



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0124NM-1 for Bloomfield School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a description of a model to improve the education and achievement of students in the Bloomfield, NM school district and provides a clear description of the need based upon data, student demographics, and performance outcomes. The plan utilizes state and local data including achievement, graduation, college attendance, and at-risk behaviors that impede student success to frame the proposal focus. The proposed model of reform describe efforts that are centered around the 4 core educational goals outlined in the RTTT-D notice (performance assessments, achievement gaps, graduation and college attendance) and have clear and objective measures of outcomes and performance that establish a clear path for improvement. The proposal describes a rural community with a high percentage of students in poverty with poor achievement beginning early in the student's academic career; this point makes evident that the issues that surround achievement begin early and require early interventions and programs. The demographics provided portray a community with limited opportunities and access to the workforce and higher education thus exacerbating the issues of poverty. The data clearly establishes a need for reform that begins at the PreK level and continues through postsecondary. The model developed for this proposal recognizes the need to change the overarching culture that permeates the community through systemic changes that involve parents, students, community partners, and the educational system. A strength of the proposal is the emphasis upon the success of minorities including Native Americans and Hispanics and being cognizant of their culture and community.</p> <p>The holistic model described recognizes the need to begin interventions and scaffolding as early as PreK by providing all students in the district access to educational experiences that improve their readiness and skills for academic success. The plan outlines four specific goals aligned to RTTT-D that improve the quality of the instruction as well as improve the social and family supports that aid in improving student outcomes. The data shows a decline in student achievement and success beginning as early as grade 3 impacting subsequent learning and graduation rates.</p> <p>Project REACH describes specific strategies to personalize the student experiences for success including mentors, a seamless transition program from one grade to the next, creating a transition center for college and workforce for students, parents, and the community, providing authentic career experiences, and access to college experiences. The activities and strategies extend into the academic realm with teacher training and professional development with a research-based program to foster achievement in science and technology with hands-on and inquiry based learning. The training for educators is ongoing and extends to all curriculum areas. The proposal addresses social and emotional skill development to combat identified behaviors that place students at-risk and thus, susceptible to dropping out. Supporting and additional information on the specifics of a personalized learning environment such as extant research, literature and data would have added a level of depth to the proposal.</p> <p>The proposal outlines a plan that is comprehensive, detailed, with targeted benchmarks that encompass the PreK through post secondary educational experience of the student. The goals are clearly articulated with specific action steps that are clearly aligned in a tightly crafted manner. The scenario provides a narrative of what a proposed classroom experience would like because of implementing the proposed model. The description shows an enriched academic experience for students built upon innovative approaches to teaching and learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The project includes all schools and all students within the district and provides supporting data that documents the need and the eligibility requirements. The district data shows that over 3000 students will be impacted and of those students,</p>		

70% are low-income, 67% minority, and 100% high-need students. The potential impact is substantial in that the proposed strategies and activities will impact the entire district and the larger community.

A table provides a list of all schools targeted with appropriate and supporting data. The proposal will impact all students through a variety of strategies beginning in PreK though post high school graduation. The proposal recognizes the need to build the greater school community and sustain the project over time and addresses learning from a comprehensive perspective (K12) by providing teacher professional development to deepen and strengthen learning and specifically STEM and inquiry base learning.

There is limited details provided on actual implementation and how certain high need students will be impacted. The description is a general description without specific supporting details to ensure a high quality plan.

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

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6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan is inclusive of all students and schools within the district; although this is a small district the unique challenges of a rural area coupled with low employment, low numbers of college graduates, and poor achievement at the K12 level, require changes that will impact the schools and students as well as the larger community. Community involvement and engagement in the learning process will require a plan that is comprehensive and one that extends beyond the schools. The challenges will be to change the level of expectations as well as to increase the rigor and level of academic preparation for student entry into higher education and the workforce. The limitations described are embedded into all aspects of the community and will require great effort to make the changes that are needed can be developed and actually occur. The plan outlined recognized the scope and depth of what is required in all areas of student development-- cognitive, social, emotional. However, the plan does not provide enough information beyond inquiry based and emotional intelligence that translates into a high quality and deeply focused plan of action. The constructs are dissimilar without supporting research or evidence that aligns and links the ideas together into a tightly crafted plan.

The logic model does not adequately address a theory of change that is grounded in a conceptual model of development that is substantive. The plan has outlined many strategies and activities that could have supported a deeper level of process development and implementation. The model explains that content knowledge and skills coupled with emotional intelligence will be sufficient for student success; while these are two aspects to consider, other factors and variables such as motivation, resources including internal and external to the district and to the student, family and community involvement, access to a high quality curriculum, and a rigorous course of study. were not examined in conjunction with the overarching plan. While content and emotional intelligence may be areas to consider, there were many more facets, and thus, this limits the understanding of what specifically would occur, how and when. Supporting research would have added to the narrative and provided evidence that these two areas are indeed the most vital to consider.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines approaches to improve student learning and student outcomes aligned to the RTTT-D goals. The proposal asserts that the Research Investigation Process will improve student engagement and student achievement outcomes but does not provide any empirical data to clearly support this ascertain. As well, the reference to CASEL and outcomes associated with emotional intelligence does not provide any data that can be clearly reviewed. The links that are made are somewhat anecdotal in that it is not evident that the scope and magnitude of change that is proposed can actually occur within the parameters of the district. What is missing is the overt connection of the conceptual framework to specific student outcomes-- the alignment and links are not tightly woven in such a manner that it is both evident and justified that by using this model that changes in student outcomes will occur.

The applicant addresses each area of improvement as outlined in the RTTT-D notice with very specific goals to obtain-- this is a strength and it is noteworthy that specific subgroups are targeted for support such as ELL students. However, the goals are broad in the sense that targets and subgoals for all subgroups are not identified. The goals for achievement and success are substantial and may be a challenge to achieve based upon the current status of the district as well as the level of change that has to occur over a short time period. For example, reading goals set for ELL students indicate a baseline level of achievement at 16.9 % with an anticipated change to 57.9 % by the end of the grant. The plan has achievement goals for struggling students that will be difficult to achieve and maintain. The focus upon the at-risk student is a plus since this will likely improve achievement as well as graduation and college enrollment. A stronger and more overt partnership with the local college would have added depth to this section as well as a definitive benchmark that defines success.

