



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1306PA-1 for Universal Companies

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They articulate a concise and coherent reform vision that is aligned with all four core assurance areas: 1) Standards and Assessments 2) Data Systems 3) Developing Teachers and Leaders and 4) Turnaround Schools. The vision is based on over ten years of experience with high need urban schools. The criterion also calls for a comprehensive vision. Their vision description was not sufficiently substantive and detailed. Nevertheless, this area is strong overall.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant addresses each of the criteria: they provide list of six schools; why schools were selected (turnaround designation and low performing); and numbers and types of participating students. Data is also provided for each school that documents the significant number of high need and low income students (p. 72-73). Nearly 100% of their students in all six schools meet the grant need and low income definitions. Later (page 64), they do say that only five of the schools have persistently failed. Also, the reading and math data (page 72) states that 65% of their overall students are proficient in these subjects. Overall state proficiency is not included in the table. This causes some confusion. Their implementation approach is very well met because it is targeted at critical schools and students.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>On the surface, this criterion appears to be not applicable because each of these six charter schools is independent and there are no related LEAs to scale up to. However, their scaling up, or perhaps better characterized as "reform integration" consists of specific, targeted strategies to go beyond simple math and reading test scores and scale up to several other critical programs and services, such as: the entire core curriculum, child obesity/health education, project learning, world cultures and technology. Weakness: it does not include each of the specific Race elements of a high quality plan. In total, their information is considered comprehensive and strong for this criterion.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Their overall proposed academic performance increase is 10 percent improvement annually. This is achievable, but not particularly ambitious. The tables (overall and by school) and narrative provide a clear and thorough display of sub groups, subjects (primarily math and reading), baseline data and five-year goals (in math, reading, graduation rates and college enrollment). Some sub-group data was not sufficiently documented. Gap data presents some significant sub group/school variations, such as: math gap for economic disadvantaged (Institute school, page 73) is small and math gaps for this sub group at nearly all other schools is large. Meanwhile, there appears to be no math/reading gaps for all ELL sub groups (at all schools). In addition, their overall high school graduation and college enrollment rates are very high (although no comparable state rates were found). These data are confusing. They also describe several other planned reform strategies (i.e. childhood obesity, behavioral/classroom management and teen pregnancy) that are not directly aligned with academic performance. In summary, this section is met at a medium level based on the above analysis.</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	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section asks for a record of success for the past four years in advancing student learning/achievement. Five of the six schools are only two years, or less, old as charter schools. The sixth school, Universal Institute (UI), started in 1999. The UI reading/math performance is not disaggregated over four years (this is a weakness). In 2011-12, UI is below the state reading/math performance in all their grades (3-8). Strong, positive math/reading success (over one year) is provided for two of the six schools. In lieu of four year data for all six schools, the applicant does, briefly, cite successes at another of the six schools and at two other non-pilot schools. Their description of making student performance data available to students, educators and parents is overly traditional and does not provide strong evidence of participation leading to improvements. Overall, the record of success is incomplete.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They explain that school budgets are made transparent and discussed at each school board meeting and these are open to the public. They only include one sample budget. It has a category for instructional salaries, but does not disaggregate this further by teachers only, as requested in the criterion. No other information is provided describing high levels of transparency in school-level processes or practices. Summary: the criterion is very weak and not met.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They provide an extremely brief statement that the Consortium is governed according to contract terms with the Philadelphia school district. A copy of the contact is not included and no specific citations or excerpts are provided. This is extremely weak and insufficient. It is too sparse to determine what conditions and autonomy exist, if any.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The discussion of stakeholder engagement and support is mixed. Strengths include: a positive letter from the president of the student advisory committee; support signatures (on petitions) from a large number of staff representing all six schools; letters from a mayor and some state legislators; and information about two meetings that were held. The signatures appear to represent at least 70% of the 190 total educators at the six schools. Weakness: there were no letters from other key stakeholders such as the business community, civic groups and/or higher education. Conclusion: the criterion is well met with a few weaknesses.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They provide specific documentation about their 2012 reading and math achievement gaps (in relation to the state and their public school district). This criterion is about them having a high quality plan that identifies the needs and gaps in their proposed grant reform proposals. They provide no such clear plan or information about this criterion.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They do not provide a high quality plan with all the required components: goals, activities, rationale, timeline, deliverables, responsible parties and overall credibility. They do address several required plan areas, such as: instructional strategies, college/career ready course of study, graduation requirements, and learner engagement/empowerment.</p>		

Weaknesses: plan does not include timelines, deliverables and responsible parties; most goals are not described and coherently articulated; little or no evidence of effectiveness is cited to support their reform strategies; their plan for greater access to diverse cultures and perspectives lacks rigor, active and personal interactions, and quality; and several non-academic initiatives are inappropriately included (i.e... Healthy Foods imitative; Behavioral Health; and teenage pregnancy).

