



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0003TX-1 for Aubrey Independent 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 district's application outlines a coherent and comprehensive vision for reform</p> <p>(a) It builds on the core areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aligning its curriculum to community college/college goals. This close link to community college curricula expresses a vision that embraces college and career ready standards. - the vision also provides for benchmarking to key goals through multiple data points. - the plan calls for mentoring and increased graduate studies to assist in developing and retaining high quality teachers, including incentives for high-performing teachers. - the applicant focuses attention on its lowest performing schools <p>(b) the application addresses this standard by creating opportunities for students to pursue courses that interest them or lead to a certification at the college level. Importantly, the opportunities are created at a point when the student is making significant life decisions (e.g., deciding on a career path, or college). It provides incentives for students to succeed at college level courses. Research suggests that providing these opportunities at appropriate moments can invest the student in their learning and close achievement gaps.</p> <p>(c) The application does offer some description of the classroom experience -- in that students may, if possible take advanced courses.</p> <p>In sum, the score should be high because the application provides a clear and coherent vision. Significantly, it is narrow in focus -- the secondary level -- which suggests that the district has a precise focus for their reform efforts. To the extent the vision can be criticized would relate to its description of the classroom experience.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The process is described well. The district tapped schools/districts from an existing network (Successful School Collaborative) and also used a number of metrics (notably those linked to the core educational assurance areas, such as evaluation systems, college/career standards) to determine eligibility. For instance the applicant required its constituent applicants (its a collaborative) to commit to use of specific data systems. The selection process appears thorough.</p> <p>(b) The list of districts participating is provided.</p> <p>(c) The applicant satisfied this criterion in its appendix.</p> <p>In sum, the approach to implementation is likely to support a high-quality LEA and school level implementation. Indeed, the use of the pre-existing (and apparently successful) Successful School Collaborative is an important foundational step in reaching this goal. It also appears committed to data.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The application does suggest that it will develop a blueprint that can be used to scale up programs. These include including outlines of assurance, practices, action steps, that may be replicated in other contexts thus, it addresses elements of a high-quality plan. Importantly, the plan does allow for a feedback loop, whereby adjustments can be made and communicated. However, four years is a long time to develop the blueprint for school improvement initiatives and thus the scale up aspect of the first initiative could have benefited from a tighter timeline. The second initiative simply suggests that it will scale up an already existing program through a Rural Technology grant. While this may be a worthwhile program, the connection to the rural grant and the improvement of student outcomes is assumed, but not sufficiently explained. The theory of change -- essentially building connections to careers -- is sound to reach career-based outcomes.

The application attends to the elements of a high quality plan in this regard, however, it could have benefited from greater detail (e.g., how the rural technology grant has been successful (if so) and therefore worthy of scaling up with RttT funds). Thus, a moderate score is warranted.

Additionally, the scale up on a collaborative-wide level is lacks detail that would indicate it would translate into meaningful reform. For instance, it notes that "templates of courses, course offerings" will be made accessible to all consortia teachers on the web. While this may ensure a floor of access, it does not reflect high-quality plan or meaningful process.

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

(a) The applicant's use of summative assessments indicates that it will use the state Accountability mechanisms. The plan stands a good chance of meeting these results. Indeed, the plan calls for close monitoring of student performance through the use of data dashboards. Importantly, the districts have adopted college and career - ready standards which, presumably, are aligned to the state assessment measures. However, the application in this subpart is lacking a through discussion of the ways in which personalized learning will be achieved. It asserts, for instance, that personal devices will assist, but it does not elaborate.

(b) The applicant avers that it will attempt to meet the state standards for the Texas Accountability System in this area. A 3% annual increase in students meeting the advance performance is achievable and ambitious over a 5 year period and decreasing the achievement gap goals are ambitious, although it is questionable as to the extent to which IBB has the potential to translate into achievement gap narrowing of the likes accounted for here.

(c) The applicant has set an achievable goal of a graduation rate 80%; Moreover, if the Grad Coaches are used efficiently to monitor student progress then this will be an effective mechanism to provide the more personalized assistance to students who may struggle.

(d) The goal of 65% of college enrollment is certainly ambitious. The district's use of funds would be heavily placed in the secondary areas (e.g., College to Career project) thus making the achievement of the goal a possibility. That said, the achievement of the goal for special education (whose enrollment rates range from 0-20% by district) may be too ambitious. It is not quite clear that the plan has specific programs that address the needs of special education students thus calling into question the attainability of these goals.

In sum, the score should be in the moderate/high range. It has achievable and ambitious goals that are likely to be met (e.g., performance on summative assessments), yet the special education college enrollment (going from, in at least one entity 0% to 65%) is overly ambitious, given the lack of attention the applicant's plan has with regard to special education students.

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:

(1)(a)-(b) The application lists a number of awards/achievements that several of the included districts have received over the years. In great part, the application notes that state "Gold Performance Acknowledgements" several districts have

received (e.g., Aubrey ISD received an award for providing incentive funds for assessment). This is commendable, as these awards directly relate to improving student learning outcomes and raising achievement (e.g., Aubrey received recognition for preparing college-ready graduates, scores in reading, science, and social studies). However, it is difficult to discern the extent to which all members of the application have demonstrated this success. Indeed, the majority of districts in the collaborative did not receive Gold Performance Acknowledgements.

(c) The application does not address in sufficient detail, if at all, the way it has had a clear record of success in making student performance available to students and parents.

Because only several schools are highlighted as demonstrating a clear record of success, it is difficult to indicate that the applicants -- taken together-- have a clear record of success, therefore warranting a moderate score.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The application deserves high marks because it:

(a) Asserts that actual personnel salaries are posted on the website.

(b)-(d). It is not apparent from the application as to the extent to which the the district reports the requirements under these subparts that promote a high-level of transparency. It does state that the district "publishes" a report that contains this information. Yet, it is unclear how the report is then communicated or distributed in such a way that would promote high-levels of transparency to the public. Thus, given this lack of detail, a moderate score is warranted.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The district has provided evidence that the districts have sufficient autonomy and conditions to implement the proposals and should receive a high rating.

The districts have available to them two important components that are closely linked to improving outcomes - flexible school days and flexible year plans. Research suggests that these modifications - which are available to the applicant - can assist greatly in improving student outcomes, developing personal learning environments. In addition, the state apparently has several models (the Texas High School Project) that may provide guidance for the district.

However, as stated, the application does not state whether they have already taken advantage of these opportunities thus, to the extent the LEA has demonstrated evidence of "successful conditions" is not entirely clear.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 (a) The application sets forth a description of the engagement and development of the proposal. These included the creating of a Advisory Committee which included students, parents, educators, parents, and other relevant stakeholders. In the course of meetings, the Committee refined the blueprint that was created by the Successful Schools Collaborative in the first instance. This opportunity for revision indicates meaningful engagement. The application asserts that none of the schools had more than 4% of the teaching population refrain or object from the proposal (they do not have collective bargaining).

(b) However, the application includes a number of letters of support from a relatively few number of a few organizations (e.g., Workforce Solutions, Communities in Schools, the Regional Education Cooperative). It suggests that the application limits prohibited them from attaching additional letters which according to the applicant, are too numerous to include. However, if that is the case - that there are too many - that tends to undercut the district's argument that they have meaningful engagement. Indeed, with so many entities potentially involved is is questionable as to how each could have meaningful input.

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



	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) the approach to learning here is career- oriented and it should be commended for its efforts to prepare students for careers. The application outlines a process by which this will be achieved - each LEA will develop a career pathway sequence. Significantly, and as the application states, the merit in this plan is that it is moving away to giving students experiences and resources to explore possible career paths, thus this allows students to engage in meaningful development of their learning and relate it to their future goals. <u>See</u> (a)(i)-(iv). Likewise, the deep learning experiences will be provided through the development of cohorts, complete with teacher mentors. Moreover, the application suggests that it will employ an online/virtual program (Naviance Succeed) that will allow students to explore college and career opportunities that they might not otherwise have discovered. <u>See</u> (a)(iv). However, the application lacks specificity with regard to development of critical thinking which seems to be limited to presentations that the LEA teams will make to other teams.</p> <p>(b)(i)-(v) Likewise, the applicant should be applauded and score high because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It includes a personalized instructional model (e.g., the cohort model, with a teacher mentor) - There are a variety of high-quality experiences (e.g., advisories with Career Advisors, Virtual Learning in college prep courses through TXVSN). - The application should be applauded for its suggestion to use technology to address some of the needs specific to subgroups (e.g., lower economic students). For instance, the application notes that many low income students do not have access or understanding of college preparatory issues/needs. The district proposes to use technology to allow students to access such resources, as well as access college prep classes through virtual learning). Likewise, the applications has high-quality mechanisms to track students and their progress towards college and career ready benchmarks (e.g., College Career Advisor, small cohorts which allow for close monitoring, use of data dashboard, Response to Intervention). <p>(c) The district should score high marks in this subpart because it proposes that parents receive workshop training on how to access and use technology and student data. Again, the use of cohorts and college advisor, and training events directed to parents, the district's plan incorporates important mechanisms to meet this subpart. The application is strong in terms of meeting this application requirement, with the possible exception of applicant's attention to (a)(v), therefore the score should be high.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district deserves moderate to high score because:</p> <p>(a)(1)(i)-(iv) The district proposes using consultants (from the Ed Service Center) and coaches in important core areas of math and reading. These positions can be very effective assisting educators in understanding how to tailor instruction and personalize learning environments, and adapt content. Additionally, the applicant intends to make use of established programs in professional development (e.g., some developed at UT-Austin for the state education agency, such as On Track to College training) which assists educators in developing and administering assessments. The use of a data dashboard (TPEIR), as proposed by the district, will be central to allowing educators to access and exchange information. Likewise, the district proposes a number of techniques that will enhance communication and the feedback loop (e.g., restructuring the day so that there is common planning). However, what is missing is the timeline and goals that would be associated with these efforts and a high quality plan, as defined. Thus, while the methods chosen can have positive impact in teaching and learning, as demonstrated in the research, specifics about using these tools are missing in the application.</p> <p>(b)(i)-(iii) The district proposes to use RtI, which is an effective mechanism to drill down in terms of understanding gaps in student learning and, accordingly, to create appropriate responses. Effective use of RtI can provide actionable information and the district proposes two online programs with merit in this regard and that are high-quality and research-based (iStation and Think it Through).</p> <p>(c) The district should be credited for giving school leadership the tools needed to satisfy this subpart, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A teacher evaluation system that uses student growth and progress as an important data point. The application appears to embrace a site-based approach (e.g., Campus Improvement Teams) that can employ the blueprint proposed by the district and be nimble enough to monitor the data and make changes accordingly. <p>(d) Creating high-quality teachers in rural areas is a challenge, yet the district has proposed a "grown your own" approach</p>		
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that may be perhaps the most efficacious in resolving this issue. In addition, the financial incentives may push teachers in the district to engage in professional development. However, to some extent, the application lacks attention to how effective teaches will be disbursed within the various districts' schools.

Overall, the district has set forth a number of learning objectives/processes that hold promise to improving outcomes, according to the research and support the award of a high score. The section should be reduced because of its lack of detail about identifying and disbursing effective teachers to the various districts. The systems may be in place to develop effective teaches, but there must also be attention to the redistribution of effective teachers.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application, for the most part, demonstrates that it has practices that will promote personalized learning, with the notable exception of the (D)(1)(e). Thus, it deserves a moderate/high mark.