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	9
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has made gains in some areas however, many of the gains fluctuate and seem to not be stable or as the result of deliberate practices and interventions. There is some data provided but limited in description and by content and grade level. The descriptions are general in nature rather than specific. The strategies that are in place such as PLC's are excellent ways to improve collaboration and communication within a school or team; and, to address student needs proactively. The overall achievement of the district is poor. The plan to address targeted subgroups at each school seems to limit the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the plan- the district is a small district and as such, a comprehensive plan for all schools and all students that share similar demographics and level of achievement may be a more focused approach. The district has identified challenges as well as to acknowledge the complexity of teaching and learning. ELL students are targeted for this plan; however, the district has made evident that the Hispanic student achievement is poor as well. The plan lacks a clear focus in places and seems to have broad goals with targets focused upon specific groups- this is a lack of a clear alignment of goals, strategies, timeline, and targets that provide a well developed model of implementation. It is challenging to see how the various components form an integrated approach. The district does share performance data with the parents and community through regular meeting and a web portal. It was not clear as to the effectiveness of these approaches.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information and data that shows salaries by school as well as by instructional and personnel staff at each school. The district appears to have an open process with regard to the development of budget as well as processes to be involved and to monitor. Information is available on the web portal. Expenditures by school were not provided. The information was provided but with limited details with respect to state funding.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information that this project is not limited or constrained by any State regulations or authority; and, this project aligns with the district strategic plan approved by the State. Approval and review of the plan included the mayor, school board, as well as all teachers in the district schools. Letters of support are included in the appendix from a variety of entities all supporting the initiative.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district described participation in the planning that included stakeholders from the schools, community, school board, and the Three Rivers Education Foundation. Public and in-school meeting were held to seek the input of all stakeholders with their recommendations incorporated into the proposal. A meeting schedule with attendees including number of participants would have been useful to determine the level of support across the district and the level of community engagement in this project. Additional details such as how input was sought and tabulated would have added another level of depth to understanding the role of the community and their involvement and support. The teacher support was impressive and adds strength to the implementation and success of the project. Letters of support were included that ranged from civic organizations, Chamber of Commerce, Mayor' office etc. - this indicates a broad based level of support that will be needed to engage this small community in the long term success of students. It also represents an investment by the community into the overall quality of life.</p>		

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides a general description of how students will be supported and provided access to experiences that enable the student to achieve and to become prepared for higher education, career and work-force ready. The descriptions are very general without specificity. The proposal had previously outlined needs with respect to early childhood and the low achievement of ELL and Hispanics as well as declining graduation rate. In this section, there is no mention of specific strategies or an instructional model other than inquiry that develops and extends the learning plan to personalize the learning. There are many strategies and models with a solid research foundation that could be utilized to add depth to this section. For example, credit recovery, online learning, opportunities to engage in collaborative learning with a mentor or peer, developing an advanced or AP curriculum, providing units of study that extend across the curriculum into other contents. The plan does not explain or provide a level of detail that clearly and precisely articulates what specifically will occur. For example, the plan states that students will engage in deeper learning without any example or explanation as to what content or grade level. A theme based curriculum is cited; however, the supporting details are not provided thus, it is not clear if this is to span the K12 curriculum or if this is for a selected grade band or content.

The diverse and rich culture of the local community provide a wealth of opportunity to provide authentic learning experiences for students. By doing so, content as well as learning about others is enhanced. The plan has outlined how emotional intelligence will support students and diminish at-risk behaviors that impact learning. There is no mention of how this goal translates into practice and into the classroom environment and thus, achievement.

The plan lacks the necessary details and supporting information that translates ideas into practice and into the repertoire of an educator's daily instruction. The plan is not provide a cohesive framework but rather a variety of strategies that are loosely coupled. The alignment is not overtly evident and the links are weakly established and articulated. The plan describes rather than focuses upon how each area such high quality content will be developed, implemented, and monitored for student success.

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

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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application has a professional development model for educators that utilizes many of the best practices associated with effective approaches to teaching and learning (e.g, collaboration, small group, large group instruction). The training extends over a two year period with content in emotional intelligence and Research Investigation Process- the two major strands from which this proposal is designed. The plan provides a description but does not provide any details as to what this training will encompass or look like in the classroom or in practice. There is gap in what is described and how this translates into practice and moreover, how this impacts students directly with achievement, post secondary education, career and workforce readiness.

The plan talks about personalized learning but there are no real examples provided as to what this means or looks like. Specifically what is expected in terms of classroom practice and implementation is not explained. The plan provides a general description, few concrete examples, and does not connect to how this training, classroom strategies, connect to student achievement. For example. adapting instruction for student engagement does not articulate curriculum revision, development of activities that are scaffold in complexity and depth, opportunities for multiple forms of assessments and deliverables, or other ways to demonstrate that learning has occurred. Students who are engaged in the learning demonstrate curiosity, willingness to learn, are self-directed and responsible and yet none of these attributes are mentioned.

The plan does build upon previous efforts to collect, analyze and evaluate data from multiple sources such as the classroom, school district and state. This evaluation is excellent in that the district is aware of student achievement in a consistent and ongoing manner. It would be useful to understand how data informs instruction at these various levels as well. The use of technology is not overtly addressed in the use of instruction in any deliberate manner. Technology could be utilized to provide student and teachers with the latest apps that would increase engagement, deepen learning and provide a mechanism to really personalize the learning- this was a missed opportunity in the narrative and in the proposal.

The district does address plans to train teachers to be highly effective and highly qualified through a professional development model of support. The district has made deliberate efforts to recruit qualified individuals with a science and mathematics background for the upper levels with success. Special education is not mentioned in the proposal either in terms of student achievement or a component of this proposal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)