Strengths: some innovative and credible activities; some rationale; a few clear goals (i.e... such as three technology outcomes in sub-criterion a.iii); dual enrollment classes with a community college; student teaming for shared projects; Schoolnet suite; and Digital Media Management and Delivery.

Summary finding: They partially meet this criterion for the above stated reasons.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Their response includes some evidence that address components of a high quality plan, such as: activities and rationale. They present some appropriate and sound plans as well as insufficient information. The RFP states that this section may be up to eight pages. The authors submit slightly over 5 pages. This is a weakness because they do not (in several areas) provide enough details and specific information to ensure that their responses are complete.

Strengths: These components are promising: project based learning; high expectations; performance driven; Teacher Content Institute; Teachscape and Danielson Distinguished Teaching Suite; hand held Technology Enhanced Building Walkthroughs (but this is not sufficiently described to determine their fidelity)

Weaknesses: This criterion says the applicant must describe their approach to implementing instructional strategies for all students. There is insufficient discussion about instructional strategies and why they are effective. Frequent student progress measures are stated as only every six weeks (this is not frequent). The planned teacher training is vague and ambiguous. The high quality plan for instruction from highly effective teachers and principals lacks sufficient detail and specifics.

Conclusion: Based on the above evidence, the criterion is incomplete and only partially met.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Race has a detailed definition (with seven specific components) for consortium governing structure. **Strengths:** Six MOUs are included (pages 26+); they use the consortium template provided in the RFP. The leadership, management and organization provided by UCED are convincing. Dual college enrollment opportunities are innovative. Mastery of standards will be provided in multiple ways including program extension option, self-study and tutorials. They also adequately address their strategies for providing learning resources for special need students such as those with disabilities and ELL.

Weaknesses: The Race MOU (Governance, article VI) states that the method of decision-making must be described. Their MOUs do not address this. They do not clearly and specifically acknowledge that each school has a school leadership team that meets Race definition, nor will teams have flexibility and autonomy as prescribed in the criterion. Overall, the criterion is met to a medium level.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

They describe several school-based supports that will provide access for students, educators and parents to most content, tools and learning resources, such as: Study Island, Digital Media Management System, etc.

Their major challenge/weakness is that more than half of their families do not have computers and/or internet access. They do not propose a strategy for resolving this weakness. Related to criteria c and d, they state they have a new interoperable data system that addresses most of the elements in these criteria, but there is no description of whether and how any electronic learning systems or instructional improvement data are included. This is a weakness.

Overall, the criterion is mostly met.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Most of this section consists of general statements and affirmations such as: “we will...” These statements do not constitute a clear and concise strategy describing how they will monitor measure and share project progress. They do present a coherent strategy for carrying out a rigorous continuous improvement process. They state they will model their strategy on something called the COMPSTAT process used by the NY City Police Department. However, no description is included about the NY process and it's fidelity or validity. For the previous reasons, the criterion is very weak.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Their proposed communication strategies (i.e.. web site, newsletters, parent guides, family picnic) are generally adequate. Little description is provided about how there will be meaningful engagement with stakeholders (i.e.. workshops, focus groups, etc.). It appears that the web site will be for internal and external stakeholders. The newsletters and parent guides are targeted at some of the external stakeholders. The criterion specifies a clear and high quality approach. Overall, their strategies are limited.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They present fourteen performance measures, overall and by sub-group in a summary chart and over a dozen detailed tables.</p> <p>Strengths: Measure 12 is particularly innovative because it addresses career-ready outcomes for non-college bound students. Annual targets are provided for each measure. Sub-groups are included for relevant measures.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Most do not have clear rationales. Obesity, behavior and pregnancy measures are included and no rationale for their relationship to student academic performance is provided. The grade 11 PSSA test measure (# 11) is weak because they propose only 5% annual improvement (whereas,10% annual improvement is projected in the elementary grades. They do not include a measure related to increased internet access for families (which is earlier identified as one of their major needs). They do not clearly describe how they will review and improve measures over time if some are insufficient to gauge progress.</p> <p>Finding: The criterion is partially met with weaknesses. Most of the measures are attainable, but not ambitious because gains are relatively modest.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>They do not describe a clear,coherent and high quality evaluation plan. Clear goals, deliverables, persons responsible and timelines are not presented. They say, if funded, then they will proceed to prepare a detailed plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the investments, such as employing a professional evaluation consultant who will be charged with this responsibility. The consultant will also study reviews of best practices in all subject areas. All of these specific components are absent. Their responses are inadequate and weak.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A detailed itemization of all major expenditures is provided for Race grant funds. These are reasonable and sufficient, with the exception of funds for obesity and pregnancy programs. A rationale, clear descriptions of funds, and identification of one-time</p>		

