Learning Compass document as a major deliverable. However, the narrative does not adequately explain the timeline for development, or responsible parties involved in the development activities for each grade level.

The narrative provides a thorough example at the high school level of how students would be involved in deep learning experiences. However, no examples were included for MS or ES students, which are more problematic levels for implementation as the students are younger and less mature than HS students. Thus, it is not clear if the applicant has fully developing plans regarding project implementation at the ES and MS levels.

The narrative provides an engaging example at the high school level of student exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. However, the narrative did not include an example of this for ES or MS, which are more challenging for implementation because of the age and maturity of the students.

While the narrative described how skills such as critical thinking, creativity and collaboration will be included in the Learning Compass, there was no plan or timeline included for the process of evaluating these skills by multiple parties including peers and panels of experts. Thus, it is difficult to determine how effectively and reliably these skills would be measured.

The narrative is not clear on whether there will be a single learning model at each elementary and middle school, or whether multiple models will be offered at a school site. The narrative is not clear on whether all students in an ES or MS must participate in the particular deeper learning model, or whether the current traditional model will be an option, too.

The narrative denotes that each of the learning models use the primary instructional delivery method of Project Based Learning. The narrative does not provide sufficient information on what strategies will be provided for students who do not learn best using projects.

The narrative provides a convincing description of how the LEA will make digital content available to students at all grades. Students will use a learning management program, such as Echo or Schoology, to access resources, and teacher will monitor student progress, assigning particular resources to individual students as needed, using the same programs. This is an ambitious strategy for ensuring content aligned to college and career ready standards.

The LEA's project depends heavily on the Learning Compass technology. The narrative is not clear about the processes, timelines, and responsible parties related to its development, and to ensuring the data are updated and entered into Learning

Compass to provide the most up-to-date information.

The application describes the training and support available to students and teachers to ensure they will understand how to use the data access tools for monitoring and managing their learning.

Overall, the application narrative addresses each of the required selection criteria, providing a description of separate activities, products, professional development opportunities for educators, and the processes students would use in achieving his or her individual learning goals.

However, what is missing is an explanation of how these disparate activities fit into a cohesive, unified plan, with a timeline that is manageable and doable for staff and students, with clear, definable deliverables, and clearly assigned responsible parties for accountability purposes. It is not clear how everything fits together into a unified plan for improvement in the LEA. Thus, the application supports a rating at the top end of the middle range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
-----------------------------------------	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative includes a general description of the professional development activities for educators participating in replicating a learning model. , with monthly timelines provided for project activities such as finalizing facility plans. However, it is not clear from the information provided exactly who participates in each activity, the specific dates of activities, what the deliverables are from the activities, and who the responsible party is for purposes of accountability. All of these are needed to determine if the plan is feasible and credible at a high level.

The narrative provides adequate explanation regarding a number of activities and professional training opportunities, such as The Critical Thinking Consortium, The Alliance of Model Schools, Project-Based Learning workshops, Take One! training program, and National Board Certification.

The narrative does not sufficiently describe how the LEA will align and integrate all of these projects and activities for teachers and coordinate the trainings, follow ups, and evaluation of use of these numerous strategies. Without a clear, concise plan for coordination and alignment, the teachers and principals will be overwhelmed by the trainings and confused as to what are the priority activities. The narrative does not include how the LEA will ensure that teachers are not overwhelmed by multiple professional development experiences, and does not include a timeline for training, using the strategies, receiving feedback on and evaluating the use of strategies by teachers for improved student learning. All of these are necessary to determine if the plan is feasible and practical.

The narrative describes training for teachers in formative and summative assessments, and in student led conferencing which are useful and effective in increasing student achievement. The narrative does not provide an explanation of the processes for ensuring mastery of these strategies, and for integration with other strategies and professional development offered to teachers.

It is not clear in the narrative if Track 1 and Track 2 teachers and leaders are the same as Tier 1 and Tier 2 tracks for professional development.

The Tier II leaders will participate in an established, researched Skillful Leaders program focusing on learning what constitutes excellence in teacher performance. The narrative does not state how this program aligns with the State teacher evaluation system. If it is not closely aligned, teachers and principals might receive conflicting data on needs, teaching strengths, etc.

Overall, the application narrative addresses each of the required selection criteria, providing a description of separate activities, products, professional development opportunities for educators, and the processes teachers would use in creating personalized learning environments for his or her students.

What is missing in the narrative is an explanation of how these disparate activities fit into a cohesive, unified plan, with a timeline that is manageable and doable for teachers and principals, with clear, definable deliverables, and clearly assigned responsible parties for accountability purposes. It is not clear how everything fits together into a unified plan for improvement in the LEA. Thus, the application supports a rating in the top portion of the middle range.