	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has implemented strategies that support students and provides educators and schools the flexibility to implement initiatives based upon identified student needs. For example, the implementation of Professional Learning Communities allows teachers and teams to collaborate and dialog on individual students and develop individualized learning plans such as interventions and mentors. The district does not have a formal mechanism for how PLC's document their efforts from a district perspective or a consistent approach. The plan allows for leadership oversight and responsibility at the school level; this provides a sense of direct ownership at the school level for the success of students. The opportunity to develop tailored approaches based upon student needs and demographics is a strength in that leadership resides with those who are responsible for the daily instruction of students. This approach does allow for a more personalized approach to teaching and to learning.</p> <p>The plan addresses student learning and progress through a mastery approach rather than the traditional seat time. However, the strategies that are outlined such as RTI or sheltered instruction, do not clearly explain how a mastery approach is utilized. The strategies are excellent for additional instructional support, remediation, or tutoring; however, it is not clear how these efforts utilize a mastery approach. It is not clear how classroom teachers use a mastery approach to learning through pre-assessments, testing out, alternative learning experiences, multiple forms and times for demonstration of mastery, or other non-traditional forms of assessment. Based upon the data provided on student achievement, it would be useful to see strategies that intentionally address authentic mastery type of experiences and multiple ways for students to earn credits to improve the graduation rates.</p> <p>The plan does provide ELL students access to support systems such as mentors and tutoring; however, it is not evident how emotional intelligence for example, is linked to instructional practices to improve ELL achievement. The ideas presented in the plan are somewhat disjoint in that one cannot clearly determine how the strategies can facilitate the changes needed for improvement. The strategies and outcomes need a tighter alignment to ensure that the goals will be obtained.</p> <p>The alignment of strategies, outcomes, and achievement outcomes are not overtly linked in such a manner that it is evident that this plan will achieve the stated goals. A high quality plan demonstrates alignment that is tightly focused with supporting research that makes the goals both evident and achievable; this is not clear in this proposal.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information that students will have access to needed resources and that teachers/PLC teams/administrators only have to make requests for funding. The applicant states that funding is sufficient and better than average capability to fund capital projects. The proposal does not articulate specific tools and resources that may be considered as part of the project implementation. Noticeably absent from the proposal is the use of technology, smart apps, IPADS, NOOKs etc. The lack of a district level approach to the full use and integration of the latest technology is a missed opportunity. There is ample and supportive research that attests to the significant achievement gains that can be made in all contents and grades with the use of technology. As well, the use of technology can deeper and support the inquiry based approach the district plans to emphasize; STEM education, for example, is an excellent example of how to integrate inquiry with technology. There does not appear to be an understanding of the latest trends and initiatives that would support the kind of efforts outlined in the proposal; the approach is dated in terms of the latest research in careers, technology integration, 21st century learning, and connecting in the global sense. How technology could be integrated into the curriculum is not addressed; thus, how students can utilize in their learning is not evident.</p> <p>The use and sharing of data across multiple platforms and to multiple stakeholders is adequately addressed in that data can be accessed by school and district personnel easily. Improving parent access to data would enhance the engagement of parents and other community members in achievement.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal outlines the steps that are associated with continuous improvement; however, the plan does not provide any specific examples that are connected with this proposal that clearly demonstrates how the evaluation extends to the proposal. The applicant proposes that the district will follow a model of continuous improvement but does not link this to the goals of the project. There are no details as to what measurements or data sources either qualitative or quantitative that will be collected in a systematic manner, how it will be evaluated, how it will inform or be utilized in making sure what progress is being made towards the goals. The action steps of gap analysis is not evident, what processes will be in place, and how the plan is focused upon personalized learning, professional development, technology or staff not clear. The proposal is a description of the continuous model process rather than aligned to the plan that is proposed. There is gap in the information, clarity with respect to the actual processes, and overall lacking in high quality processes. The applicant does not provide any details as to monitoring and evaluation that is evidence of a high quality plan. Dissemination of data is discussed but little concrete information is provided.

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

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2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The project describes a variety of strategies to engage and communicate with stakeholders. For example, regularly scheduled advisory meetings, evaluator meetings and project staff is a plus. The Parent Portal is mentioned although it is not clear if access would provide the data on the progress of the grant or if this information was more geared towards an individual child. The plan does not provide enough supporting information that is in-depth and focused to understand what is to occur. The plan is a general description of generic ideas without specificity or precision thus lacking in what is defined as a high quality approach and plan for change.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has established goals for all students along several dimensions including academic performance, behavior, graduation rates and higher education; ELL student performance was specifically targeted for academic gains along with significant gains for students in grade 3 and high school. The performance measure was the state assessment and state proficiency results. The project outlines process objectives for each year centered around identified needs such as transition, instruction, emotional intelligence and readiness. The emphasis upon PreK and school readiness is a strength; however, this facet of the proposal has not been addressed to any depth in earlier sections.

Performance measures for all students and grade bands are provided with projected targets that demonstrate success. The applicant plans to use state assessments for all students in mathematics and language arts to gauge performance and the Youth Resiliency measure to assess at risk behaviors. The charts provide information on performance and targets; however, it is not clear what is to be measured in all examples. For instance, performance measure for grades 4-8 on number and percentage of students on track to college and career readiness plans to use the applicants on track indicator - this does not provide the level of detail or information that makes this a realistic and doable target. As well, there is no information provided that explains how this information will be collected, utilized, monitored, and evaluated in concert with the overall evaluation. The information is not presented in a clear and understandable manner such that it is evident of how the data will inform and be useful to the success of the project.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not provided information that rigorously evaluates aspects of the plan with any degree of depth. The proposal does not include any evaluation of professional development, EI training, teacher training. The description provided in the narrative of data disaggregation for each performance standard does not make clear how this will occur and how the analysis will be used to make changes to instruction and classroom practice to inform the plan. The description is not specific and does not indicate a high quality plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget is heavily focused upon personnel costs particularly those associated with the early childhood program. If the early childhood program had been a point of emphasis throughout the proposal, including training and other types of efforts associated with achievement this would have been a strong point. However, there was little information provided on the PreK program and the budget has many line items directed towards this aspect. It is not clear not tightly crafted in terms of a strong alignment of goals, strategies, and outcomes. As well, the budget has funding geared towards the inquiry based aspect and yet this was not fully explained throughout the proposal. The lack of information that provides a clear and compelling picture is not evident. The plan did articulate the depth with respect to the activities that would come about as a result of teacher training in inquiry for example. Having all teachers trained is an excellent strategy if the deliverables had more clearly articulated.

There was some explanation of how the district would sustain some of the initiatives; however, there was no indication that thoughtful planning had been given and that this would occur and how personalized learning could be sustained over time. The project evaluator costs coupled with district leadership funded by the grant seemed high in light of the overall activities and strategies.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines that much of the costs are one-time costs such as for training; educators will have the training and be able to train new teachers or others- this will build internal capacity for change. As well, the district plan to absorb some of the associated costs after years 3 and 4 such as personnel costs and does plan to offer in-kind for many expenses; this is a strength considering this is a small rural district. . The plan does not articulate any long term strategies associated with sustainability other than plans for year 6 of post grant work which is supported through the district budget. The plan does not include any thoughtful or indepth plans that evaluate the long term effectiveness of the grant activities to any degree of rigor.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal clearly identified students in need and provided data that supported the type of effort and support that RTTT-D could provide in changing outcomes for students. The plan has several strengths including the PreK program which provided strong support for students as a strategy to improve school readiness. However, the lack of subsequent information left a gap in the plan in terms of outcomes. The proposal indicates that inquiry and emotional intelligence would guide the plan; however, this was not fully explained or elaborated upon in such a manner that one could clearly see how this strategy could provide a longterm and sustainable impact to student achievement. For example, emotional intelligence training may be an excellent strategy to reduce at-risk behaviors; however, it was not made evident that there was a relationship of teacher training in EI that aligned to changes in student behaviors. Many of the strategies were tangentially linked and there was not an overt or evident example that clearly supported this type of training.