investments are provided in the Budget Subparts. The details of the technology, staffing, equipment, supplies, contractual, one-time investments, and workforce connectivity are well documented. Funds from other sources are documented. They do address their sustainability plans and these are adequate because they include projected annual increases in per student funds as well as other local/state and foundation sources.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

They have components of a sustainability plan and detailed budget. Future financial sources are: increase student growth and FTE funding and unidentified (i.e. state/local, corporate, foundation, etc.) sources. Each of the Race grant high quality plan components are not clearly included.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The intent of this priority is to support applicants seeking to provide additional student and family supports that address “social, emotional or behavioral needs” in partnership with a public or private resource. The applicant proposes to expand offerings/programs in their career technical education partnership. Although these appear to be innovative and effective career ready paths and programs, they do not meet the preference priorities of “social, emotional or behavioral needs”. Finding: the applicant does not meet this preference priority. No points are awarded.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Personalized Learning Environment absolute priority is not met because of significant weaknesses in these Race criteria: prior record of success and reform conditions, state context for implementation, needs and gaps analysis, continuous improvement, evaluating effectiveness of investments, and sustainability. Specific details about each of these weaknesses can be found in the comments related to each criterion in the main sections. They do not coherently and comprehensively describe learning environments that provide assurances that learning and teaching will be improved through clear and effective personalization strategies and tools.

Total	210	104
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

They seek \$1.5 million to support their Regional Workforce Connectivity project. The narrative is incorrectly included in the Competitive Preference Priority section of their proposal. This is extensive and innovative because it provides offerings/programs in specific occupations connected with their career technical education partnership. The areas to be addressed are health related technology, electrical, culinary arts and transportation. A high quality plan is not completely

developed and included. Finding: the supplemental project should be approved, provided a high quality plan is completed.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1306PA-2 for Universal Companies

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant presents evidence of an all-inclusive process of a developing reformation instructional process that addresses key educational goals. Applicant displays structural evidence of a developing reformation instructional process that addresses core educational assurance areas. The vision includes stakeholders, utilization of data analysis and progress monitoring. The vision also includes processes and opportunities that could lead to accelerated learning, student achievement and outcomes. Applicant displays a broad base of featuring a comprehensive reform vision that includes a high quality education for all students in a safe and nurturing environment, building future community leaders and positive members of society, resulting in the applicant receiving a high point range score. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant provided a list of schools that will participate in grant activities. The applicant also provided a chart with participating schools, grade levels, number of student participants, number of educators and year of beginning management of each school. Applicant identified targeted schools, listing the applicant's charter school consortium; which identified its lowest performing schools used with the proven turnaround model. Presented by the applicant is an array of their highly data-driven processes, the education model used that supported the identification of its lowest performing schools and participants justified the selection. The detailed chart provided and the already in place initiative of the turnaround model that led to the selection of schools and participants results in the applicant receiving a high score. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already in place is a defined vision with the inclusion of the development of neighborhood schools as community enrichment centers. Applicants attempt to define a reform & change in four categories; deepening student learning, cognitive skills development, learning behaviors, and personalized student support based on academic interests. A highly quality plan in this section was not fully met according to the RTTT-D definition. Given the lack of adherence to this section's requirements, yet a well-defined reform listed, a medium score is given. 		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant provides sufficient data.
- Applicant clearly reference criteria points and a clear progression of their vision for improved student learning and academic performance.
- Applicant list goals that are ambitious and reasonably set for success of the students.
- Applicant's non-cognitive interventions are impressive with extensive plans that include challenging childhood obesity, behaviors that disrupt the learning environment, and teenage and unplanned pregnancy.
- Applicant presents material with adequate relevance to the expected criteria, resulting in a high score.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has documented success for the past few years with tables comparing enrollment and the different school results on the School District of Philadelphia and State's exam. • Applicant makes student performance available four times per year via report cards and teacher conferences. • The open door policy given to family members provides opportunities for reviewing student performance data. • The applicants' documentation is comprehensive and convincing showing improvements and success. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant's budget is announced in the School Board meetings that are open to the public. • A detailed description of the budget is not presented. • Lacking is the breakdown of how funds are disseminated for personnel salaries at the school level. • As such, the applicant receives a low score. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	1
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although, the applicants' consortium members are governed according to contract terms with the school district of Philadelphia, the applicant provides inadequate information justifying state codes as governance of a public school. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provides documentation of support, but the extent or method of input concerning this grant proposal was lacking. • Applicant offered limited concrete evidence that would demonstrate a description of how participants and end-users shared their input into the proposal. • Groups were identified as LEA partners, but insufficient support to delineate the engagement process utilized to solicit input that would affect the proposal was lacking, therefore results in a mid-range score. 		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate data is presented related to documented academic needs and gaps of targeted groups. • Various demographic data is presented that depicts a student group in dire need of multiple interventions. 		