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 narrative sufficiently describes a reorganized LEA central office that is restructured to provide direct support to schools and principals. The structure should be sufficient to provide needed organizational and instructional support to the LEA's schools for project implementation.

The narrative provides a clear description of the autonomy and flexibility options at the school levels, which should be of sufficient scope to provide schools with the ability to individualize their approach to personalized learning environments needed for project implementation.

The narrative indicates the LEA Board of Education has not passed a policy allowing students to progress and earn credit based on mastery, not seat time. The narrative describes the process the LEA will take in reviewing graduation policy, seeking waiver requests from the State Board of Education as needed in order to implement policy changes. The narrative did not include a timeline for the activities required in this policy change process.

The process described in the narrative for implementing a standards-based grading and reporting system includes a unreasonable timeline to accomplish the task. The activities presented and subcommittees described should be sufficient to develop a workable policy and procedures prior to the 2014-15 implementation. However, the development of a complete assessment and reporting system for standards-based grading is likely to take more time than allotted in the timeline, given the complexity of creating reliable and valid assessments for all high school courses.

It is not clear that Appendix P reflects the plan for implementation of the standards-based grading and reporting process, as stated in the narrative. Rather, Appendix P appears to be a chart for the overall RTTD project implementation.

The application provides an extensive description of the processes in place to provide adaptable and accessible instruction for students with disabilities and English learners. Each of the deeper learning models focuses on individualized learning plans. Thus, both current and possible learning environments in the LEA thoroughly address the needs of students with disabilities and English learners.

Overall, the LEA's policies and practices provide some support for implementation of their plan, but some additional policy changes are needed to enable credit for mastery and not seat time. The timeline does not appear to be realistic for completion of an assessment and reporting system for standards-based grading, particularly at the high school level. Thus, a rating in the middle range is supported.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides a thorough description of the Parent and Family Resource Center, which appears to have programs and access in place to provide students who need assistance and resources outside of the school day with this support.

The narrative did not provide any data on use of the Center by students and families since it began in 2011, which would provide support for saying that the Center is reaching its desired audience and serving its intended purpose. Thus, it is unclear to what extent the Center will be an effective LEA support during project implementation.

A wide variety of opportunities is described in the narrative for additional mentoring, homework, and literacy programs through the Parent/Family Resource Center. The narrative does not include any data on how the current use compares to what was expected prior to project start up.

The narrative provides information on technology that provides additional opportunities for learning outside the classroom, such as Study Island and Compass Learning Odyssey.

The narrative does not address the issue of allowing parents and students to export their information to other applications. Thus, the applicant has only partially addressed this selection criterion.

The narrative provides sufficient information on three data tools (Education Insight Dashboard, I-Tracker PRO, Identity Management) to communicate their purpose and how they function. However, the narrative does not include information on how educators would easily access and use these three systems. It appears that educators would need to combine various pieces of information/data from these three systems to facilitate instruction and personalized learning plans, which is an impediment to sustained used by educators.

The narrative did not indicate that these systems are built with interoperability, nor that there would be a single source by which to access the data from these three separate systems.

Overall, the evidence in the application supports a rating in the middle range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA is poised to implement a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiative to address continuous improvement during project implementation. CQI is an exemplary process for addressing improvement of processes that are impediments to high achievement, if sufficient training and commitment to its full implementation are provided by top organization leaders.</p> <p>The narrative provides a comprehensive set of activities and trainings for the CQI Team development strategy, as well as a myriad of methods used for monitoring changes made as a result of using the CQI process.</p> <p>In addition to the “as needed” CQI measurement and monitoring, the narrative presents a set of more traditional qualitative and quantitative strategies that will be used for evaluation in the continuous improvement process. These strategies include periodic focus groups, student surveys, and weekly school meetings and walks. The data from these strategies will be integrated by the outside evaluator with State and local assessment data for analyses and reporting.</p> <p>Overall, the strategies and processes described in the narrative present a comprehensive continuous improvement process, which should be sufficient to measure and monitor the impact of planned grant-funded activities.</p> <p>However, what is missing from the application is an explanation of how the CQI process, which is time consuming and needs commitment and leadership for success, fits into a feasible training and implementation timeline for teachers and principals, who have a substantial number of other professional development activities and requirements as a part of the personalized learning initiative. The feasibility of thorough implementation is low because of limitations on staff time. Therefore, the overall quality and completeness of the narrative supports a rating in the middle range for this section.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The methods described in the narrative to ensure communication and engagement with stakeholders includes a variety of traditional strategies: newsletter; website; webinars; lunch meetings; annual forum. In combination, they should provide a reasonable amount of information to and engagement with the intended audience.</p> <p>The narrative does not include a complete timeline of the communication activities, but only general timeframes (e.g., yearly). In addition, the parties responsible for the activity completion are not provided. It is not clear how monthly Lunch and Learn Webinars for teachers is feasible and would operate, as teachers usually have short lunch times spread out over a wide daily time frame.</p> <p>Overall, the application provides a basic set of communication strategies that lacks a timeline or responsible parties, which are needed to determine if these activities are sufficient for effective communication throughout the project implementation period. The lack of clarity and completeness on the timeline support a rating in the middle range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes the required tables which outline targets for students taught by highly effective or effective teachers/principals. The targets are reasonable and address the project goals.</p> <p>The application does not provide a narrative for this E3 selection criterion; some information is included in the tables (e.g., MAP reading at grade 3), but insufficient information is included on the rationale for MAP and how the measure is aligned with and tailored to the project plan and goals.</p> <p>It is not clear in the application which percentages for MAP grade 3 reading are the actual targets as the application includes two tables identical except for the percentages for 2016 and post-grant.</p> <p>The application provides measures for all of the required grade spans and performance areas. Overall, the targets are reasonable based upon baseline data and experience with the assessment. The targets for MAP and Engage, as they are new tests for the LEA, are based upon the publishers’ normative data. The changes over time on MAP and Engage are reasonable. The target for the SAT Benchmark score is perhaps overly ambitious, given that the baseline is 10% and the 5-year target is 50%.</p>		