The partnerships were not fully described throughout the proposal in terms of how they would be integrated into the plan in a consistent and ongoing manner. The opportunity to collaborate with the high schools and students as well as with teachers was an opportunity that was not fully developed. The full scale model that impacts an entire district has the potential to make substantial progress towards improving student outcomes. The plan did not fully develop the strategies in such a manner that it was evident to see how strategies could make a definitive impact upon students and their future. The PreK center and transition center may engage the community but again this was an assumption; there were no overt strategies that encouraged parental engagement and involvement that were specifically described.

The plan has several strengths and made a strong case based upon current student performance; however, the overall plan is not a comprehensive high-quality plan that provides a level of depth and information that could be deemed as viable for success.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal did not clearly address personalized learning throughout the plan but rather inserted the idea in places throughout the proposal. The overall plan did not align goals, strategies, activities to outcomes that provided a clear understanding and a sense that the plan was viable. The major thrust of the plan was emotional intelligence and the application did not link this to concrete strategies aligned to outcomes. The goals associated with PreK were excellent but this was not woven throughout the plan but interspersed. The achievement gaps were not addressed overtly in professional development for the teachers through content training, technology integration, tools for the future etc.</p>		
Total	210	122



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0124NM-2 for Bloomfield School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(1) The applicant described a comprehensive reform vision. The vision described will support the applicant in accelerating students as a whole and sub groups, toward college and career readiness. The project will serve the entire 3,028 pre-K-12 student populations in this rural area, where only 10% of the adult population have higher education degrees. The high school graduation rate for the school district is 63%. The applicant has instituted some programs that will enhance the services. The strengths of the articulated vision is the recognition that there is need to change and enhance the academic achievement levels. The vision is credible because the successful implementation of the project will move the district forward in attaining goals in personalized learning. The school district is in Corrective Action 2 status for reading and math. This is notification that further reform should be implemented in the school district. According to the state office of education 38.6% of students are proficient in math and 47% proficient in reading. These are data from 2012. Using these data, the applicant determined the course the school district would take to provide personalized learning for students. Emphasis was placed on providing the needed support and prepare students for successful academic transition from grade level to grade level and from secondary school to post secondary education or careers. This is needed and will guide the applicant toward successfully implemented this proposal.

The applicant will establish an Education Transition Center. The Center will strengthen and reinforce learning skills, especially reading and math skills of students. It will provide several high quality resources. The applicant described an interactive classroom experience. By piloting inquiry based instruction for a semester, the applicant was able to collect and analyze data from the implementation. For instance 80% of the teachers, who were trained in the inquiry method showed significant increases in their understanding of the scientific inquiry process and in their confidence and demonstrated abilities to teach and engage students in the scientific method. Specific examples are presented of what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in a personalized learning environment. The Research Investigative Process will train two or three teachers to be Champions and assist the trainers in conducting workshop delivery, teacher mentoring and teacher coaching. This will be useful in the successful completion of the project. The vision is credible because it will provide academic support for students, emotional support for students, professional development for teachers and special, tailored programs that will ensure personalized learning opportunities that will create an attainable vision of education reform.

The proposal would be strengthened by including more details about the classroom experience for students and teachers,

especially as that vision incorporates the appropriate use of technology in the teaching and learning process.

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

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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2)

The implementation plan is described and likely will be successful, because it is based on respected research. The applicant;s approach, through the use of a logic model, is a proven strategy, with significant promise.The eligibility requirements are met. All Schools in the district will participate in the project. The applicant chose to include all students in the project because of the Corrective Action 2 status of the school district. Therefore the entire school district would benefit. A list of schools are included in the proposal. There are 3,028 students in the school district. The low income students in the school district is 70%. The ethnic minority students comprise 67%..The applicant reported that 100% of students are high needs students. There will be 204 educators participating in the project and all teachers in the district will participate in the project. Since the enrollment in the school district is rather small at 3,028 students, the decision to include all students in the project is reasonable.

The proposal would be strengthened by including an explanation of the statement that 100% of the students in the school district are at risk. Further information about the statement would make it more credible. It would also provide further insight into the students in the school district.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(3)

The applicant presented a plan.which will guide the applicant in reaching the project goals. The issue of scaling is not applicable, since the entire school district and all schools will participate in the project. The applicant did not address the possibility of scaling up the project beyond the school district. The applicant chose the logic model for the instructional approach, of inquiry-based learning. This is a frame work that has a track record of success. Appropriate focus will be on content knowledge based on Common Core standards and National Science standards.This is in step with national education reform. The overall plan is strategic.It is well described. The Champions, are teachers who will take leadership in instruction and will build district-wide capacity in training staff members. They will deepen teachers' understanding of the project goals and successfully transfer the knowledge to students. Students will benefit from the Champions because they will have additional support. The project will impact the graduation rate in the school district.

The application would be strengthened by including more persuasive data on the impact the project will have on improving personalized learning outcomes for all students.The applicant failed to provide information on ways in which the project will be scaled up, since all schools in the school district will be participating, equally in the project.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4)

The applicant presented a comprehensive table of qualitative and quantitative data, which will drive the applicant toward reaching project goals There is evidence that the performance on summative assessments will be documented. The evidence is the qualitative summative assessments.There is evidence that the applicant will decrease the achievement gaps between the two major subgroups in the school district, based on the data presented. The data presented are persuasive and significant. The applicant is realistic in setting ambitious academic achievement growth. Special attention will be placed on the ELL students. This is reasonable because that group has the lowest academic achievement level. A 20% point increase by the third year of the project. will be reached by that group. This showed growth. The school district measured the school district's achievement levels against state and national standards, which adds credibility to the process.

The applicant will increase the graduation rate by 10% by the third year of the project and an additional 5% by the end of the

fifth year of the project. This is reflective of the applicant's quality of service to all students since these data include English Language Learners. The applicant will focus on providing strong support during grade to grade transitions and school to school transitions, including student mentoring and specific events to promote graduation and higher education experiences designed to encourage higher academic achievement. Higher education graduation rates is a goal for the project

The applicant stated that there will be a statistically significant increase in students enrolling in postsecondary education. The data on college enrollment rate is unclear. Using US Census data, the applicant indicates 25.5% of adults, 25 years or older, have college degrees. It is not clear that the data are current. The data do not document the specific number of students who enroll in college or the postsecondary degree attainment for students in the school district. The goals are ambitious. The lack of critical data makes it difficult to believe that the goals are attainable.