- However, the required identification of needs and gaps for the purpose of this grant proposal are insufficient, resulting in a low score earned.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has an ambitious vision and platform to ensure students graduate career and college ready. • LEA does not have the staff or structure in place to actuate such an ambitious program. Personnel will be hired to facilitate the programs initiated. • Applicant includes educators in facilitating the personal learning environments of the learners with a plan to continue and develop existing programs and implementation of newer ones, which includes individualized personal learning environments geared to improved student learning. • Applicants' plan presents a comprehensive and ambitious plan to incorporate programs and processes designed to address a broad scope of student learning styles and develop teachers to implement them. • The presentation of programs, documented history of performance and outlined proposal plans presented by the applicant receives a lower of a high score. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant outlines unique methodologies in providing improved student achievement using assessment data, individualized learning environments, small learning groups, and the adjustment of the curriculum to meet the students' needs. • Professional observations, unique to the LEA provides opportunities for professionals to participate in their evaluations, reflect on, and add comments and later apply observations to their professional development. • The applicant outlines professional development plans of educators that are part of their continuous improvement process. • Applicant provides a multi-layered plan to ensure teacher and administrator development to help teachers prepare student for college or careers. • Applicant utilizes the Universal's Educational Plan (UEP) program which sets high expectations and data driven performance approach to increase academic student achievement. • Data driven decisions are utilized by educators to identify learning needs and approaches for the students. • The objective of the applicant is to introduce new technology learning tools, utilized by a Front-End Technology Consultant to provide support to students and teachers. • Although not fully implemented, the proposal offers attention to details of compliance with key goals, activities, timelines, responsible parties for implementing activities, all which lends itself to a high score. 		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	3
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEA Universal Central Education Division provides leadership, technology and administrative support and services to all Universal schools. • Applicant provides information of the interpretation and communication of data to a wide range of stakeholders. • Applicant is less forthcoming with actual details of the required practices, policies and rules as expected. As such the applicant receives a low score. 		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant lists numerous programs, but the plan lacks policies and practices to be used for success. • Applicant fails to provide a plan for students from year to year. • The school infrastructure is unclear, resulting in a low score. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant will adopt the COMPSTAT process management philosophy and organizational management tool. • Applicant will use assessment data, Universal Educational Plan to create a system of interconnected feedback among teachers and principals. • Applicant does not list a performance measure that is tractable and computable, as such a low score is given. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant will provide stakeholders with a webpage of information to internal audiences and external stakeholders. • Applicant proposes a plethora of information to the website to ensure ongoing communication and engagement. • This detailed description of providing information to stakeholders equates to a high score. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provided a clear list of performance measures. • Applicant list the various subgroups. • Applicant list the performance measures that are trackable and measurable. • Applicant list performance measures in grades PreK - 3, math and reading proficiency, technology competency, childhood obesity, and food and nutrition knowledge. • Performance measures in grades 4 - 8 includes math and reading proficiency, technology competency, and reducing disruptive behavior. • Performance measures in grades 9 - 12 includes the number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, the number and percentage of students participating students who are on track to college and career readiness, technology competency, health: and reduction of pregnant or parenting students. • Applicant presents mandatory performance measures in detailed charts, which contributes to a high score. 		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts and information are not presented in E4. Charts are found in E3. • Applicant will contract and rely on an evaluation consultant to assemble team to conduct outcomes and effectiveness of grant proposal. • The applicant does not present high expectations of student academic success in Reading and Math. • Applicant post-grant success of 3rd graders in Math is 72% for economically disadvantage students, IEP is 2%, and ELL is 79%. 		