(a) The applicant- because of the number of constituents in the collaborative - has a difficult task in creating coherent conditions and structures for personalized learning. That said, the applicants have a governance structure that links the reforms proposed here with the leadership in its constituents (An Advisory Committee and a requirement that the reforms are embedded in each district's improvement plan.

(b) The proposal also calls for Advisory committees at each participating LEA, thereby providing school leadership teams with a link in to the reform. Yet, it is unclear to the extent that the school leadership will have sufficient flexibility in the areas described by the notice (e.g., schedules, personnel assignments). The application does not sufficiently address how these committee may have this flexibility, although it does describe that they are in the process.

(c) The plan has merit in the regard to this prong because the reforms will give the district the opportuntiy to progress based on mastery. For instance, the district calls for enlisting dual credit courses that allow students to earn college credit for high school classes, in addition to concurrent courses, allowing enrollment in both high school and college courses which allow for credit in both.

(d) The plan has policies that allow students ample opportunity to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways, including:

- more traditional (common assessments)
- capstone course, consisting of a project.
- technical certifications.

Yet, while these are end-assessments, they are insufficient for constituting multiple ways to demonstrate mastery of the many standards in multiple and comparable ways.

(e) A great portion of this subpart rests on the District Improvement Plan (DIP). While this is an important document, it is not a document that necessarily provides learning resources and instructional practices that create personalized experiences for the subgroups. Indeed, this discussion lacks specific attention to the identified subgroups.

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

(a) The application calls, appropriately, for increased technology as resources for its parents and students and this should be commended. Indeed, the plan requires a great deal of technology access. The district is calling for have access to tablets for parents and students so that they can: have access to Naviance (a career-college site/program with activities); and online courses, among others. This is a necessary support for the application for be fully successful.

(b) The application may have weak support for technological support. To be sure, students/parents may have access to several hands-on workshops. However, from the application, these workshops end in the fall. An appropriate level of support would also require continual support. Hands on training that is front-loaded, misses this point.

(c) The application is calling for Naviance Succeed which is a reputable program for students/parents to house and organize information, as well as participate in online technology. However, the extent to which the application allows data to be transported to other formats, as required under the guidelines, is unclear.

(d) The application describes the various tools available to students and parents for off-campus technology and access to data (e.g., Naviance). However, the application does not discuss how LEAs will have interoperability. Thus, the applicant misplaced the focus of their response on the parents/students, where the requirement here relates to LEAs.

Because of concerns discussed below, particularly in sub (c) and (d), the score here should be in the moderate range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	9
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has proposed an infrastructure for implement changes, as needed, to the plan to proceed to goals. The applicant has identified the stakeholders (CTA Committees, Campus Improvement Teams, etc., their roles). The plan describes the processes and roles of the respective groups along with timelines related to action (e.g., the Advisory Committee will review campus 90 day plans and revise timelines and targets). The district should then be credited because it incorporates opportunity to make adjustments. Thus, to some extent, the elements of a high quality plan are evident.</p> <p>However, the proposed system has inherent tensions. In particular, the Advisory Committee appears to have control over the site-based management teams ("the Advisory committee will used CIT evaluations of progress in determining effectiveness and site-based decision-making in the future"). This tension - between site-based management and the Advisory Committee -- muddies the responsibilities and roles of each. Thus, the integration of the various roles and responsibilities is short on specifics required in a high-quality plan (deliverables, sharing information).</p> <p>Additionally, the applicant suffers here because its efforts to publicly share the information are minimal (e.g., in essence, the Superintendent reporting to the Board of trustees). Moreover, the applicant lacks discussion about assessing the investments within the plan, quite apart from the plan itself.</p> <p>Thus, because there appears to be positive oversight committees and structures in place (with some overlap, tensions) the district should be credited points. However, for the reasons in the preceding two paragraphs, a reduction is warranted, making the total score in the mid range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The score should be in the mid range because of its lack of attention to the elements of a high quality plan. Specifically, the plan addresses the communication portion of this subpart, but the engagement portion is lacking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To its credit, the applicant discusses a variety of mechanisms to discuss progress internally (e.g., quarterly meetings from Career Advisory Committee, Coaches providing updates to principals). There are timelines set (e.g., ELA and math coaches will meet weekly). - However, the discussion with <u>external stakeholders</u> is limited, at best. This is problematic, given the applicant's reliance on developing career paths for students. Indeed, the application overlooks this engagement and offers little to know discussion about this engagement with stakeholders. Moreover, to the extent internal engagement is addressed, it is limited to reporting the status of the grant, rather than engaging the stakeholders in meaningful revisions (E.g., Project Director will design a system.... that "will report to all parties the status and effectiveness" of the grant). Thus a low/moderate score is warranted because of the missing engagement component of the plan. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the chosen performance measures may be achievable and ambitious, the application should score in the low/moderate range because:</p> <p>(a) Rationale for the measures does not have sufficient explanation, although arguably the measures chosen have a</p>		

relationship to the goals. However, the rationale could be more fully explained. Moreover, the measures chosen for cognitive growth (discipline reports, attendance rates) may not give an accurate description of progress in cognitive growth.

(b) The application lists a number of measures. However, the way the district purports to use these methods lacks coherence and the application speaks in generalities (e.g., "During planning meetings, teachers will look at trends in the data and find solutions together" "Professional development plans will be adjusted to meet the needs identified at meetings."). With regard to this last reference of professional development modification, it would be unwise to adjust those plans based on meetings. Rather such adjustments should be made with attention to other data and evaluations, etc., not simply meetings.

(c) The review and revisions, according to the district, will be done in large part through the use of surveys. However, the surveys are geared to determine if the various reforms were implemented and appear inadequate to link specific reform to improvement in the chosen measures. (e.g. survey questions include: What data system, management were employed? How were the school's governance structure changed? What new flexibility was granted to teachers). While these open-ended, process oriented questions are important, they do not provide an effective way to link specific measure and any improvements that may be needed.

In sum, the lack of specificity, as noted above, warrants a low/moderate score.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lacks the elements of a high-quality plan in important respects, set forth below, and therefore warrants a low score:

- This portion of the application notes that it has a survey. However, the application is vague in terms of parties responsible for evaluating effectiveness (e.g., "Key practices will be reviewed and revised based on their effectiveness"). Moreover, the effectiveness evaluation appears to rest largely on the Blue print. But the application is unclear as to whether the blueprint exists (e.g., referring to the fact that the Successful Schools "developed" a blueprint) in the beginning of the section and then discusses a "resulting blueprint" that will be created as a result of reviewing key practices. This vagueness in terms of roles and activities and responsibilities detracts from the plan being considered high quality.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) the district identifies funds and divides them into the various projects of the grant and notes various other agencies that will be contributing (e.g., Texas Education Agencies funds for data dashboards). Each section in the budget narrative also includes such designations.

(b) The requested amounts seem reasonable and the estimates are fair (e.g., 115,000 for a project director, \$3500 yr site for technology training for sites). The budget includes additional costs associated with the employees/personnel. In other words, the costs are appropriate for the level and nature of personnel being requested. The resources, thus, are sufficient to support implementation of the program

(c) The rationale for the investments appears sound (e.g., use of a technology director for manage technology and curriculum/assessment programs; Leadership Coordinator and part-time graduate coaches). Given the heavy tech focus of the proposal this makes sense. Further elaboration could be made regarding those expenses that are one-time finds and, more specifically, how the local funds will sustain the program. As it stands, the project has vague references in this regard (e.g. "Additional funds from local regional foundations and non-profit organization will be used to supplement and sustain the student incentive program"). This raises a question of sustainability because the precise commitment - in terms of resources from these agencies - is unclear and therefore difficult to "bank on" in terms of sustainability.

Because the budget uses appropriate numbers for the requested services it is reasonable. However, it could use further clarification with regards to how the funds will be used strategically to help sustain the program going forward. In sum, then

a moderate score is warranted.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant should score in the moderate range because:

- Generally, most elements of the high quality plan is present. However, while the application notes that it has support, it does not sufficiently specify any continued timeline or goals with respect to continuing the project once the grant term ends. Moreover, the application refers to continued work in very general terms (e.g., The Lead LEA will work with proven professional development and technical assistance providers). In another instance, the grant notes that \$ 2.5 have been identified to fund the grant during its life and beyond. Yet it does not specify in this section which portion of this amount would be contributed during the life of the grant, or later, or to where the appropriations would go. In addition, it is unclear whether this 2.5 million is from outside grants or the schools themselves (See, e.g., "Over 2.5 million were identified a support during the life of the grant and beyond. These funds represent the school districts' support of this grant....")

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application warrants a score in the low range in this application, for the following reasons

- (1) The description of the partnership outlines a number of the roles that the additional players/stakeholders will have. However, the coherence of the plan is not well stated. Indeed, the application presents each stakeholder has providing a certain service/relationship almost in isolation. The application does not articulate how the various partnerships integrate.
- (2) The results include desired results. However, the results lack attention to a particular population and are phrased generally (e.g., Attendance rate improvement, compare to requirements under the application calling for "population-level desired results). Moreover, the results are more focused on educational outcome, rather than family and community supports. Almost all, if not all, are education oriented (e.g., Increase student participation in continuing education opportunities; increase students who earn a degree).
- (3) The application describes how it will track the data (e.g., using REVEAL EARLY WARNING system)
- (4) the description provides how the partnerships will be employed within schools with some specificity (contracted social workers will serve as grad coaches and social workers in participating LEAs; serve on the advisory council; technical schools will provide technical credit courses)
- (5) The applicant provides data discussing the needs for its programs, especially in the context of Texas, which is rapidly growing and in need of skilled workers.
- (6) However, the application refers the reader to an appendix. However, the appendix does not contain specific goals for each of the measures. See (Gr 9-12 performance measure goal.

Because of the issues discussed in subpart 6, the score should be moderate /high.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The application addresses the **core educational assurance** areas:

- It has adopted careeer ready standards

- It proposes to use data systems to track and monitor success (e.g., state dashboard system) and it also provides opportunity for use of data to inform instruction (e.g., data meetings at the school level).

- It has put forth several measures related to teacher quality (e.g., use of coaches)

Moreover, the application's focus on career connections should be commended and it assists in it meeting this priority (e.g., development of the College to Career Blueprint).

The use of data on both the district and educator level will increase the effectiveness of educators and their ability to identify particular student weaknesses and refine instruction on a more individual basis.

- Likewise, the districts here have set forth goals relative to improving student outcomes and narrowing the achievement gap.

- The applicant has also suggested that it will engage with outside stakeholders, including college/workforce development agencies, in a way that will prepare students for college and or careers.

Total	210	150
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0003TX-2 for Aubrey Independent School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

-The applicant provides a clear and credible approach to imcreasing student acheivement through personalized learning because the application provides evidence of:

-Basing approach on research and needs of workforce and aligning those needs with the needs of students in the collaborating schools. For example, the applicant provides clear rationale for positioning community colleges as the gateway for students to college and career ready opportunities.