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	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)

The applicant presented evidence of advancing student learning in the past four years. The evidence is impressive because it documented improvements in learning outcomes, especially in mathematics. It has been a struggle, but the applicant persisted in teaching and reinforcing reading and mathematics. For instance Hispanic students, one of the subgroups, in 2010-2011 school year surpassed all other groups, academically. However; that lead disappeared in the next school year. There has been substantial improvement in the graduation rate, from 30.4% in 2009-2010 to 63% in school year 2012-2013, which is a 32.6% point increase. As a result of the academic effort, data show increased growth in improving the graduation rate. This is impressive because it reflects the inclusion of data from sub groups, such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

There is some evidence of education reforms in the lowest performing schools. ELL (English Language Learners) and families will receive special focus in the project because they are the lowest performing subgroup in the school district. Because the applicant will train 80% of teachers to address the academic and other needs of this subgroup, there is reason to believe the subgroup will continue to improve academically because of the extra resources of the newly trained teachers. The Professional Learning Community is a promising reform. However more details are needed regarding exactly how the Professional Learning Community will advance the students to successfully complete high school and having a personalized learning plan. Another reform effort in place is the principal and teacher evaluations required by the State.. The State has recently implemented a more rigorous evaluation instrument and process. These are good foundations for project progress and assessment. The applicant presented some ambitious and significant reforms in the schools that make up the school district.

The applicant presented a credible plan for data sharing with students and parents through open school board meetings, the state public school education web site, the parent teacher association and other means. Teachers, administrators and consultants will analyze and interpret data in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services. The application would be strengthened by providing more details about some ways the data sharing will improve participation, instruction and services. Examples are needed about how this will be accomplished for all, or at least most, stakeholders.. Without further explanation it is unclear how stakeholders without access to a computer, or do not attend or are unable to attend parent teacher meetings or do not choose to attend open school board meetings will be informed about the project. Some accommodations are needed for these stakeholders and those who have literacy issues.

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

(B)(2)

The applicant displays a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments because the applicant has multiple means to share salaries and related financial information with stakeholders. The school district reported that total salaries for all seven schools in the school district is \$10,641,563. Total personnel salaries at the school

and average salary data for school level teachers are reported. Total expenditure for non personnel district-wide is also available. The applicant already makes this information available to stakeholders prior to budget approval. It is published for public review and comment. Budget meetings are held for the public. These meetings are covered by the local media. This will ensure even wider dissemination. Also there is a published school district report card that is circulated in the media. The stakeholders and other members of the community are kept well informed on fiduciary and personnel matters pertaining to the school district.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(3)

The applicant has demonstrated strong evidence that the State has provided successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to effectively implement the project. First and foremost, as a local education agency, under the SEA, the school district has intrinsic autonomy to refigure and institute reform measures that improve teaching and learning in the school district. The SEA has instituted some statewide initiatives which has set up an environment that supports education reform. One example is the new teacher and administrator evaluations. Also the fact that the SEA has endorsed this proposal, commended the planned approach and encouraged implementation clearly demonstrates that the context for implementing the project is indicative of successful conditions and that there is sufficient autonomy under state law to implement the personalized learning environment. There are no legal or regulatory impediments to implementing the project.

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

15

15

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4)

The applicant launched a robust outreach effort that ensured wide and meaningful participation in planning this project. Teacher, student and family participation was evident. Public meetings, school board meetings, a concept paper that described the project outcomes and strategies were widely circulated in the community. Consequently because of the wide distribution and circulation of the proposed project and the applicants willingness to listen and make necessary changes by stakeholders, there is a strong likelihood that stakeholders will buy-in and support the project.

The applicant does not have collective bargaining. Therefore at least 70% of teachers in schools must endorse the project. The teacher signatures in support of the project in the schools exceeded the 70% requirement. One school, the Early Childhood Center, had 100% support for the project, according to the teacher and personnel signatures. Strong letters of support were submitted in support of the project, from the Office of Indian Education, the local Chamber of Commerce and other organizations, which represent a cross section of the community.

In evaluating the applicant's support for the project, it is clear that stakeholders within the school district and outside of the school district, there is clear evidence that there is significant support for the project.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)

This project will become the cornerstone for reforming instruction in the school district. So it is critical that the project is rich in subject content and innovative in teaching strategies. This is evident and appropriate in the proposal. The recognition of the need for substantive support services is also evident and will further strengthen the school reform effort. It will guide the applicant to a pathway of success in reaching project goals. The project will be data driven and the applicant will use the data collected for project improvement. The school district's, aligning the curriculum with Common Core standards will ensure that it is linked to current education reform strategies. The entire instructional plan will move students closer to attaining their goals relative to college and career preparation. Students will receive deep learning experiences. One promising example is the Research Investigation Process. It is a process with proven success. In essence it is the scientific method, which is a systematic way to examine and solve problems. This approach fosters critical thinking, which is a goal for a solid, well rounded education.

The student and professional development data will be collected, analyzed and shared with students. This will help the students further define and enrich their personalized learning. Students and teachers will be able to measure progress and make timely adjustments when necessary. Teachers will be trained to continuously analyze quantitative and qualitative data and provide constant student feedback. The applying of the Socratic method of teaching will easily enhance these strategies. The curriculum, strategies and intense focus on the regular and creative use of data will measure implementation fidelity and project outcomes.

The applicant maintains that all students in the project are high need students. Therefore all students will be beneficiaries of the rich instruction and services of the project. Because the English Language Learners are the lowest academic performing subgroup, it is reasonable for the applicant to implement more focused resources to these students. The Student Growth Mentors and the sheltered instruction will raise their academic achievement levels. All students will have continuous access to their teachers, who in turn will be constantly trained and retrained to assist students in reaching their personalized learning goals.

The proposal would be strengthened by including a more detailed description of the specific role technology will play in assisting students in successfully developing and following their personalized learning plans. More details on the creative use of new technologies are needed, since technology is an integral part of our lives today and will probably be even more critical in the future.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)

Educators will be trained in new strategies that will empower them to instruct and lead in successfully implementing the project. Students will benefit from the teacher training because it is designed to enrich personal, professional and instructional capacities of teachers and leaders in the school district. As a result of the teacher training, students will improve their knowledge in reading, math and science. Educators will be trained to implement two formalized staff development components which is framed by the logic model. Reflection and strategic planning will help contribute to a personalized learning environment. There is sufficient evidence that the project will reach the set goals. Students will be well prepared, through their individual personalized learning plans. The result will be increased college completion and career readiness

Processes, tools, resources and approaches are all sufficiently described. Professional development will be ongoing and frequent. The feedback loop will generate useful data and information that will be used to intervene for corrective action, if needed. Data will be used in instruction and in helping students to engage in shared and collaborative tasks. Hands-on learning, through project activities, will reinforce personalized learning. The students will experience deep learning and constant flow of data that will be measured against Common Core standards. This will likely improve student academic outcomes. Actionable information from the new State teacher and administrator evaluation system will be retrieved, implemented and used as a guide for educators to attain project goals..