- Applicant post-grant success of 3rd graders in Reading is 56% is economically disadvantage students, IEP is 6%, and ELL is 39%.

The omission of detailed funded activities, professional development and activities, results in a low score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provides a detailed, comprehensive budget analysis of funding to implement their reform vision proposal. • The applicant budget presented is reasonable and sufficient to attain goals as stated in the proposal. • LEA depicted a clear roadmap of the source of funds to enact the details of their vision, resulting in a high score. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant provided a detail budget for their guidance tool for vision implementation, but it is unclear if the applicant has a plan for proposal continuance for the long-term. • Although the applicant presented a detailed plan, the applicant basically asserts their inability to confirm commitment of financial support from external sources relying solely on the anticipated one-time allocated of the grant money, with no plan of sustainability. • As such, the applicant is given a low score. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clearly evidenced in the reform process was the applicant's vision of working with existing partners or creating new partnerships. • Performance measures were listed as required, with ambitious goals for students at key outcome points. • The required details of this criterion are met with a narrative that is not consistent with the need to integrate funding. • Applicant misses the requirement to address the emotional, social and behavioral need of all student participants. • Applicant list a host of partnerships, but little details of how these partnerships will support the proposal. • Applicant list of population-level desired results for students is not clearly defined. • Applicant will use data but no clear cut plan as to how the partnership will use the data to improve student results over time. • Applicants plan lacks components in the plan and progress monitoring, resulting in a low score. 		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressive is that the applicant has over 12 years of successfully turning around failing urban schools. 		

- The applicant will not create a new curriculum, but utilize the core curriculum of the School District of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure students are career and college ready. There is no innovative or original development of a curriculum to ensure students are career/college ready or to decrease achievement gaps across the student groups.
- Applicant plans to accelerate student achievement and deepen learning with a technology data driven learning environment that is not explained and is vague.
- Applicant plans to increase the effectiveness of educators by providing professional development opportunities. Other opportunities will include the use of interactive desktop videoconferencing integration, which is impressive but does not list the lessons, courses or modules that will be covered.
- Applicant provides limited opportunities to increase rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and career ready.
- Applicant will utilize a digital technical education video clips of various careers to introduce and educate students of the numerous careers available to them. There is no mention of providing courses within the schools to introduce and teach career opportunities.
- Applicant provides financial incentives for instructor certifications and continuing education, but lacks reference for providing incentives for improved student achievement.
- Applicant developed a proposal shell that outlines the intended engagement of stakeholders that does not outline the development of a strong program.
- Many partnerships are provided, but not clearly evidenced in the reform process was the applicant's vision of working with existing partners or creating new partnerships.
- The required details of this criterion are met with a narrative that is not consistent with the need to integrate funding.
- Applicant did not refer to the requirement that would address the emotional, social and behavioral need of all student participants.
- Applicant will use data, but no clear cut plan as to how the partnership will use the data to improve student results over time.
- Applicants proposal lacks components in the plan and progress monitoring.
- Applicants goals are without supporting details for delivery, leaving gaps for results for the students involved.

Total	210	115
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Applicant structures a supplemental proposal that provides support for workforce liaison and four tech assistants to coordinate local businesses to place students in career/work transition positions. Additionally, the technician assistants will assist these students with reading and math skills to pass industry certification tests. This additional, specialized student support comprises the applicant’s Optional Budget Supplement.

The three areas outlined by the Department are not all equally fulfilled.