-Understanding clear steps towards based on this research and rationale. The applicant offers a clear approach to what it will look like for students to graduate from high school college and career ready (including students will all at least a minimum amount of credits towards college or technical certification)

-The applicant provides a coherent vision based on the use of the College and Career BluePrint developed by the SSC. This serves as evidence that the applicant has considered how various stakeholders can support the overall vision through a clear plan and steps. The BluePrint is founded in the core educational assurance areas. However, the applicant does not provide a clear narrative around how the core areas directly align with the overall vision (the connection is not explicitly made)

-The applicant describes a coherent and clear view of how actual learning experience will be impacted throughout the participating schools. For example, the applicant discusses how each student will have a rigorous academic program and gives examples of how each student will work with teachers and their own families to acheive their goals. However, the applicant does not provide a clear picture of how specifically the classroom experience for each student will be changed and impacted through the reform vision. For example, the applicant provides a general overview, but there are few tangible

examples of how the goal and vision will be actually translated into a clear student experience. The overall response to this selection criterion is strong in its presentation of clear reform vision but does not provide detail on how each student will feel the impact therefore the score remains in the middle range.

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

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant clearly communicates the process by which the consortium school were selected to participate including state and federal accountability ratings, low on-time graduation rates, and low rates of technical training. The robust and comprehensive list also included requirements for LEAs to have a educator evaluation system in place, a focus on college and career readiness, and a focus on the collection of data.
- The applicant provides information on the total number of participating students and clearly shows how the approach to implementation will be focused on over 20,000 students.
- The applicant discusses a differentiated strategy to distinguish between the needs of middle school students vs. high school students so to further the effective implementation of the College to Career project.
- Overall, the applicant presents a clear plan for how it will support a high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation plan through clearly describing the method used to select participating schools, providing a list of school, and presenting data on number of participating students.

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant describes a coherent and strategic approach to bringing programs to scale but the application does not provide details how changes will support district-wide change.
- Further, the applicant does not provide a rationale for why the personalized system will be the first project chosen or why the Dual Credit and Advances texhcnical career pathways will be the second program. A specific rationale as to why a systematic approach to bringing projects to scale is necessary as the current rationale does not discuss how the reform proposal will be scaled up and will support district-wide change.
- The applicant does not adequately address how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform for all participating LEAs nor does the applicant make a strong case for how the proposal will directly support target goals therefore justifying a mid-range score.

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant references rationale for how it will support achievable goals through matching lower performing schools with higherforming schools. While the applicant does provide clear goals for each area (growth, decreasing acheivement gaps, increase graduation rates, and increased college enrollment), the applicant does not provide a clear rationale for why each of the goal areas are ambitious yet achievable. For example, the applicant states clear goals for decreasing of the acheivement gap but the application is not specific on why the goals are ambitious (and built on an understanding of how or why the baseline can increase to the stated goal). It is noted, however, that for graduation rates, the applicant does provide not only a statement of the goal but additionally elaborates on how the goal number was chosen. The applicant does address the optional goal of post-secondary degree attainment and provides rationale for how the goal is ambitious yet realistic by referring to relevant data and expected outcomes. Overall, the applicant's reform vision is likely to support its improved student learning goals however, given not all subgroup areas were fully addressed (graduation rates), the applicant's response falls short of earning full points on this selection criterion.

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>-Applicant articulates clear rationale for why the the lead LEA was chosen and provides multiple examples for how the lead LEA has shown a clear track record of success. Additionally, the applicant provides details on how success clearly tracks to raising student success through use of data and actuals (for example, discussing actual improvement in graduation rates). However, the applicant does not provide clear demonstrated evidence of a clear track record of success in achieving significant reforms. While there is discussion of improvement, the response does not include a comprehensive overview of how the goals met were ambitious in their targeted growth goals. Further, the applicant does not provide clear and comprehensive descriptions of how student performance data will be made available to the students, teachers, and parents as a strategy to improve success of the reform plan. Overall, the response is strong on the first category of how the lead LEA and other LEA members have been successful but the response is not strong in its response to how the goals set for previous successes were ambitious nor how student data will be shared with stakeholders to improve outcomes therefore a low-range score is appropriate.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a full response to how each of the 4 categories have already been made available to the public including discussion of how information will be reported during the grant period. The response also includes examples of current data on actual personnel salaries. For example, the response indicates that information will be available in the form of reports and the district and state website. The response is thorough and clear and consistent with a high range score.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response is clear and comprehensive as to how the applicant has successful conditions and autonomies in place to support and implement the reform plan. The applicant describes current flexible management options allowed by the State Education Agency including autonomy over the school day, school year, and budget. Further, the response provides clear evidence of how the LEA has autonomy to implement plans in line with requirements set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The response also includes evidence of how federal funds can be used to implement the reform plan. As a result of the applicant's full explanation and comprehensive demonstrated evidence for how sufficient autonomy and conditions are in place to fully support the reform plan, the response scores in the high range.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of how the framework that will serve as the foundation of the reform plan includes input from stakeholders and was that it was presented to the schools and community through faculty meetings, student clubs, PTOs, and community meetings. Notably, a student presented the strategy the LEA put in place to policymakers during a trip to Washington, DC. The response clearly provides evidence of how teachers (given the LEA does not have bargaining representation) in each school consented to the program and in fact, with no less than 4% objecting or refraining. Examples of partnerships are given as well as discussion of how the project has been publicized since 2008 with key community stakeholders. Several examples are provided as to how community partners will support the reform plan including letters of support. However, the response <u>does not</u> describe how the plan was revised to respond to feedback given by stakeholders. Given the response is strong and thorough as to how the plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders but provides little demonstrable evidence as to how the plan was developed in direct response to feedback given from partners (particularly within the community) a mid range score has been given.</p>		

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

	Available	Score

(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>7The response provides evidence as to how individual plans will be developed based on career or college pathway for each student. Each student will be provided with an individually tailored to his or her career pathway. The application provides a clear plan for a high-quality strategy to provide support for high-needs students including career and technical training and the offering of career tracks. The response provides a high-quality plan for how this individual course curriculum will be structured. The plan provides clear rationale for how the plan will support students in their understanding of how high learning standards are integral to their success and goals. Evidence of students' opportunity to be involved in deep learning experience is provided through reference to the small learning communities for students with similar career interests. Technology will be used to enhance participation and respond to diverse student needs through the offering of online courses, credit recover courses, and distance learning courses. In order to support student exposure to diverse cultures the applicant provides evidence of a high quality plan focused on exposure to diversity outside the culture of their own school and community. Students will be required to have a job or internship that will provide an experience that will open them to real-world contexts. Through the cohort model, the applicant's plan will support team building and critical thinking skills so critical to life success by requiring a capstone class that will require feedback from professionals other than educators. Through the use of Naviance Succeed, the applicant will provide a highly differentiated sequence of instruction that will focus on student and parent engagement. Further, the applicant provides evidence of a high quality plan for aligning curriculum with college and career standards through use of CSCOPE. The response also includes substantial evidence of a high quality plan around the use of feedback as a tool to increase learning. For example, a data system will provide real time data on each student and will employ the use of an early warning system to identify at-risk students so recommendations and revisions to curriculum can be provided. For high need students, the plan will support high quality strategies through the implementation of extended learning time interventions and alternative learning environments. Overall the response provides a evidence of a high quality plan that will further teaching and learning by focusing on a personalized learning plan for each student.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant addresses the need to provide a personalized learning environment for each student but little detail is provided as to how a well planned strategy will be executed that students will experience on a daily basis through the development of teachers. The response does provide a summary of new training for teachers (Project Share) but there is little discussion of how this will translate to changes or development for implementation of personalized learning environments. While the applicant does describe how instruction will be adapted in response to academic needs in ELA and Math, no plan is presented to helping students to optimize learning or response to individual academic interests. Further, does not provide a clear plan for how data was be used to measure student growth beyond presenting a common planning schedule and quarterly meetings. There is little description of how individual teachers will support student progress through frequent measurement, more detail is necessary for response to be strong. While the response references resources and the LEA's intention to evaluate the effectiveness of resources, the reference is general and not specific. For example, the applicant references the Blueprint plan but does not present specifics on how the plan evaluates the efficacy of resources. The plan does not explicitly provide for the use of a rigorous educator evaluation system that will directly tie into measuring progress towards student learning. Further, beyond coaching, there is little evidence that effective teaching can be expected to increase given that the plan does not provide detail on how less effective teachers will receive professional development (beyond coaching). Given that the response lacks a general level of clarity and detail around how the applicant has crafted a high quality plan to support development in teaching and learning, the score falls into the low range.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides evidence that a well planned strategy for governance in the lead LEA and participating schools is sufficient to support implementation of their reform plan. The hiring of a Project Director will support campuses as reform plans are put into place and a College to Career (CTC) Board will monitor progress. The applicant has considered geographic limitations given the numerous participating LEAs but has adequately addressed the concern through providing for virtual meetings. Under the leadership of a CTC at each participating LEA, schools will operate with sufficient autonomy and freedoms to implement the plan. However, the response does not indicate what specifically, will support increased</p>		

flexibility under the reform plan. While the response describes a CTC Committee structure, it is not clear that editing the action steps of the reform plan in each school is sufficient enough to support the true implementation of reforms. The applicant provides a strong response outlining how students will be given opportunities to earn college credits, be guided by CTC advisors and counselors, and to develop a personal graduation plan. However, while the response provides ample detail on how data will be used to assess learning resources and instructional practices, there is little evidence that the applicant will be able to translate that data into actual outcomes for all students. For example, the response refers to action steps but there is little description of how those action steps directly relate to the ability to differentiate for all students. While there is reference to Academic Coaches who will assist teachers to change instruction and curriculum to address student needs little detail is provided again, on what measures will be put in place to measure how effective the assistance will be at providing students with curriculum to meet their needs. Given the response is clear in how the applicant has a plan to develop a strong central governance strategy but lacks detail and evidence of a high quality plan on other selection criteria, the response scores in the low range.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of a high quality plan to ensure all stakeholders have access to resources including lesson plans and data reports as well as development opportunities. The school day will be restructured and students and families will have access to personal technology platforms as well as Naviance Succeed to support access to resources. Through the distribution of a handbook, students will have access to technical support as well as to hands on training. The Naviance Succeed system will serve as means to support access to student data and will make college planning accessible and streamlines for students and their families. Students will be able to gain a clear picture of their overall progress (from school, extracurriculars, and online resources) so that students and families have access to multiple data points as well as college information. Further, evidence is provided showing the applicant has a quality plan to support the use of interoperable data systems that will allow for ease of use and will help support a clear picture of progress in varying aspects of the plan. Given the overall strong response to the selection criteria the response scores in the high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes evidence of a high quality plan centered on the use of continuous improvement processes through a discussion of how the LEA will employ an Advisory Committee to monitor and check progress of the reform plan. The applicant provides examples of how already established guidelines for continual assessment will be used including the analysis of performance data and a survey. The applicant show a clear understanding of the inevitable need to make revisions to the reform plan as it is rolled out and implemented. Site Based Decision Making procedures will be employed as required by the state that include a committee that will include staff, parents, and community stakeholders who will convene to discuss planning and response to needs. However, the applicant does not provide a plan for how the LEA will share information with the public on the reform plan and its progress nor does the applicant provide a clear and strong plan for how it will sustain improvements after the grant period. While the application is strong in its plan for implementing methods to evaluate and re-evaluate the success of the reform plan, the response does not provide a clear explanation for how information will be shared publically nor how corrections will continue well after the grant period has ended to fully support sustained success. Therefore, the plan scores in the mid range on this criteria.