In evaluating the teaching and leading aspect of the application, there is solid evidence that the project will implement an effective project for the entire school district. Several resources will be available to students and educators that will foster education reform through personalized learning, for students and intensive professional development for teachers. Students will likely master the skills to graduate from high school and complete college or enter a career because of the rich resources which will be available to them. Teachers will be monitoring each student's personalized learning plan, to ensure that each student is on track for attaining individualized academic goals.

The application would be strengthened by clarifying the statement that all educators are highly qualified. It is unclear what this means, in terms of the project. More information on the training of principals would further explain the expectations from principals and other school-based educators. It is unclear whether or not there will be sufficient and appropriate training for

principals and other administrators.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1)

The applicant will utilize Central Office Personnel in developing and supporting Professional Learning Communities. The contributions of the Professional Learning Communities will be fundamental to the success of the project in reaching goals, especially in addressing social, emotional and academic needs of the individual students. There are three major strategies that provide opportunities for students to progress, academically, by mastery learning rather than being constricted by time. Some credit will be awarded to students, accordingly. This is a key element of education reform and is appropriate for this project. Central Office has already implemented the Professional Learning Communities in the school district. This is another strength upon which the applicant will build. The applicant has indicated that learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and accessible to all students are available. Charts, tables and the project narrative, throughout the proposal has indicated an environment of inclusion of all students. One example is that the project planning team identified the need for increasing awareness of the special needs student population through instruction in emotional intelligence. This is an innovative curriculum addition.

The applicant would be strengthened by a more in-depth description of personnel in the Central Office, their titles and their responsibilities. An organization chart would illustrate lines of reporting and authority in the Central Office. Also more specificity is needed in describing the kind of credit that students can earn as they master course content.

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

(D)(2)

The applicant's school support for a Personalized Learning environment is presented in the proposal. The passion for implementing the project is evident in the narrative, when describing teacher and community enthusiasm for the project. Stakeholders have demonstrated, through their letters of support, their support for the project. The applicant has made available support to stakeholders, online. The kind of support that stakeholders can get online needs further description. This is one way for applicants to accommodate some stakeholders. It would have been helpful to know how many internal and external stakeholders request resources. All students, including subgroups, in the school district will participate in the project. No student will be excluded because of income or any other reason. Equity for all students is incorporated in the project proposal. All student data are available to stakeholders through the School Master Data System. Teachers and administrators use the system to access and disseminate project information. It is unclear what other groups or stakeholders use the School Master Data System. This is necessary for project success. Parents can access classroom grades and assignments. Data can be downloaded and easily transferred among various data systems. A more descriptive statement about the kinds of data that will be downloaded, and to whom the data will be distributed would strengthen the proposal.

The application would be strengthened by describing available or future use of an interoperable data system. In discussing technology use, the applicant failed to indicate the availability of an interoperable data system. An interoperable data system

is necessary to support the project activities. More descriptive information is needed about other learning technologies and related software that will enhance student learning and professional development.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(1)</p> <p>The applicant stated that there is a rigorous improvement process model that will provide timely feedback on progress toward attaining project goals. However the project narrative does not fully support that statement. Measuring of project goals will be performed in the Professional Learning Communities. The applicant has displayed the ability to report strong data collection and analysis on charts and tables in the proposal. The data was comprehensive and credible. Outcome objectives are measurable. For instance the student graduation rate will reach 95%. by the end of year five of the project. This is an ambitious goal, but it is unclear that it will be attainable.</p> <p>The applicant will create a Continuous Improvement Office, comprised of upper level project staff and the project evaluator. That Office will "remain in constant contact with district level personnel." This could be a useful Office which will perform a necessary function in support of the project. More information is needed about the ways in which the Continuous Improvement Office will remain in constant contact with district personnel".</p> <p>The plan to disseminate project information is likely to have some success because the applicant will post project data on the school district's parent portal, the Three Rivers Education Foundation web site and share at public school board meetings. However disseminating project information could be more successful by using a more robust disseminating plan. In addition project progress will be circulated, analyzed and shared in the Professional Learning Community.</p> <p>The application would be strengthened by presenting a more coherent plan for monitoring all aspects of the project. More information is needed to explain how and by whom the project will be monitored. This is essential to the success of the project.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(2)</p> <p>The applicant will maintain ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through the school district's web site, the Three Rivers web site, project specific web sites and school board and community meetings. A Continuous Improvement Office will remain in constant contact with district level personnel. Teachers will be trained to intervene in personalized learning plans if it is not working for individual students, as they work to attain their individual goals. The applicant presented a plan that has some promise of success, but it lacks sufficient elements to call it a high quality plan. For instance It lacks a clear formative evaluation plan. Without a clear formative evaluation plan, it is doubtful that the summative evaluation will capture reliable and necessary data.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(3) The applicant has presented five clear performance objectives. It fell short of the 12-14 required. The strength of the proposal is in the category of All. Generally the applicant provided adequate data on the number of students; the subgroup of students; the quality of teachers and principals. and related information. One weakness is not clearly articulating the indicators; providing a rationale for selecting the measurement and reviewing and improving the measure over time.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(E)(4)and</p> <p>The applicant presented a plan to evaluate some aspects of the project. One example is the measurement of student academic</p>		

achievement. The applicant presented several data rich tables and charts in the proposal. Baseline data and projected data over the four years of the project were included. In some instances the fifth year projected data were included. This was useful and believable information.

The applicant failed to present a comprehensive, high quality evaluation plan for the Race-to-the Top-District funded activities. For instance, it is unclear how the professional training of the teachers will be measured, especially in the use of technology. There is little or no evidence that the project will be technology rich. The use of diverse technology is not adequately described. More information is needed on the training and evaluation of the teacher and leader training in the new technology which will be used in the project. It would be helpful for the applicant to have described some of the evaluation instruments or tools that will be used to determine the overall effectiveness of the project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: (F)(1) The applicant presented a budget. Costs for year one to four are presented. and include RTTD funds. The proposal would be strengthened by a clearer, more detailed budget narrative that would explain and justify budget items. For instance, the cost of technology is not adequately addressed. Examples are: the cost of teleconferencing equipment, stipends for training and computers. More information is needed on other funds and the source of other funds that will be used to support the project in years one to four. Because of lack of information, it is not possible to determine whether the budget is reasonable and sufficient. It is also not clear what the budget priorities are nor if there is a clear rationale for the project investments.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: (E)(2) The applicant stated that the total cost to sustain the project "for year 6, is \$848.8 k", with a 2% increase for subsequent years. There is evidence that the applicant wants to sustain the project, but there is no estimated budget for the three years after the terms of the grant. The applicant has forged several partnerships with San Juan College, San Juan Economic Development Services and Three Rivers Education Foundation. More information is needed about the financial and in-kind contributions to the project from the partners. The proposal is missing an evaluation plan for measuring the effectiveness of past investments and improvements in productivity and outcomes..		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The applicant has established three partnerships to support this project. Those projects will provide various services to the project. Some services that will be provided include student shadowing opportunities, financial aid information, career awareness and information dissemination. These are useful in-kind contributions to the project but other non in-kind resources need to be explored through potential sources inside the area and outside of the area. There is evidence of a process for tracking data, such as the graduation rate and high school enrollment, through a State system already in place. The applicant failed to adequately describe the project feedback mechanism that will be used to determine individual needs of each student through the personalized learning plan.. The project will deliver services to all students in the school district. Data will be disaggregated by student ethnicity, socioeconomic, achievement and other sub groups. This will provide a clearer picture of the students served in the project and the targeted needs that each sub group has for closing the academic performance gaps. The applicant will have no need to scale up the project within the school district since all schools will participate in the project. The applicant will disseminate project progress and relate information to the education community and the larger		