- Category number one claimed to qualify by virtue of the specific population served—Career and Technical Education students. Examples as provided in application under category number are not the limits of compliance to qualification.
- Category number two is adequately addressed since this venture can be carried out independently of the main grant-funding request.
- Category number three is satisfied due to the supplement being sound, reasonable and adequate to reach stated objectives. Due to meeting requirements and category intent, applicant receives a high score.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1306PA-3 for Universal Companies

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of a coherent reform vision but is weak in the area for tasks based on student interest since their evidence in this area is primarily related only to high school students in Career coursework as well as access for families and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core curriculum is linked to the Common Core State Standards and Career Technology Education. • The consortium will use the Charlotte Danielson Framework for teacher evaluation and improvement but failed to provide quality evidence on their principal evaluation and improvement system. • Universal has worked with lowest achieving schools and turnaround schools and shown growth for the schools. • There is a plan for increasing personalized learning environments through technology and teacher support and training. • More than half of the families do not have computer access and the plan fails to address adequately how this will be addressed since much of the family engagement with lessons and progress are internet and computer based. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range. There is evidence of a rigorous curriculum but insufficient evidence on how students interests will be brought in to deepen learning and how they will address the family engagement issues with the personalized learning environment structures.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides adequate evidence of an approach to implementing the proposal that will support high quality school-level implementation by serving all students and schools since they are all considered low performing and meet eligibility requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant will serve all six of the schools in the consortium since they are all low performing schools. All students will be served and each school meets the eligibility requirements. • A list of the participating schools is included in the proposal. • The metrics of the participating students is provided including the required information. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the high range for this criteria with their approach to serving all low achieving schools and meeting the eligibility criteria.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides some information on how they will create meaningful reform in all the schools but fails to provide a high-quality plan linking goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, or responsible parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does not have to address scale up since all schools are being served. • Insufficient information is provided in regards to a high quality plan: goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible party. • Student learning will be deepened through building on the remedial education framework with technology which does not give a clear agenda for the wide array of learners including enrichment activities. • Critical thinking and inquiry-framed learning will deepen student learning. • The proposal will focus on learning behaviors to promote responsibility for work and to work collaboratively. 		

- Academic interests are addressed only at the high school level.
- How students interests will be addressed in K-8 is insufficient other than noting they will us a vast array of learning and research opportunities.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range due to lack of the elements of a high quality plan and weaknesses in a complete description of personalized learning activities to address low to high achieving students as well as to address the interests of K-8 students.

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

The applicant provides adequate evidence of ambitious and achievable performance goals but fails to provide a high quality plan linking outcomes to timelines and responsible parties.

- Interventions will be provided to assure all schools meet or exceed the NCLB annual progress goals by the end of the grant period.
- The goal for graduation rates is to meet or exceed state cohort on-time high school graduation benchmarks.
- The achievement goals are ambitious and achievable for state assessments in reading and math, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. Goals equal and exceed the state ESEA targets.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low end of the high range due to a lack of timelines and responsible parties linked to the performance measures.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some evidence of success but their overall record of success is not evident with gaps left in the information provided for success in the five schools as well as three other schools they took over. The system to provide stakeholders with performance data to be used to inform and improve is weak.

- Universal's first charter school has met or exceeded AYP goals for 12 consecutive years. Evidence is provided on how far they are behind the state and city schools but failed to provide raw data of where they started to prove clear success. Annual report cards from the state indicate the school is generally performing above the city schools.
- Universal was assigned three turnaround schools in 2002. The applicant provided information on success in two of the schools but failed to provide any information as to if they were successful with the third school.
- Universal included information as to how they improved achievement gaps in the five other schools included in the consortium. The increases range from minimal to significant.
- Universal has makes school-level performance data four times a year through report cards and teacher conferences. They also stated they have an open door policy. This does not constitute a strong system to make performance data available to stakeholders in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

Overall, the participant scores within the medium range due to a lack of evidence for a clear record of success as well as a weak system for sharing performance data to engage stakeholders and improve instruction.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to provide a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and policies. Only expenditures were addressed and the information provided did not indicate a high level of transparency.

- Universal makes available all school-level expenditures as described in the criteria through public board meetings open to the public and presented to school principals in an understandable manner. This does not prove a high level of transparency in being able to access the information at other times than the board meeting.
- No information is provided on how the consortium makes transparent the policies and practices of the schools.

Overall, the applicant scores in the low range for this criteria due to a lack of evidence for a high level of transparency for areas outlined in this criteria.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides insufficient evidence of how their contract with the Philadelphia schools allows the flexibility and supports the success of the proposal.