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

5

1

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant response includes description of the role of a Project Director in designing and implementing a plan for internal and external communications that will report on progress, challenges, and general updates to stakeholders. However, the response does not go into detail for how the ongoing communication will occur (other than reference to

teacher meetings and a summary report). The applicant does not describe a high quality plan: more detail is needed on the specifics of the communication plan beyond referencing it will be the responsibility of the PD. Therefore, this response scores in the low range.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discusses multiple measures of performance including identified performance measures as well as leading indicators of success. Specific measures are presented in the Appendix including a measure of how many students have completed the FAFSA forms, the % of students meeting state standards. For each goal at least one performance measure is given as well as the assessment tool to be used. The applicant provides more than one measure of career readiness and multiple measures to assess social or emotional needs. Though, notably the only two indicators for social-emotional health are attendance and discipline rates therefore the applicant does not provide a comprehensive approach to assess this complicated issue. Further, while the applicant provides the measures, the application does not fully describe why each measure was selected. The applicant does provide rationale for the by subgroup but does not provide an individual rationale for each measure. The applicant provides a high quality plan for how measures and data will be used to inform intervention in and revision of the reform plan. While the applicant does discuss how it will survey participants twice a year, no detail on what the survey will ask is provided nor is there a comprehensive and robust plan for how the results will be used to improve the program over time. Therefore the response scores in the low range on this criteria.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The response does clearly describe a plan that will use technology to assess the effectiveness of grant funded activities but the plan is not detailed or descriptive. For example, the response indicates the Blueprint will be used to empower schools to plan for improvement but little detail is provided as to how the Blueprint produces an analysis and why it is reliable and valid. Overall, the response lacks detail as to how the LEA will evaluate the effectiveness of grant funds in a robust way and therefore scores in the low range on this criteria.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget provides a detailed description of the funds that will be used to support the project including grant funds, local funds, state funds, and high school allotment funds. The biggest portion of the financial need is to be met with grant funds (\$30M) with roughly \$6.4M coming into from other sources as just noted. The budget allocates funds based on the appropriate need for each of the major programs for the reform plan (the College to Career subgroups: curriculum standards, data systems, effective educators, and turning around low performing schools using BluePrint). However, the plan does not delineate between funds to be used as one-time investments vs. funds that will be used for ongoing costs. The response does thoroughly discuss how the budget will be adequate for full implementation of the plan and it is evidence the applicant has a rationale for investments and priorities. Indeed, no major parts of the plan go unfunded and nothing appears in the budget that has not been discussed through the plan application. Given the response does address the budget and its ability to support the plan but given the response is not clear or detailed in its discussion of what funds are one-time vs. ongoing, the score falls into the mid range.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The response provides clear rationale for why state and local government leadership is invested in the long term project and its goals. However, the applicant does not discuss how the past success and return on investment will be evaluated to inform future investments under the reform plan. The section is broken down into sub-sections addressing staff development, project management, and interactive learning and technology and how each will be continuously evaluated and tracked against goals to ensure regular and continuous improvement. However, while the applicant does acknowledge that other grant sources are available, the response does not provide a detailed description of how a post-grant budget will be sustained for at least years after the grant terms. As a result of a strong response providing evidence of governmental

support and continuous evaluation that will inform improvement, but little discussion of sustainability of outcomes beyond the grant terms, the response scores in the mid-range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a comprehensive for how it will foster sustainable partnerships with business and industry partners, institutions of higher education, and community organizations. The applicant discusses how the program will sustain partnerships through connecting students with employers are part of its reform plan. The applicant clearly describes how partnerships with external stakeholders will support desired results for students and how the results would be tracked. It is clear the applicant has been thoughtful about how the desired outcomes will be tracked through measures that accurately capture how the selected measures are tracking towards goals of reform plan. The plan clearly describes a plan for how partners will work together with the LEA to improve results through targetting first generation college goers and target students who are at-risk of dropped out of school. However, the response does not provide a clear plan for how the reform strategy for how the reform model will be brought to scale beyond the participating students. The response is brief, general, and does not discuss a comprehensive plan to bring reforms to non participating students. Further, the applicant does not provide a detailed description for how partnershipss will integrate education with other services (including social and emotional). The applicant discusses the presence of Communities in Schools social workers but this is the only example provided. In addition, the applicant does not provide a well thought out plan for it will work with partners to consider and decide upon ways to select and evaluate supports. The applicant credits the Campus Improvement Team with the ability to carry out this important aspect to the reform plan but does not describe in detail how the process will be decided upon nor provide any specifics on how it will be created by the Campus Improvement Team. The applicant does refer to the use of the Advisory Committee to further the reform plan by involving parents in decision making to improve results over time. Families will be trained and will work with social workers but the response does not provide detail as to how parents will be engaged in the process. While the response does address each selection area, it does not provide a level of detail in its response nor provide demonstrable evidence that the applicant has considered **how** it will acheive the goals and therefore scores in the low range.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does provide a clear and cogent overall plan to build on the core educational assurance areas. The applicant provides a plan that will create personalized learning environments for each student that is well positioned to improve college and career ready outcomes for students through partnerships with key stakeholders guided by the BluePrint plan and School Collaborative model. The plan will provide students with real-world experience and deepen student learning by requiring internships and/or jobs, involving parents, and by calling on institutions of higher education to be integral partners that will positively impact all schools. Overall, the application meets the absolute priority for the reasons stated here and overall approach to the reform plan.

Total	210	130
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Race to the Top - District



Technical Review Form

Application #0003TX-3 for Aubrey Independent 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 Applicant clearly articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on the four core education assurance areas. The Applicant's framework for reform is a comprehensive College to Career Blueprint, which was developed collaboratively by a team of local education agencies (LEA's), higher education administrators and faculties, partnering organizations and the community. The College to Career Blueprint is a collaborative vision that can be replicated by other districts across the state and nation.

The Applicant details four goals in the College to Career Blueprint that are based on the core educational assurance areas, and which provide a sound approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. For example, each College to Career Blueprint goal includes objective-based key practices, expected outcomes, and state and federal resources districts will need to create personalized learning environments and improve teaching and learning.

The College to Career Blueprint clearly details appropriate classroom experiences for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. These innovative strategies for teachers will focus on monitoring student progress, collaborative planning, and data analysis with the goal of delivering integrated and personalized instruction aimed at teaching high-level academic and technical content.

Similarly, the student classroom experiences will emphasize appropriate personalized learning strategies based on student strengths, interests, and rigorous academic core curriculum. For example, in middle school students will set goals and plan for postsecondary education and training that includes courses leading to industry certification and/or a college degree.

Additional strong examples of personalizing learning for high school students includes giving students personal computers which provide access to instructional programs and resources at school and at home and giving students the choice of completing a course that includes an internship or paid employment to integrate school-based and work-based learning.

The Applicant clearly articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision driven by the College to Career Blueprint logic model. The blueprint provides sound strategies for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity and accountability, expanding college and career readiness opportunities, and personalizing instruction.

As a result of the Applicant's strong responses to selection criteria and to the vision for developing personalized learning environments, the score for this criterion is in the high range.

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

The Applicant conducted a comprehensive needs assessment for interested local education agencies (LEAs) and used the following program eligibility requirements to determine participation: state and federal accountability ratings; low on-time graduation rates for the general student population and targeted low income subpopulations; low rates of advanced credit enrollment in high school for the targeted low income subpopulations; low rates of technical training courses in high school for the targeted subpopulations; and low postsecondary education enrollment rates for district graduates and/or first generation college students. This process is a reasonable and focused approach to implementing reform.

Participating local education agencies (LEAs) are divided into four regions or quadrants of the state (metropolitan, central, south, and north Texas) to facilitate effective collaboration. The Applicant provides comprehensive data documenting the total number of participating students (32 secondary campuses serving 20,435 students in grades 6-12), participating students from low income households (10,636), participating students

who are high-need students (data detailed in appendix), and secondary school educators in the participating schools (1,778).

The Applicant’s approach to implementation is likely to succeed because it is collaborative, pairing low performing schools participating in the project with a host local education agency (LEA) in their quadrant that has met adequate yearly progress criteria on three measures: reading/language arts, mathematics, and graduation rate. The pairing of schools demonstrates the consortia districts’ commitment to successfully using their College to Career Blueprint to implement key practices that will allow local education agencies (LEAs) to develop model programs and scale up existing programs for targeted populations.

Although the majority of the project focuses on implementation in secondary schools, the Applicant specifies that PK-12 English language arts and math curriculum will be revised to align with Texas College and Career Readiness Standards during the first year of the project to establish vertically aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment in each participating local education agency (LEA). These alignments will ensure a seamless implementation process.

Full points are awarded because the Applicant provided a clear and convincing approach to implementing its reform proposal which will support high-quality LEA level and school-level implementation of the proposal.

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

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

High Quality Plan, Goals, and Logic Model

The Applicant presents a comprehensive high quality plan as described in the notice which details ambitious and achievable goals, executable deliverables, appropriate timelines, persons responsible, and key practices that will positively impact goals and student achievement and learning through state Race to the Top (RtT-D) projects outlined within each goal. The Applicant’s logic model is the College to Career Blueprint which outlines the theory of change and the Applicant’s plan to improve student learning outcomes for all students served. The following goals in the College to Career Blueprint will guide meaningful reform to support district wide change:

Goal 1: Curriculum Standards and Assessments- The focus of this goal is on adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy

Goal 2: Data Systems – The focus of this goal is utilizing data systems that measure student growth and success and to improve teacher practice

Goal 3: Effective Educators and Leaders – The focus of this goal is to recruit, develop, evaluate, support, reward, and retain highly quailed educators and leaders

Goal 4: Preparation for College and Career- The focus of this goal is to increase college access, implement rigorous courses thorough collaboration with partner higher education institutions, make learning relevant, personalize learning, and provide academic support.

Scale Up Initiatives

In addition to ambitious and achievable goals, the Applicant describes two initiatives that illustrate how their reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. The first program to be scaled up is the unique personalized system of school improvement and reform. Innovative and feasible strategies include:

- interactive data programs, communication tools, personal computers, and distance learning systems;
- providing learners with personal technology devices to access classroom, intervention;
- advanced curriculum, as well as, college and career resources in school and at home;
- the ability of educators and schools state-wide to communicate in a virtual learning community sharing resources, content, and ideas;
- students working with academic advisors using the online Naviance Succeed program for middle school students’ program and career planning; and
- academic support will be provided through technology rich learning labs for teaching and learning with access to distance education, online courses, and training during extended hours

Collectively, these focused strategies provide strong support for the Applicant’s successful scale up of a personalized system of school improvement.

The second program that the Applicant proposes to scale up is the Dual Credit and Advanced Technical career pathways program. The Applicant

proposes to expand the model to offer college and career options at high school campuses. The Applicant’s scale up proposal embraces innovative and executable strategies including:

- expanding the number of schools served and expanding the scope of the project to offer 24-60 credit hours in five high demand career fields identified for each quadrant;
- providing an ELA Coach, Math Coach, Grad Coach and College to Career Advisors at campuses who support students and train educators and families to monitor student progress;
- making learning relevant by establishing pathways that will include access to at least 24 hours of college credit in a career field in high school; and
- providing course templates for each district which will be posted in a menu on the College Access network based on five high demand degree/endorsements

Clearly the Applicant’s ambitious scale- up initiatives will provide schools with feasible strategies for reform that link to the College and Career Blueprint, which is their framework for effective school improvement initiatives.

Full points are awarded because the Applicant includes a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools

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

(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth).