community. The application would be strengthened by additional strategies for building staff capacity beyond the role of the two Champions and committees described in the proposal. More specific information on parental engagement for middle school and high school students is needed. Additional outreach strategies and measurements of the effectiveness of the parental engagement strategies would strengthen the proposal. A more definitive, coherent plan to assess project progress in a timely manner is needed. A regular and substantive plan for project feedback is missing. The absence of a clear identifiable formative evaluation plan weakens the proposal. The applicant presented ambitious project goals. The goals will not likely be attainable for lack of a strong evaluation plan; the lack of a solid plan for project sustainability and other planning gaps.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to meet the Absolute Priority because the proposal did not provide persuasive evidence that students will meet their academic goals of completing high school and being prepared for college or career. Teachers will be trained to support and assist each student with individual plans for personalized learning, but more details about the process is needed. The applicant did not present a complete improvement plan for education reform.

The application would have been strengthened by including more information on the content, quality and focus of teacher training. It is unclear how effective teachers will be identified, since the proposal stated that all teachers in the school district are great. Consequently it is not clear whether or not each student will have an effective or highly effective teacher. Evidence on this critical issue is not sufficiently explained. The proposal failed to present how the creative and substantive use of technology will enhance the teaching and learning process in the project. In this digital age, technology is essential to being on the cutting edge of education reform. The applicant failed to recognize this and incorporate use of the several electronic devices into the project. The entire range and possibilities of technology was not sufficiently explored. Blended instruction would hold great possibilities for the school district and the project.

Total	210	157
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0124NM-3 for Bloomfield School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant, Bloomfield Public Schools, presents a limited vision of its reform plan that builds on an analysis of current needs within the district. The applicant does present a compelling need for a comprehensive and coherent reform plan based on achievement and graduation rates within the district including school climate and student behavior issues. The four core assurance areas are acknowledged but are insufficiently addressed as the framework for its vision. For example, there is little mention of using standards to drive the proposed instructional program to improve student achievement and deepen student learning.

The applicant proposes a number of approaches to meet its goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student

learning, and increasing equity through the use of personalized learning. The use of inquiry based units, emotional intelligence, and mentoring programs will support the applicant's goals but there is little explanation of how these various programs will be integrated to provide a cohesive approach that meets the articulated goals. In addition, these three strategies do not have the level of credibility and rigor that is necessary to reach the goal of deep student learning.

The applicant provides a vignette of a typical student's experience with both instructional and school climate experiences to demonstrate what its reform plan will look like in action. The description of the response to bullying and the instructional process is ambiguous in its links to how students might use the skills and techniques learned through this proposed project.

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

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to involve all the schools in the district with the high schools implementing the instructional component first and the elementary schools implementing the emotional intelligence program the first year. The applicant's justification for this approach is adequate but does not provide additional information on whether or not specific grades at the elementary level or content areas at the high school level will be targeted or if the total school will implement the programs at one time. These factors impact the school-level implementation and resource allocation particularly if the the District intends to differentiate between grade levels and/or content areas.

All the schools in the District meet the eligibility requirements and are all in some level of corrective action. The required data elements are included in the application including sub-group populations and participating educators. This is a comparatively small district with approximately 3,000 students and 200 educators.

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

10

4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan addresses the required elements including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. It proposes an implementation process for its two main components (inquiry-based learning and emotional intelligence) that will begin at opposite ends of the education spectrum. The rationale for beginning the inquiry-based learning at the high school level and emotional intelligence at the elementary level is justified but fails to provide for a meeting point for these two approaches, including how the two will reinforce each other and be integrated at the classroom level. Furthermore, given that this is a district wide approach, the application does not provide a clear process for moving the approaches into either the lower or higher grade levels.

The applicant does provide a reasonable plan for teacher training to build district capacity to extend and maintain the project but leaves much of the responsibility with the Professional Learning Communities at the school level. It is unclear how much support, advice, and counsel these teacher groups will have over the course of this change process to guide its implementation. In addition, there is little discussion of who will provide training at the different levels of implementation other than the previously trained and identified "champions" within each school.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents ambitious annual goals for improved learning that increase over the implementation of the project. The applicant's plan for increases in achievement on state and local assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment do not appear to be aligned with the implementation plan. For example, the instructional component of the project will not be implemented at the elementary level until year 3 but gains are expected prior to that without an adequate explanation of how those gains will be achieved or a process to support students and teachers to make those gains beyond a proposed pre-K program and emotional-intelligence training.

The ability of the District to achieve these ambitious goals is not supported by either the rigor of its reform plan nor its implementation plan. The applicant does not articulate a cohesive vision across all grade levels that would lead to meeting these goals. The use of Response to Intervention strategies may help some students meet goals but there does not appear to be a systematic, district-wide personalized approach to meet these performance targets.