- The applicant is governed according to contract terms with the School District of Philadelphia. The applicant states the contract supports education management flexibility sufficient to support proposal activities but fails to give a description of how the contracts supports the success of the proposal.

The applicant scores in the low range due to lack of evidence as to how the contract actually allows the flexibility or support the success of the proposal.

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

The applicant provides insufficient of meaningful stakeholder engagement with vague information on how input was used and lacked to prove evidence of community engagement other than a reference to them attending the meetings.

- Parents were invited to meetings during the planning process in October and November of 2012 but the applicant fails sufficient evidence of how input was garnered and how the input was used to develop the proposal or if their input caused any changes to the proposal.
- Signatures are provided to verify at least 70% of the teachers support the proposal.
- The letters of support are general and primarily from government officials. There is no evidence of business and community support or engagement in the development of the proposal.

Overall, the applicant provided weak evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement but did provide evidence of teacher support which places them in the medium range for this criteria.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to provide evidence of a high quality plan analyzing needs and gaps to implement personalized learning environments. The information they provided was not related to personalized learning environments.

- The applicant addressed the needs by providing information on the difference between LEA and state proficiency level percentages on state assessments. This does not provide information on how they identified needs and gaps in relation to implementing personalized learning environments.
- No evidence was provided on the elements of a high-quality plan or how the analysis supports the logic behind the reform proposal.

The applicant scores in the low range due to the fact they did not address analysis of their current status in implementing personalized learning environments.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides insufficient evidence of a high-quality plan with weaknesses in engaging all learners including those needing enrichment, frequent and individual feedback, or a comprehensive personalized sequence of instructional content.

- The proposal's technology driven learning builds on their remedial education framework and fails to provide information on how they will provide this for all students including those who need enrichment.

- The proposal state a "significant" amount of time is spent on data analysis linked to student achievement and professional development but failed to give specifics about how often, what data, and how it is used to improve student achievement.
- Several instructional programs were noted in providing a personalized sequence of instructional content without information as to how the applicant will bring all the programs together for one cohesive personalized instructional approach sequenced K-12 for career and college readiness.

Overall, the applicant fails to provide evidence of the elements of a high-quality plan that engages students in an age-appropriate manner and scores in the medium range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has strategies in place for improving learning and teaching but fails to provide specific information linked to personalized learning environments and the information lacks the elements of a high quality plan.

- The applicant includes information on teacher training to support personalized learning environments using current trends and research driven instructional practices. Zero periods will allow teachers to meet daily to share successful strategies, review data, and develop monthly curriculum and regrouping strategies. The Teacher Content Institute offers professional development throughout the year and there is ongoing training on the use of the Digital Media Management Delivery System.
- The teacher evaluation systems will focus on improvement through the Teachscape and Danielson Distinguished Teaching Suite.
- Training will be provided on the tools to be used in the program by a technology consultant and technology leaders at each school.
- Insufficient information is provided on the steps to be taken with an ineffective teacher including support, training, or termination.
- Insufficient information is provided on the principal evaluation and improvement plans other than it is similar to the one already in place.
- The elements for a high-quality plan are not addressed such as goals linked to activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

The applicant scores within the medium due to strategies in place but a lack of clarity linking them to personalized learning environments and a lack of the elements needed to support a high-quality plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to provide strong evidence of practices and polices that support learning environments including lack of school leadership teams, no evidence of promotion from mastery rather than time on content, and lack of the elements of a high-quality plan.