The Applicant’s performance on summative assessments is based on student performance levels on the Texas STAAR and end of course (EOC) Assessments and the State of Texas new accountability system which utilizes index scores to determine student achievement, progress, and achievement gaps. Working collaboratively within the consortia, the Applicant’s ambitious goal is to identify and match schools with a successful record of improvement with low achieving and persistently low achieving schools. For example, this goal is executable because collaboration allows schools to share personnel, strategies, and resources to improve achievement and to bridge the achievement gap between high need students and the general student population. The Applicant states that performance in each content area will increase each year from 2013-14 to 2015-16 requiring students to correctly answer a higher percentage of questions each year to meet state proficiency standards. A possible inconsistency is that the subpopulation goals in reading and math will increase only marginally during the first three years of the project (2013-14 to 2015-16). Recognizing this possible inconsistency, the Applicant plans to apply program resources such as standards based curriculum; rigorous instruction and active teaching and learning, focused educator training, and use of real time data from benchmark assessments to increase the probability of achieving their planned goal of student growth at 70% based on scale score growth in reading and math by 2018, and an INDEX 2 weighted growth rate of 65% of students, by subpopulation meeting or exceeding scale score growth.

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps as defined in the notice

Beginning with middle schools, the Applicant plans to demonstrate commitment to closing the achievement gap by restructuring the school day to provide content tutoring sessions in math and ELA/reading for high need students. Reasonable strategies and focused interventions include utilizing personal technologies, access to online tutorials and test practice programs, and supervision by professional staff and college interns who will be paid extra-duty to supervise the sessions offered to students at the Academic Study Center. Based on standards set by the State, the Applicant plans to use the Texas Accountability System Index 3 to compare the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students and the two lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups in each district to the general student population. As a result of these planned interventions, the Applicant justifiably projects that the percentages of students meeting the Level III advanced performance rate will potentially increase from 55% in 2013 to 70% in 2018. The Applicant’s goal is ambitious yet attainable and employs persistent actions for reform.

(c) Graduation rates as defined in the notice

The Applicant’s ambitious goal for improving graduation rates is 80% of participating students, by subgroup, in participating districts will graduate on time with their cohort by 2018 as determined by the four year graduation rate. A significant component of the goal is the focus on 4 year completion rates of ELL students in low achieving or persistently low achieving high schools, and the over two-thirds dropout rate among economically disadvantaged students district-wide. Examples of focused and achievable strategies that the Applicant proposes to support attainment of the 80% graduation rate include:

- Grad Coaches who will monitor student risk factors, provide tutoring and social supports, and coordinate communication between parents and the school;

- On-going encouragement through campus-based college to career advisors who will work with students to develop personal and academic goals.
- Providing academic English language arts and mathematics
- Establishing a culture of high achievement in which each local education agency (LEA) in the consortium will establish a shared district and school-wide culture that places its primary focus on improvements in academic outcomes for all students.

(d) College enrollment rates as defined in the notice

The Applicant’s goal is to enroll 65% of high school students by subpopulation in college, technical, or postsecondary courses during high school. Examples of innovative strategies for attaining this ambitious goal consist of programming middle school students in dual credit and/or technical credit courses toward a postsecondary degree or technical certification; student scholarship awards for dual enrollment college preparatory core content courses passed in middle school; purchasing Naviance Succeed online college and career planning program; and hiring Grad Coaches and advisors who will coordinate activities, training and technical assistance to students and families.

(e) Postsecondary degree attainment as defined in this notice

The Applicant’s ambitious goal calls for 70% of Race to the Top (RttT-D) participants, with an expected high school graduation date within the third or fourth year of the project to:

- complete at least 24 hours of college or technical credit in a program of postsecondary education during the project period,
- complete an associates degree or technical certification within one year, or
- complete a baccalaureate degree within three years immediately following high school graduation

Evidence supporting the achievable of this goal is based on the Applicant’s demonstrated ability of success with 47%-57% of students in participating low performing districts who graduated from college within four years of graduating from high school. The Applicant adequately addresses a vision likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals points in the high range are awarded.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant documents a clear track record of success based on work with the Successful Schools Collaborative. The Applicant is the lead local education agency (LEA) and houses the Successful Schools Collaborative, and together the consortium LEAs and the Collaborative t have an exemplary history of working collaboratively with local education agencies (LEAs), state associations, higher education institutions, and business and community organizations to fund research based school improvement projects. The Collaborative supported the lead local education agency (LEA) and Consortium LEAs in the design of the College to Career Blueprint, which is the logic model for the Race to the Top (RttT-D) project.

The Aubrey ISD is the lead local education agency (LEA) along with other Consortium LEAs who are working with the Successful Schools Collaborative (SSC). The Applicant reasonably describes a clear track record demonstrating that the consortium members have the full capacity and extensive experience in developing and managing large, complex grant programs that serve districts.

Strong Examples include:

- Delineation Four collaborative schools have been selected as host districts based on their record of success in advancing the core educational assurances targeted in the proposed RttT-D project.
- Each school has been awarded Gold Performance Acknowledgements for outstanding performance when compared to districts with similar demographics in the state of Texas.

These examples clearly show how the Aubrey Independent School District, Consortium LEAs, along with the Collaborative have demonstrated significant experience in effectively planning and implementing programs that improve student learning outcomes. The Applicant's work is based on the College to Career blueprint which it collaboratively developed; and it includes sound evidence of improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, including raising student achievement, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates; strong evidence of achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools; and making student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. The Applicant is awarded

points in the high range.

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

5

4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant presents evidence of a reasonable level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. To meet requirements the Applicant states that each district presently reports four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds through the Expenditure Reporting (ER) system and ARRA Section 1512 Quarterly Reports to The Texas Education Agency (TEA).

The Applicant provides actual personnel salaries at the district level. In addition to reporting through the Expenditure Reporting (ER) system, each school district publishes a district-wide salary schedule to report actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff. The Applicant provides actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level for 2012-2013.

The salary schedule is posted on each participating district's website annually. These processes will ensure a high level of transparency in lead education agency (LEA) processes, practices, and investments including making public actual school-level expenditures for grade 6-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.

One confusing factor is that even though the Applicant reports ARRA actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers during the 2012-2013 school year; it is unclear why the total listed is reported as \$0 (The actual salary was listed as \$0) if the system is truly transparent.

The Applicant is not awarded full points because it is unclear the total salary listed for teachers is listed as \$0 and if the system is truly transparent an actual salary would be listed.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Successful conditions

The Applicant clearly describes the flexible management options approved by The Texas Education Agency (TEA) which allow Texas schools to align budget and staffing decisions to meet the needs of students and educators. The Applicant documents a variety of flexible plans available to Collaborative schools to implement the reforms of the proposed Race to the Top District (RttT-D) project. Examples include the optional flexible school day plan for students at risk; and the optional flexible year plan which allows schools to modify the instructional calendar year program. The benefits of these optional flexibility plans is that they allow districts flexibility is spending which will allow districts to target fiscal resources to match unique initiatives.

Sufficient autonomy

The Applicant clearly and comprehensively presents successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments. Evidence provided includes the approval of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and commissioned the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative Council to develop a strategic plan for high school reform; the focused consideration of six strategic questions which set research-based priorities for implementing promising practices; the development of strong supports for local education agencies (LEAs) to utilize in establishing autonomous public schools; the innovative Texas High School project which is a collaborative initiative to support two college readiness models for first generation college students from low income families; and the College High Schools and T-STEM Academies which are high schools established as autonomous secondary schools located in a community college or a stand-alone secondary campus within an local education agency (LEA).

In addition, the Applicant describes how the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides support for the Title I, Part A, Section 1116 School Improvement Program which extends supplemental funds to Title I campuses identified for school improvement by failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two or more consecutive years (low performing schools). These funds are used to implement the campus' revised campus improvement plan, which incorporates strategies based on scientifically based research, in ways that have the greatest likelihood of improving the performance of participating children in meeting the state's student performance standards.

The School Improvement Program supports flexibility and autonomy for school management in implementing the school's

improvement plan. Together these focused initiatives provide convincing evidence of the Applicant's autonomy to implement personalized learning environments.

Full points are awarded because the Applicant provides a clear and complete response to the selection criteria by providing evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the Applicant's proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)

15

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant describes meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal including a complete description of how students, families, teachers and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal. For example a team of administrators working as a learning community led the training and dissemination of research-based strategies through meetings, focus groups, and workshops with stakeholders, who shared ideas and provided feedback, was used to revise the College to Career Blueprint. In each participating district, educators approved the College to Career project and use of the blueprint as the foundation of the project by a majority vote.

The Applicant reports that none of the schools had more than 4% of teachers refrain from voting or object to the proposal. Although the local education agencies (LEAs) do not have collective bargaining representation, the Applicant describes evidence of participation including advisory meeting signature forms, the overview presented, and documentation of educator support provided by each district.

The Applicant did not include 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.

The Applicant provided letters from Mayors from participating districts, as well as signatures from the Superintendent of Schools and the School Board Chair from Aubrey Independent School District.

Points in the medium range are awarded because the Applicant did not provide letters of support from key stakeholders as evidence of meaningful stakeholder support as required by the selection criteria.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Learning: (a)(i) Understanding the relevance of learning to personal and academic goals –

In order to ensure that students understand the relevance of learning to personal and academic goals, the Applicant will implement the College to Career project which is designed to enhance existing graduation requirements by providing local education agencies (LEAs) to set high expectations for students through course plans created to provide concept and skills development in the student's chosen career field and provide a means for students and LEAs to attain their goals.

The Applicant comprehensively describes how their innovative Race to the Top District (RtT-D) project targets first generation college students and provides them with experiences and resources to explore careers and to establish academic and personal goals; revise related pathway curriculum to provide related academic support and job skill training to promote success; and to articulate pathways indicated on career plans that lead seamlessly from high school diploma to certification to degree options in a variety of high demand industries.

Each of these ambitious and achievable strategies will provide sound support for helping students understand the relevance of learning to personal and academic goals because students will receive the necessary support and guidance to develop personalized career pathways which will allow them to be actively engaged in learning while focusing on college and career options.

(a)(ii) Learning linked to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements

The Applicant clearly describes how the College to Career Blueprint will provide a system for students begin career pathways during high school. For example, students will receive guidance and support from the career to college coordinator and advisors, and local education agency (LEA) counselors who have been trained to use the technology-based Naviance Succeed program.

The process will also provide strong support for students and families by focusing on training for students and families in utilizing a technology based program to learn about careers, colleges, employment and complete college readiness tasks. College to Career Advisors will work collaboratively with local education agency (LEA) teams and school counselors to help students identify and set personal and academic goals.

(a)(iii) Deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest:

The Applicant will establish campus-level College to Career Centers which provide access to technology tools including computers. Technology will be the key to participation, achievement, and success for participating students. Strong examples of technology integration includes student access online courses, such as college preparatory and credit recovery courses, college and technical school credit courses, and distance learning courses taught by educators in collaborative school teams. In addition to courses, students will utilize technologies to understand and master content in rigorous courses.

The Applicant anticipates only a small percentage of students in each district who will take college preparatory and college or technical credit courses during high school with the expectation of attending postsecondary education or training in a chosen career field. The Applicant justifies this position with undocumented data that they assert reveals the percentage of economically disadvantaged learners who enroll in advanced courses is far less than the general student population. This position appears to be inconsistent with the Applicant's stated goals of providing rigorous academic programs, supporting student success, and providing all students, focusing on first generation at-risk students in particular, with opportunities to succeed in college to career options based on student goals and areas of academic interest.