Overall, the application includes required performance measures, but provides insufficient information as to the rationale for selection of some of the new measures (i.e., MAP, Engage). Therefore a rating in the middle of the range is given.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides a philosophical description of how the LEA plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTD funded activities. In general, the narrative does not provide a clear, thorough description of the activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties for evaluation activities. Rather, the narrative states that task will be left to the project evaluator during the first three months of the grant.

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

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget narrative and tables—overall and for the four projects—clearly identify all of the funds that support the implementation of the proposal. The line items identify if the funding is from RTTD grant or from IDEA, Title I, Title II, Perkins, State Funding, State Grant, RTT-State, Title III or other source.

Several expenditures are not clearly explained, such as costs for World Language Teachers, who are not mentioned anywhere in the grant application except in the table for project level costs (Deeper Learning Models project).

The budget table does not provide sufficient explanation for registration expenditures for professional development, as to why expenditures increase in each of the first three years of the project.

The narrative and tables provide insufficient description of one-time costs versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs during and after the grant period. Some costs (e.g., video recording equipment) are only expended in year 1 of the project. However, the tables and narrative do not provide information on the personnel line items (e.g., the World Language Teachers) as to whether or not these are ongoing operational costs after the grant funding period.

The narrative and tables do not provide information as to why some of the funding for consultants, registration, stipends (for completion of Take One module) are in only year 1 or 2 of the project and not needed throughout the project.

Overall, the budget narrative and tables provide a basic level of information regarding the reasoning behind expenditures. The source of the funds is clearly provided, but it is not clear what are ongoing expenditures for the program or one-time expenditures (and why they are one time). The budget is sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal, but not always clear as to the expenditure's linkage to the goals. Thus, the budget information rating falls into the middle portion of the range.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative does not address the key issue of training in the numerous components of the project for new staff after they are hired. In order to maintain the level of teacher efficacy in using the strategies implemented in this project, there must be a thorough plan for immersing new staff in the project's deliverables. The narrative does not address this key sustainability issue.

The sustainability plan as presented depends substantially on reallocation and use of federal Title I, II, III, IDEA, and Perkins funds. The application does not provide a sufficient explanation within a plan in case federal funding is reduced.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative provides a brief description of a number of partnerships between the LEA and public and private organizations.

The population-level desired results address the required categories (educational, and family and community) from the selection criteria.

The narrative does not address how the partnership would use the data from the performance measures to improve results for participating students, nor does it provide specific strategies for improving the results over time.

Overall, the narrative does not describe a coherent set of partnerships with an overall plan. The presentation does not include a high quality plan with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties for implementation for accountability purposes. The partnerships described in this section do support the overall project goal, but there is insufficient coherence and alignment in connecting each of the partnerships with each other, especially at a school level.

In total, the evidence in the application support a rating in the middle range for this section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Seaford RTTD project is an extremely comprehensive and ambitious project, which raises a major concern over feasibility. The project would implement many new activities, assessments, professional development activities, technology applications. The number of new activities, tools, assessments, processes, expectations, demands for teachers and principals from this project are so many that effective, efficient, and thorough project implementation is unlikely. The narrative does not address the process it will use to manage, coordinate, and align the competing demands from various project components, particularly the professional development demands on teachers. Thus, while individually, each component in the plan has worth, there was insufficient description of how the project would be managed and coordinated to not overwhelm teachers and principals.

Total	210	150
-------	-----	-----