- The schools are under the control of Universal's Central Education Division which prefers to direct higher-level LEA operations and functions in order to maintain a consistent institutional framework therefore School Leaderships Teams was not indicated.
- Insufficient evidence was provided on promotion due to mastery rather than time on content.
- The technology to be used will provide opportunities for a way to demonstrate mastery multiple times in in multiple ways.
- Universal offers adaptable instructional practices for all students including handicapped and ELL.
- Elements of a high-quality plans including goals linked to activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties was not indicated.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range due to the lack of elements of a high-quality plan, no evidence of flexibility and autonomy with school leadership teams, and no evidence of promotion based on mastery rather than time on content.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence which is weak in relation to an infrastructure that support personalized learning especially for families and also fails to provide the necessary elements necessary for a high-quality plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The technology formats will allow for parents, students, and teachers to access the information from home. 50% of the families do not have computer access and this will continue to be addressed throughout the proposal. • The applicant described how teachers and administrators will be provided technical support but failed to mention student and family support. • An interoperable data system is in place to provide exporting of data for parents and students but the description of how this will be done is vague. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range for this criteria. Some supports are in place to allow parent and student access and use of the online personalized learning systems but the plan is weak with no evidence of the elements of a high-quality plan.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides insufficient evidence of a high-quality plan for rigorous continuous improvement with a lack of information on how the quality of its investments will be shared publicly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accountability and management process will be the COMPSTAT process originated by the New York City Police Department including using similar approaches to data management, multi-layered dynamic analysis, software and agile asset deployment. This does not provide sufficient information as to how this will provide rigorous continuous improvement in the schools in relation to personalized learning environments. • The Universal Education Plan will create a system of interconnected feedback for the Central office, principals and teachers and aggregate the data to continually improve learning outcomes. This does not provide evidence of a high-quality plan with outcomes aligned to activities, timelines, deliverables, or responsible parties. • Little evidence is provided that information will be shared publicly on the quality of the investments. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range with some evidence of regular feedback on progress but a lack of evidence of a high quality plan or how the information will be shared.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of several effective strategies to communicate and engage internal and external stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication will be provided to internal and external stakeholders though a website, newsletters, and parent guides to increase engagement. <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the high range with several effective strategies to communicate and engage stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides ambitious and achievable performance measures but fails to provide all elements of a high-quality plan including responsible parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides ambitious and achievable performance measures but fails to provide all elements of a high-quality plan including responsible parties, a rationale for choosing the performance measures, or how it will review and 		

improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

- The applicant provides 14 performance measures.
- One permanent measure indicates that no students have access to effective teachers as a baseline. If this is the case, it is highly unlikely that the proposal can be carried out effectively without the ability to build on the work of effective teachers.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range with performance measures provided with no rationale for the choices or how they will be improved over time and lacks the elements of a high-quality plan.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to provide evidence of the elements of a high-quality plan or how the evaluation results will be used to improve results.

- The applicant will hire an outside evaluator to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan but fails to provide the elements of a high quality plan such as outcomes, timelines, and responsible parties.
- No information was provided on how the information from the evaluations will be used to improve results.

The applicant scores in the medium range for this criteria. An evaluator will be hired and will examine critical outcomes but there is no evidence of a high-quality plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies funds that will be used but used unguaranteed funds for key personnel salaries and the 26% for the evaluation consultant is unreasonable.

- All funds are identified for the support of the project with a description of how the funds will be used and which funds are one-time investments.
- Twenty-two percent of the funding is based on increasing per student funding by growing the number of students attending the career school. This is not a solid base for providing funding especially since a key component of the proposal (School Technology Leader) will be paid from these funds which are not actually in place for use to support the proposal.
- The amount for the evaluation consultant is unreasonable in that it uses 26% of the RTTT-D funds requested.

Overall, the applicant scores in the medium range with a description of how the funds will be used but lacks feasibility with the inclusion of unguaranteed funds and an unreasonable amount budgeted for the evaluation consultant.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an insufficient plan for sustainability with twenty-two percent of the funds being unguaranteed and the lack of the elements of a high-quality plan to sustain the project's goals.

- Twenty-two percent of the funds for sustainability are not guaranteed.
- Nine percent of the proposal cost are funded by local or state government and the 69% funded by RTTT-D is one-time costs.

Overall, the majority of the funds provided by RTTT-D are one-time costs but the plan still lacks strength with 22% of the funds to be used for sustainability not guaranteed as well as the lack of elements of a high-quality plan. This places the applicant in the medium range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant failed to address the competitive preference of results, resource alignment, and integrated by only providing information on the work of the Career Technical School in the consortium. The applicant scores within the low range due to failing to address the criteria related to the competitive preference.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides evidence of implementing strategies (although segmented) to provide personalized learning environments, increase student achievement, improve teaching and learning, and decrease achievement gaps.		

Total	210	99
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant provided a description of the salaries but failed to provide a description or breakdown of the \$489,216 to be spent on contractual. The applicant failed to provide strong evidence of a link to Absolute Priority 1. Therefore, the score for this indicator is in the low medium range. 		