(a)(iv) Exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning:

Through the proposed project, students will be exposed to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. Learners in the project will have options for fulfilling requirements including online courses, lab classes in other postsecondary education locations, advanced technical credit or certification courses in technical schools, and/or distance learning courses. These experiences and relationships that are monitored by the student's school and instructors will deepen each students learning and provide them with understandings of how to interact and succeed in future educational and workplace situations.

(a)(v) Master critical academic content and develop teamwork and critical thinking skills:

The Applicant's detailed plan for ensuring that students master critical academic content and develop teamwork and critical thinking skills is based on the career pathways model, where enrolled students become part of a cohort of students focusing on developing skills and passing relevant college preparatory and credit courses. Students will engage in a variety of structured activities. Collectively, these innovative and achievable strategies demonstrate the Applicant's strong commitment to providing opportunities for students to master critical academic content and develop teamwork and critical thinking skills.

(b) (i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development:

The Applicant clearly describes how students are provided with a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development. Grad Coaches hired through the project will monitor student progress toward graduation, and utilize the system to communicate with parents when risk factors, such as academic challenges, excessive absences, or misconduct indicate the student may be at risk of course failure; and coordinate monitoring and support with local college to career advisor to ensure the enrollment is on track to graduate with the desired college credits.

During their junior year, each student and family will also learn to use the online system to track college or technical school credits, Naviance Agile Grad Data from the high school system will be uploaded into the postsecondary program. The College to Career Advisor and Grad Coach will work with families throughout the project to use the system.

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

The Applicant describes a variety of collaborative professional development strategies designed to prepare educators to access resources and use tools to create environments where high-quality instructional approaches focus on accelerating student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Strong examples include:

- extensive training in hands-on project-based learning focusing on transforming classrooms into project-based learning environments where students collaborate with peers to solve real-world problems that involve the use of

essential knowledge skills for ELA and math.

- appropriate training on parent participation and engagement strategies to support student success
- focused training for principals and the superintendent focusing on teacher effectiveness and evaluation
- intensive training on state mandated assessments and End-of-Course (EOC) exams in grades 9-12 and how to utilize the results

(b)(iii) High-quality content aligned with college and career standards:

The Applicant describes how high quality content includes technology based instruction, engages students in learning standards based curriculum, and is aligned with college and career standards. Strong examples of this initiative includes using Project Share, which allows teachers and students to create or join common interest networks to collaborate with experts and communicate with students in a secure online environment; and access to state-adopted and approved materials including electronic textbooks and other materials developed through Texas Education Agency (TEA) partnerships.

(b) (iv.). Ongoing and regular feedback (A) Frequently updated individual student data:

The Applicant's plan to provide ongoing and regular feedback and frequently updating individual student data will be achieved by installing and implementing the Texas Data System GPS Dashboard, which will enable districts to design, develop, and implement data systems to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student to teacher data. The TPEIR component will expand existing data reports to include college and career information. The Applicant clearly describes how using the improved data system will assist districts in generating and using accurate and timely data to meet reporting requirements; support decision-making at the district, campus, and classroom levels; and facilitate campus and district improvement planning to eliminate achievement gaps and improve learning of all students.

(B) Personalized learning recommendations

The Applicant's strategy for personalizing learning begins with access to real time student data through the Texas State Data System (TSDS) GPS Dashboard and the REVEAL technology program. Access to student data will provide teachers with information needed to make data-driven decisions concerning teaching and learning; to plan for implementation of personalized instruction with appropriate instructional activities learned through focused training; and to monitor response to intervention (RTI) processes for struggling students. In addition, the technology based Early Warning System will be used to monitor student risk factors, which in turn will allow staff to implement academic and social supports through coaches and advisors.

Together these strategies clearly describe how personalized learning recommendations are based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready graduation requirements and available content, instructional approaches, and supports to ensure that students continue to progress successfully through their college and career ready pathways.

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students:

The Applicant's plan for providing accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements consists of prevention and intervention strategies accessible to students in the classroom, during extended day activities and at home.

The sound reasoning behind this strategy is that in order to promote student success, teaching and learning should be a collaborative partnership and the collective responsibility among all stakeholders, including students, parents, LEA teachers, and postsecondary education instructors. The Applicant clearly describes focused intervention strategies provided to students during extended learning.

Secondly, Alternative Learning Environments will be provided to provide high-quality strategies for high-need students. Not only will technology be used to track student academic progress, REVEAL Early Warning System will also tracks risk factors including attendance, misbehavior, and credit accumulation. The Applicant will provide Grad Coaches to coordinate use of the system which will provide online courses including high school and college credit courses offered through high quality, Texas Education Agency (TEA) approved technology based lessons.

This alternative learning environment will be an option for students who struggle with conforming to conventional classroom learning. Together, these comprehensive layers of prevention and intervention will be available as needed to ensure students develop prerequisite knowledge and skills needed to successfully progress in a coherent sequence of courses; to provide a variety of instructional methods in order to meet student needs and to optimize learning; and to reduce achievement gaps, as well as the need for credit recovery courses in high school and remediation courses at the postsecondary education level.

(c) Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students

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 Applicant specifies several reasonable mechanisms for 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.

Full points are not awarded because the Applicant articulated low expectations for economically disadvantaged learners who enroll in advanced courses is far less than the general student population. This position appears to be inconsistent with the Applicant's stated goals of providing rigorous academic programs, supporting student success, and providing all students, focusing on first generation at-risk students in particular, with opportunities to succeed in college to career options based on student goals and areas of academic interest.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C 2 (a)(i) Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments:

The Applicant plans to implement a peer mentoring model to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environment. The peer mentoring model appears reasonable will likely provide teacher training in three focused areas including training by English language arts (ELA) and math coaches on rigorous curriculum and assessment teachers in grades 3-12. The peer mentoring model appears to be an effective model for successfully implementing personalized learning and supporting teachers to be skilled and confident in personalizing learning environments and modeling high expectations and fostering high achievement among students.

2 (a)(ii) Adapt content and instruction in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches:

The Applicant's evidence-based model for adapting content and instruction in response to student academic needs, interests, and optimal learning approaches include research-based mentor training for math coaches provided by the Regional Math and Science Collaborative and research-based Track to College Training for English language arts (ELA) coaches developed by the University of Texas for the Texas Education Agency. The Applicant provides a clearly detailed overview of each program is provided in the appendix.

C 2 (a)(iii) Frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards:

The Applicant frequently measures student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards through the Texas Data System GPS Dashboard, which enables districts to design and implement data systems to manage, disaggregate, analyze and utilize for data driven decision making at the classroom level. The College to Career project focuses on increasing local data capabilities to support instruction and accountability. Installing and implementing the Texas Data System GPS Dashboard is a sound practice which will enable districts to use individual student to teacher data within individual schools as well as across districts within the collaborative.

C 2 (a)(iv) Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness using feedback from evaluation systems:

The Applicant ambitious plan to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness using feedback from evaluation systems includes utilizing technology to create 21st century classrooms. A key component of the plan is professional development focusing on utilizing digital resources to explore, apply, and create content. Focused training will ensure LEA skill, accountability, and support of the electronic enhanced and redeveloped PDAS teacher and principal evaluation system as a measure of effective educators in every classroom and building. The comprehensive plan for training in the revised evaluation system is provided in appendix

C 2 (b)(i) Actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches: The primary model that the State of Texas uses to obtain actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches is Response to Intervention (RTI). This comprehensive and research-based model ensures students receive core instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of each learner, requires interventions based on data analysis of learning gaps, includes diagnostic and progress assessments, and requires intensive interventions when students fail to show a response to intervention.

In addition, the Applicant will utilize online programs in reading/English language arts (iStation) and Math (Think it Through) to accelerate learning of developmental skills over a span of grade levels. Focused strategies such as extended learning time, college prep reading, writing and math instruction, credit recovery courses instructed through technology for students who struggle to meet conventional classroom schedules and routines will provide additional learning approaches.

Combined these focused interventions will meet the needs of the individual student and will reduce the need for students to recover credit.

C 2 (b)(ii) High-quality learning resources:

The Applicant's achievable plan for providing high-quality learning resources is based on the College to Career Blueprint as a framework for planning, implementation, budget, and evaluation of college preparatory school improvement programs. A list of College to Career Resources is

found in appendix. Clearly, the College to Career Blueprint is a sustainable model that provides data systems, project professional development, materials, resources, and assessments that can be sustained beyond the project period and expanded to districts across the state.

C 2 (b)(iii) Specific resources and approaches to provide feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs:

The Applicant's Race to the top District (RttT-D) project details the Applicant's ambitious plans for the installation of technology-based data systems that provide real time student data as an essential component in planning and implementing personalized learning for students. The plan includes technical support, identifies specific resources and approaches in meeting student needs; and provides feedback on the effectiveness of resources and their impact on improving student achievement.

A detailed overview of the data systems and project support and the correlation of key practices, resources, and progress monitoring tools are provided in the appendix. Clearly, the Applicant describes how the College to Career Blueprint illustrates key practices, resources, and the data systems that can be used to provide feedback.

C 2(C)(i) Information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system for the purpose of continuous school improvement:

The Applicant's comprehensive plan for continuous improvement includes utilizing a Project Director manage the components necessary to implement key practices and action steps of the College to Career Blueprint including training, policies, technology tools, data, and resources. Achievable strategies include establishing a campus improvement team and a district improvement team which will be trained to plan, as well as implement and monitor progress of school improvement projects.

Stakeholders, including educators, students, and parents will actively participate with improvement teams in setting goals, creating graduation plans, monitoring their student progress, selecting appropriate academic and social supports, and evaluating progress using technology based systems. The model is collaborative, allowing educators and families will give input to project decisions at Campus Improvement Meetings.

C 2(C)(ii) Systems, and practices to continuously increase student performance and close gaps:

The Applicant's ambitious and achievable plan for continuously increasing student performance and closing gaps includes the establishment of electronic curriculum management system (CSCOPE curriculum, lessons, resources and lesson plans) managed by curriculum coordinators. The Coordinators will conduct summer curriculum seminars to update the electronic curriculum system.

At the project level data will be used to revise Action Steps based on feedback, revise the Blueprint based on feedback, and to evaluate the effectiveness of project management. By purchasing technology based management systems to automate test administration and data analysis, developing systems for implementing a progress monitoring process and using data to inform decisions, schools will increase student performance and achievement gaps.

C 2(C)(d) Increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals:

The Applicant's reasonable plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals includes focused training utilizing coaches to model effective teaching and conduct classroom demonstrations guiding teachers to plan lessons and utilize data to drive instruction, and ongoing coaching. Evaluations of student growth will include benchmark scores and STAAR and EOC scale scores, and ePortfolios of student work will be evaluated using a rubric system, attendance rates, and discipline report incidences will also be used to evaluate growth for at-risk students. Incentives such as scholarships will be offered to effective teachers which will allow them to attend graduate level courses in their teaching field to become eligible to teach college technical credit courses.

The Applicant provides detailed descriptions of the Teaching and Leading College to Career Timeline including a rationale, key practices, action steps, timeline, deliverables and the persons responsible for creating a school environment that values high achievement and introduces students to college success during high school in the appendix.

The Applicant is awarded points in the high range for providing a reasonable plan for teaching and leading that addresses the components of the selection criteria.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure:

The Applicant details the organizational structure of the consortium governance structure for the proposed College to Career (CTC) Project, which has been developed to provide support services to participating schools through an advisory board. Aubrey Independent School District is the lead local education agency (LEA) and project director in charge of the transformation process. The Applicant provides strong examples of specific job responsibilities. These examples demonstrate the Applicant's commitment to providing practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning and provide convincing evidence that organization of the LEA consortium governance structure will provide support and services to all participating schools. Also, a complete description of the governance structure of the advisory board, a timeline of grant management are provided in the Appendix and member district superintendents have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which is provided in the required signature pages document.

(b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy

The Applicant's plan for providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy is to establish a College to Career (CTC) Advisory Committee at each participating lead education agency (LEA). This plan is likely to be successful in providing schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy because the plan will require the implementation of four teams – one for each of the educational assurance areas addressed by the project, standards based academics, data based decisions, leadership, and college preparation. Each team will focus on an assurance area and will be led by a CTC Coordinator and a LEA campus administrator. A detailed chart summarizing the governance structure of the Advisory Committee is provided in the Appendix.

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery:

The Applicant's plan for giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery is based on the Texas Education Agency Early College High School model which has significantly reduced the number of at-risk students dropping out of school, increased the number of students graduating on-time with their graduating cohort, and improved the number of students entering and completing college. Participating students may earn extra credit based on demonstrated mastery. Together these practices demonstrate the Applicant's strong support and commitment to giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic;

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

The Applicant describes an ambitious plan for giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Strong examples of why this plan is focused and achievable includes Common Assessments, Project Based Learning in Courses, Capstone Course, Technical Certifications Earned and Degrees Earned.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students:

The Applicant will provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students. Analysis of data will lead to decision making in areas to include: 1) extensive efforts to align instruction with test content; 2) detailed analysis of student responses to the tests or assessments designed to parallel these; and 3) the provision of immediate and appropriate corrective instruction for individual students as indicated by that analysis.

The academic coaches will guide teachers in designing changes in curriculum and instruction to address the needs identified by the data analysis. Academic Coaches will mentor teachers in using data to implement the approach to improve student learning and academic achievement, to provide tutorials and enroll students in intervention programs when appropriate, and to monitor student progress and response to intervention. The learning resources and instructional strategies utilized in the project, empower educators to vary instruction to meet the needs of all learners and monitor their response to the intervention – enabling all students, including those who qualify for Special Education and those with limited English proficiency to succeed in school.

Full points are awarded because the Applicant provides a high quality plan that comprehensively describe LEA practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning.

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

10

8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) All participants have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources:

The Applicant's plan is to provide all participants with access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources will be provided through the College to Career project. For example, the Applicant plans include establishing systems and structures for using technology tools to reform campus curriculum.

(b) Ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support:

The Applicant's achievable plan for ensuring that students, parents, educators and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support is through the College to Career project, which is built upon the idea of providing information and training and encouraging participants to act as peer

mentors to support learning includes a number of strategies.. Each LEA will work with the Technology Coordinator to develop a Personal Technology Handbook; provide focused training for all stakeholders; conduct meeting; and once the training has been completed, the student and parent will enter into a formal loan agreement which will include: student information, lending device information, the condition of the equipment and responsible use guidelines, and signatures signifying agreement. Signatures of both the student and parent or guardian will be required before the device will be loaned to a student. The technology devices loaned to students through the College to Career project will remain the property of the district. The district will provide commercial insurance for each device loaned through the program. Although the Applicant plans to provide personal computers for students to use at home, the Applicant does not explain the process of providing internet provider services which students and parents will need in order to use the personal computers to access online resources.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format:

The Applicant’s ambitious plan for using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format will be provided to the Naviance Succeed online technology system. The Internet based program allows students and parents to export information in an open data format to complete college and career planning efforts. Although the Applicant plans to allow access to the online resources to parents, the Applicant does not provide a clear explanation of how the district will ensure that parents have internet provider services which they would need to access the Naviance Succeed online technology system.

(d) Ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems:

The Applicant’s plan for ensuring that LEAs and schools use data systems will be through the College to Career project, which will allow parents and students to maintain a record of school performance data that can be downloaded electronically. The ePortfolio tool will allow a parent or student to combine data from school, extracurricular activities, and online learning experiences. The Naviance Succeed program will provide this capability for families. However, this data system is not an interoperable data system as defined in this notice (e.g., systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data)

Overall the Applicant provides an ambitious and achievable plan; however full points are not awarded because the Applicant does not provide a high quality plan (ie. High quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) for ensuring that LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems. Also the Applicant does not adequately explain how internet provider services will be provided for students and parents who check out personal computers for use at home. Internet provider services will be needed for parents and student to access the Naviance Succeed online technology system.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p><i>A strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process:</i></p> <p>The Applicant’s ambitious plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process includes establishing an advisory committee to monitor and check progress, identify problems and recommend and implement solutions. The Advisory Committee will monitor and check progress throughout the implementation process to identify and address problems quickly. The advisory committee will facilitate communication, calendar events, plan and implement training, monitor student assessment, purchase of materials and resources, and work collaboratively with business partners. The committee will facilitate data driven decision making, coordinate evaluation and site-based decision making.</p> <p>Although the Applicant provides descriptions of some of the duties of the Advisory Committee, the Applicant provides insufficient information describing how the Advisory Committee is part of a rigorous continuous improvement process that will provide regular ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The Applicant is not awarded full points because the Applicant does not adequately describe a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p><i>Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement:</i></p> <p>The Applicant’s strategies for ensuring successful ongoing communication and engagement include:</p>		

- Teachers of ELA and Math meet with Coaches weekly during common planning meetings..
- Coaches meet with the Project Director; ELA, Math, and Technology Coordinators; and the Financial Manager each month to monitor grant implementation.
- The College to Career Advisory Committee meets quarterly during the project period.
- The Project Director is responsible for collecting data information required of the evaluation and those reports required by the US Department of Education in areas of program and finance.

The Applicant's high quality plan (i.e.goals, activities and rationales, responsible parties, deliverables) for implementing strategies for ongoing communication and engagement is a streamlined process with a designated project manager who is responsible for coordinating program components and for accountability. The process is vertically and horizontally aligned allowing for meaningful articulation across disciplines and within teams. The plan includes internal (i.e. teachers, coaches) and external (i.e. the College to Career Advisory Committee) components to ensure seamless communication.

Full points are awarded because the Applicant provides feasible strategies and a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement, regular feedback on progress toward project goals, and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Rationale for selecting measure –

The Applicant's includes performance measure targets that are ambitious yet achievable. The Applicant's College to Career Project will utilize these achievable performance measures and additional leading indicators of success designed to ensure site based teams have information to determine interim growth as well as long-term proficiency outcomes. Project performance measures are categorized by college and career readiness, academic growth, and cognitive growth.

The Applicant details multiple performance measures in each area such as utilizing multiple measures of progress to measure readiness annually including the completion of college readiness tasks, credit accrual, and 4 year high school completion.

The rationale for selecting these performance measures is sound because each measure is focused and will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the Applicant's proposed plan. These measures provide strong support for the likelihood of achieving the Applicant's ultimate measure of progress which is students earning a degree or credential. A full list of performance measures developed for the College to Career project, divided into appropriate categories, are provided in the appendix.

(b) 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.

The Applicant's College to Career Project will include rigorous, timely and formative leading information tailored to the Applicant's proposed plan and theory of action for implementation of success. Examples of strong and achievable strategies include continuous monitoring of the type, quality, and level of curriculum and instruction and professional development used to determine effects on college entrance and success; and curriculum seminars that will focus on aligning CSCOPE curriculum with college and career readiness standards; common assessments will be created; and articulated course sequences in career pathways will be developed. Focused professional training will be conducted to develop teacher content knowledge and to utilize curriculum and resources to meet needs of diverse learners. Flexibility in curriculum will be based on data driven decision making; and curriculum scope and sequence documents and lesson plans will reflect the changes.

(c) How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gage implementation progress.

The Applicant's plan for reviewing and improving the measure over time includes feedback from surveys which will be utilized in the College to Career project to develop a Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants. Participants will be surveyed regarding Action Steps implemented in each Key Practice. Responses will be aggregated up to the school level. Then, survey results will be analyzed against school mean scale scores on the STAAR and EOC tests. In this way, the project will obtain rigorous and timely information regarding the effectiveness of implemented Key Practices on school improvement. A draft survey document is provided in the Appendix.

The Applicant is awarded full points for providing a clear and comprehensive response to this selection criteria.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant's Successful School Collaborative developed an ambitious and achievable Blueprint of Key Practices and Action Steps that appear to be effective in bringing about school improvement. The blueprint predicts future results using research of effective practices and activities and planning. Examples of strategies supporting the likelihood of applicant's plan for evaluating the effectiveness of its investments to be successful include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing and analyzing data will provide opportunities to build key performance indicators.. • Results will be evaluated across multiple locations and schools. • Key practices will be reviewed and revised based on their effectiveness to increase student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and college readiness. <p>By utilizing these achievable strategies, the Applicant's plan is likely to empower schools in the Successful School Collaborative, as well as schools across the state and country, to a plan for school improvement to match the needs and school improvement goals of their school and community.</p> <p>Although the Applicant provides ambitious and achievable strategies the Applicant does not provide all of the components of a high quality plan as described in this notice to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology. For this reason the Applicant is awarded points in the medium range.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant clearly identifies and describes all funds and convincingly describes how they will be used to specifically support the project including RTT-D funds; project budgets, and funds from other sources used to support the budget.</p> <p>Full points are awarded because the Applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables, clearly and convincingly identifies all funds that will support the project, including a thoughtful rationale for investment and priorities including a description of all funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant includes a high quality plan for sustainability of the project goals after the term of the grant. The plan appears feasible and includes required sources and sound rationales for support. The plan appears sustainable because of support from state and local government leaders, school district support, support from partners, and high quality management.</p> <p>Full points are awarded because the Applicant describes a high-quality plan (as defined) for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan includes support from State and local government leaders, financial support, and a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(1)The Applicant clearly describes the coherent and sustainable partnerships to support the Successful School</p>		

Collaborative. The Applicant clearly details how for the past five years, their partners have been awarded Dropout Prevention and Recovery, Health Science Partnership, and Texas Literacy Plan grants that have empowered Collaborative schools to develop career programs that span K-16. These awards have supported the Applicant in developing successful dual and concurrent enrollment course sequences leading progressively from high school diploma to associate and baccalaureate degrees in high demand occupations. The Applicant specifies how industry and business, workforce agencies, industry, and community organizations will serve as partners to identify and articulate pathway course sequences, provide employment and internships, and support students and families as they work to attain diplomas, degrees, and credentials. Together these initiatives clearly describe how the Applicant will integrate public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools with high-need students.

Strong examples provided include:

- **public health-** North Texas Medical Center, Bowie Memorial Hospital, Good Samaritan Center of Denton, and Bellmire Healthcare Facilities have agreed to serve the following roles in the project: serving on an advisory committee to define the program strategy and goals, identifying necessary skills and competencies for curriculum development, identifying desired certifications in each career pathways and resources to support training, providing clinical and internship sites when appropriate, and also when appropriate, hiring qualified program participants. Health science partners will also provide preceptors to assist with clinical training for the medical assisting program.
- **Businesses and Industry-** Workforce board partners including North Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc., North Central Texas Workforce Development Board, and The Texoma Workforce Development Board have agreed to perform the following roles: serving on an advisory committee, identifying necessary skills and competencies, identifying desired certifications in each career pathways and resources to support training, providing expertise in skill based curriculum development, identifying and referring candidates for training, assessing potential participants, connecting and placing participants with employers that have existing job openings, providing supportive services to help participants overcome barriers to training or employment.
- **Technical Schools-** Kraft Technical Training Center and North Central Texas College Lifelong Learning Department will provide technical credit courses leading to certification or credential in selected career pathways. Administrators have agreed to serve on the Advisory Committee to identify and articulate appropriate pathways.
- **Other community-based organizations-** Community organizations including Communities in Schools (CIS) North Texas and Communities in Schools of the Coastal Bend will work with the project to provided contracted social workers to serve as Grad Coaches in participating LEAs. The coaches will provide casework, prevention programs, and incentive initiatives. The CIS social workers will also monitor student risk factors using REVEAL and coordinate CIS and community services for families as needed. Administrators from each organization have agreed to serve on the Advisory Committee.
- **postsecondary institutions-** North Central Texas College, Del Mar College, Collin College, and the University of North Texas have a Collaborate with community colleges have agree to work with LEAs to develop pathway programs that meet local workforce and student needs and can be replicated across the region to adopt the models on a larger scale; serve on advisory committee to define program strategy and goals; attend summer workshop to identify courses and associated certification programs; work with LEA educators to revise existing curriculum; and provide certified/qualified instructors for courses in isolated areas of the community college service area.

(2) The Applicant clearly and coherently describes 10 population-level desired and reasonable results for targeted students that appropriately align with and support the Applicant's broader Race to the Top-district proposal focusing on educational results and other education outcomes.

Strong examples of partner activities align with and support project outcomes for Educational Results and Other Education Outcomes include:

Educational Results and Other Education Outcomes

- Attendance rate improvement – Communities in Schools has a record of improving attendance through implementation of Incentive programs to encourage students to come to school.
- . Reduction of discipline incidences – Communities in Schools has a record of reducing discipline referrals through implementation of violence and other CIS prevention programs.
- . Reduction in district dropout rate - Communities in Schools has a record of decreasing dropout rates in high schools across Texas through casework and coordination of social services.
- Increasing graduation rates - Communities in Schools has a record of improving graduation rates in high schools across Texas through implementing gang, drug and alcohol prevention programs.
- Increase the number of students who meet state standards in ELA and Math – Workforce Development Board, Institution of Higher Education, and Technical Center partners will work with LEAs to identify and integrate career

based skills into courses to provide hands-on, relevant learning.

Although the Applicant provides clear and coherent examples of educational results and other education outcomes; the applicant does not provide population-level desired results for family and community supports as required by the selection criteria.

(3) a) The Applicant clearly describes how their protocol for tracking selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all LEA students and at the student level for the participating students will occur through partner specific roles in the College to Career Project.

Strong examples of the Applicant's achievable strategies for tracking results through partner collaboration initiatives include:

- **Communities in Schools** –The Applicant will track individual risk factors using the REVEAL Early Warning System. Tracked data will be used to determine attendance, discipline, graduation and dropout rates of students served. Students receiving support through the Grad Coach will be tracked individually. The Applicant plans to track the data on students served and compare the data to the general student population for each performance measure.
- **Workforce, Postsecondary Education and Training** – The Applicant plans to track data through English language arts (ELA) and Math Coaches and LEA educators using the Texas State Data System. Data will be tracked on the student proficiency rate on ELA and Math STAAR (6-8) and End of Course Exams (EOC) in grades 9-12; number and percent of 9-12 students who fail classes during one school year; student on-time completion rates; and the number and percent of students who complete postsecondary certification or credentials.

The Applicant appropriately detailed an achievable protocol to track the number and percentage of students for each of these performance measures in collaboration with partner organizations. Tracked data is by student grade level within the general school population and for targeted students.

The Applicant adequately describes how they plan to use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students through collaboration with partners focusing on:

- **Improving student achievement-** The Applicant provides insufficient support of this data target.
- **Increasing graduation rates-** The community organization partners will work with students who are at-risk of dropping out of school. The organization will provide social service referrals/ interventions; case management; attendance incentives; academic mentoring; substance abuse gang violence and prevention education; and parent education and support.
- **Increasing the number of students who earn a postsecondary credential and enter the workforce-** Partners working to develop workforce skills will target first generation college goers. These students are less likely to enter college and earn a degree. By working as a collaborative team to integrate workforce skills and postsecondary credits into high school courses, these learners will develop background experiences to succeed in college or technical school. Education Foundation partners will support families by providing scholarship support for students to take postsecondary education courses once they leave the high school campus.

Although the Applicant identifies three data targets for this selection criterion, the Applicant clearly and coherently described two of the three data targets (i.e.. increasing graduation rates and increasing number of students who earn a postsecondary credential or enter the workforce). The Applicant did not clearly explain plans for improving student achievement.

c) The Applicant's feasible strategy developed to scale the model beyond the participating students includes providing the opportunity for students in schools across north, south and central Texas to take postsecondary education courses that apply to high school graduation as well as postsecondary education in a high demand career field. Supporting partners include Postsecondary Education and Workforce Skill Development partners work with regional school districts to share the career pathway templates including certification, degrees, and credentials with partnering education agencies.

d) The Applicant describes reasonable and achievable plans to improve results for the College to Career Project over time through focused collaborations with partners. The performance results of the project are strategically designed to move from interim goals of improving achievement to long-term goals of graduation from high school and attaining a postsecondary degree. The following are key components of the plan:

- Workforce partners will support long-term goals by providing courses in career pathway sequences as well as opportunities for internships and paid employment. The services and programs these partners provide will link school to personal goals to engage students in learning.
- Community organization partners will focus on interim goals such as providing food, clothing, and medical treatment. Also, the partners will provide incentive, prevention, and scholarship programs that focus on the long term goals of graduating from high school.

The work of partnering organizations will provide the tools for LEAs to change the structure and strategies of their campuses. These changes will provide improved results over time for targeted students as well as the general school population.

(4) The Applicant's response to this selection criterion is insufficient. The Applicant describes the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) student counselor ratio and notes that schools participating in the RtT-D project is hindered by the high need for and low availability of counselors to perform tasks outside of direct counseling services. The Applicant states that the Communities in Schools social worker will provide personnel to address the social-emotional and behavioral needs of students who are at-risk of dropping out of school; however, the Applicant does not describe how the partnership, within participating schools, integrates education and other services (e.g., services that address social-emotional, and behavioral needs, acculturation for immigrants and refugees) for participating students.

(5) a) The Applicant describes an ambitious and achievable plan for assessing the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership.

To build the capacity of staff in participating schools, the Applicant will work collaboratively with partners to provide them with tools and supports. For example, the Texas Higher Education Postsecondary Education Partner will provide curriculum workshops to revise curriculum in career pathway sequences; and LEA educators will learn to integrate high school TEKS and workforce skills. Through teaching these rigorous courses, teachers will meet the academic needs of the students. Other support programs to improve completion and college entrance rates include identifying adult advocates and initiating attendance incentives. Rates of attendance for economically disadvantaged learners are the lowest of any student population. Community organization partners will address attendance using incentive programs to improve the number of days students are in school learning.

(b) Identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports (as defined) identified by the applicant;

The Applicant states that according to the United States Census Bureau, Texas is one of the fastest growing states in the nation. The highest growing segment of the growing population is low income families. According to demographic data less than 27% of first generation college goers enter college and less than 17% complete a degree. The cycle of poverty continues. This data has implications for the state. By 2020, more than 57% of the persons in Texas are projected to live in poverty or be classified as low income. There is a need for academic preparation to increase college success for first generation and low income students. Postsecondary education and community organization partners will address the needs of these learners by providing college credit at no cost to the family during high school and support for the family that allow the student to focus on school. **Although the Applicant adequately identifies and inventories the needs of the school and community that are aligned with the goals for improving the education and family and community supports; the Applicant does not describe the assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports.as required by the selection criteria.**

(c) The Applicant states that the supports provided by partners will be implemented as part of the College to Career program but does not describe the process for this to occur. The Applicant states that because the work of the partners is an integral part of the project, the Campus Improvement Team will make decisions concerning implementation at the campus level; however, the Applicant does not describe the decision making process. The Applicant states that all components will be evaluated based on the performance measures of the broader project; but, the Applicant does not describe the infrastructure to select implement and evaluate supports. Although the Applicant states that the results will be evaluated by the Advisory Committee at the project level to determine effectiveness; the Applicant does not describe the process. The Applicant does not describe a decision-making process and infrastructure to select implement and evaluate supports as required by this criterion.

(d) The Applicant describes feasible strategies explaining how parents and families of participating students engage in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs. Strong examples of strategies include:

- Families will participate in each decision concerning student academic and social supports at the district level, and students will work with their parents to develop personal graduation plans with the guidance of the College to Career Advisor.
- Families will be trained to use an online program to support students throughout the process of exploring careers, enrolling in courses, completing homework with project resources, and selecting workforce employment or internships during their senior year.

- The CIS social worker will also work with families in his/her role of Grad Coach. They will work together to determine needs and locate community services and resources that keep the child on track graduate.
- The caseworker will track student risk factors throughout high school to ensure services provided promote school attendance and success.

(e) The Applicant clearly describes how they will routinely **assess** the applicant's **progress in implementing its plan** to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems through feedback from the Project Director. The Project Director will:

- Work with Campus Administrators, and ELA and Math Coordinators to track progress and provide feedback ensuring continuous improvement in the operation of the plan.
- Monitor onsite visits for the purpose of interviews and observations, collection and analysis of student assessment data, and ongoing review of school records.
- Submit progress reports and ongoing formative feedback to the Advisory Committee at each meeting to allow the team to make timely interventions to processes and procedures.
- Chart continuous improvement by student performance, attendance, course grades, test and benchmark performance, graduation rate and college admission and graduation rates.

(6) The Applicant clearly Identifies its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describes desired results for students. The performance measures are correlated with partners and are achievable yet ambitious. Performance measures for all partners are provided on the Blueprint in the Appendix on the chart provided for this criterion.

Population-Level Desired Results. Performance measures for students are illustrated in the chart, Competitive Preference Priority: Performance Measures and linked to the blueprint in the Appendix..

Points in the medium range are awarded because the Applicant provides insufficient support of key elements of this criterion as noted in various sections.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provides a clear and comprehensive vision for personalizing learning environments. The Applicant's College to Career Project coherently describes how the Applicant will build on core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies. The Applicant clearly identifies tools and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards.

The College to Career Blueprint clearly details appropriate classroom experiences for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. These innovative strategies for teachers will focus on monitoring student progress, collaborative planning, and data analysis with the goal of delivering integrated and personalized instruction aimed at teaching high-level academic and technical content.

Similarly, the student classroom experiences will emphasize appropriate personalized learning strategies based on student strengths, interests, and rigorous academic core curriculum. For example, in middle school students will set goals and plan for postsecondary education and training that includes courses leading to industry certification and/or a college degree.

Additional strong examples of personalizing learning for high school students includes giving students personal computers which provide access to instructional programs and resources at school and at home and giving students the choice of completing a course that includes an internship or paid employment to integrate school-based and work-based learning.

The Applicant clearly articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision driven by the College to Career Blueprint logic model. The blueprint provides sound strategies for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity and accountability, expanding college and career readiness opportunities, and personalizing instruction.

The Applicant clearly describes how the district plans to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student, increasing the effectiveness of educators, expanding student access to the

most effective educators, decreasing the achievement gap across student groups, and increasing the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. As a result of the Applicant's strong responses to selection criteria and to the vision for developing personalized learning environments, the Applicant met this priority.

Total	210	176
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