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	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has made very modest improvements over the past four years with a small improvement in mathematics and an impressive increase in high school graduation rates. The District claims success in slowing the rate of decline but the data presented in the application indicate that in reading student achievement has declined overall since 2010 and the mathematics scores have only experienced a very slight increase. Improvements across sub-groups are also very limited.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe how it achieved these modest improvements other than a discussion of its Professional Learning Communities as well as proposed changes included in its reform plans for RTT-D. The applicant does not provide details on why the graduation rate changed so drastically and if the change might relate to a specific District intervention.</p> <p>The applicant provides access to school and district data through established data portals at the district and state level. It does not provide information on how many parents or stakeholders currently access these portals. The applicant proposes to promote the use of these data portals at the school and community level but does not provide a thorough description of how it will accomplish this goal including the current accessibility at the community level and a proactive data sharing plan.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides expenditure data for each of the participating schools at the requested level of detail within the application. It states that the proposed budget is published annually for review and comment but it does not describe the level of detail within the District's proposed budget nor does it provide an example of the budget that would demonstrate the level of detail available to the public. Without that level of detail it is difficult to determine if the expenditures are available at the level of detail required within this criterion. The applicant does state that the annual state level report card includes total expenditure levels by program and school location but does not provide a specific list of the expenditures included in state report card.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that it has the authority from the state to implement the program described in the application. It further states that the plan is aligned with the District's strategic plan. The applicant further provides the comments from the state education agency on the application which indicates its approval of the plan.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides an adequate description of the process used to inform the school board and local educators on the details of the plan including school-based public meetings, in-school meetings, and a school board meeting. While it does state that these meetings are adequate to inform the public, it provides no detailed information of the number of parents, interested community members, or other stakeholders who attended any of these meetings or commented on the plan. The meaningfulness of this undocumented stakeholder engagement is extremely limited. Changes included in the application are described in the application including changes in the implementation plan to ease the burden on teachers and the increased use of the professional learning communities as central to the management structure. The applicant does not provide any additional information on other questions that might have risen including the proposed achievement targets and the support for the specific learning interventions proposed in the application. It is difficult to determine the true level of support for the project given the requirements for 70 percent level of support and that slightly less than 90 percent of the teachers signed the approval document.</p> <p>The application includes six letters of support including one organization that is a partner in the application as well as the District's federal program director. The application did not include letters from parents or parent organizations, the local college, or local businesses that might benefit from the results of this RTT-D project.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's plan to ensure that all students meet college- and career-ready standards is focused on implementing an inquiry-based learning model with secondary activities focused on career awareness, mentoring, and transition experiences. The inquiry model as described by the applicant provides for students to have learning experiences based on their interests but does not describe the guidance and direction that teachers will provide in order to ensure that college- and career-ready standards are met. The applicant does not provide a clear pathway between the district's standards-based curriculum and the inquiry based learning. Given the current achievement levels at the school and district level, it is difficult to determine how students will master critical academic content within the model proposed by the applicant. The lack of specific examples of how the inquiry-based approach will be implemented at the the classroom level and within the standards leads to a less than high quality plan. For example, the applicant fails to adequately describe specific activities that focus on academic content knowledge at the high school level or basic skills at the elementary level that will lead to enhanced critical thinking, perseverance or problem-solving abilities.</p> <p>The second strategy in this application supports the personalization of learning goals by implementing emotional intelligence strategies as well as Response to Intervention to provide students with the additional assistance they may need to meet the achievement goals. However, the applicant does not provide a robust description of the high-quality instructional approaches or interventions it intends to employ in the project to support students on their path to meeting standards and graduating on time and ready for higher education or a career. This lack of detail on what will actually take place as a student moves the system leads to questions on the quality of learning plan.</p> <p>The applicant does provide an adequate description of the process it will use to provide on-going feedback to students and teachers with short-cycle assessments and the evaluation methods built into the major program components. The mentoring component of the project may also add to greater student feedback on his/her progress.</p> <p>The applicant acknowledges that most of its students are high-need but provides little in the way of specific support other than sheltered instruction for English language learners. It is unclear in the application how this approach will actually operate beyond the increase in TESOL teachers.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's professional development implementation plan spans the four years of the project with a very deliberate, albeit slow, process for preparing teachers to use emotional intelligence and the Research Investigation Process in their classrooms. The goals and the activities follow established good practices in preparing teachers to effectively implement personalized learning environments, such as coaching and mentoring. The proposed timeline is overly long and may not result in the applicant meeting its proposed achievement gains. The applicant has, however, proposed to develop the capacity of local educators to train and mentor their colleagues over time.</p> <p>It is unclear in the application how the applicant will actually use the Research Investigation Process to personalize the learning environment for students in a meaningful fashion. There is an adequate description of the types of activities students will engage in but it is difficult to determine how teacher practice will change as a result of the proposed professional development. There is also inadequate descriptions of the content and curriculum that will be used to improve student learning.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to continue to use its current on-going assessment system, the annual state assessment, and assessments built into the instructional program to monitor student progress. There are Professional Learning Communities within each school at both grade level and content level that will monitor student progress and guide any mid-course changes. The integration of these activities will provide an effective instructional monitoring process if they are aligned with the curriculum. The final component of monitoring focuses on the state's principal and teacher evaluation system which will provide additional feedback. The type of data available through these existing systems is not described in the application especially in the area of determining student interests and needs which is a foundational element of the proposed approach. It is unclear how the mentoring program and emotional intelligence activities will actually be used to provide actionable information.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)



	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	4

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an organizational chart indicating that authority will rest with the curriculum and assessment director in the central office and places an outside partner, Three Rivers Foundation (TRF), between the Central Office and implementing schools. The applicant proposes that the project be administered in conjunction with the RTT-D project director at the Three Rivers Foundation but the District will maintain decision-making authority and responsibility. It is unclear in the application why the District is proposing a project director and 2 other staff that will be housed outside the District. The budget does include a statement explaining that TRF has the resources, experience, and expertise to manage the project but does not explain why the District has placed that position in the middle of the authority chart. The Memorandum of Understanding included in the Appendices indicates that TRF will have much of the day-to-day management responsibilities for the implementation of the project including scheduling and supervising external providers. Given the relative small size of the District and the project's potential impact on all of the schools, the use of an outside organization is confusing.

The District has established leadership teams within each participating school but it is unclear in the application how much autonomy and/or flexibility these teams will have during the implementation of the project. The process described in the application for reviewing recommendations and decision making appears to continue to flow to the District level. There is no discussion in the application of site-based budgeting, authority to make mid-course corrections or other management strategies that would indicate autonomy at the site level.

In terms of student's opportunities to progress at individual rates and demonstrate mastery at various times throughout the project, the applicant focuses on intervention instructional strategies rather than providing students an opportunity to progress. It is unclear if students will be able to move forward at their own pace and if these intervention instructional strategies will provide students opportunities to succeed.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Other than the applicant's plan to add an early childhood facility and renovate a building for a transition center, the applicant does not present a thorough description of its plan, including activities and a specific timeline, to ensure that resources are available to students, parents, and educators. It is unclear if the implementing schools have access to library/media centers, computer labs, or appropriate internet access to improve student outcomes. While the applicant states that most needs can be met within the existing school resources, no specific descriptions of those resources either in or out of school is provided.

The applicant states that it is committed to providing the necessary technical support to students and teachers but does not address providing support to parents and stakeholders. The applicant's plan is to provide training to students and educators if necessary but has not developed proactive strategies to address this need.

The applicant appears to make limited data available to stakeholders through its School Master data system. The data is limited to grades, assignments, and some assessment information. The applicant does not address additional learning supports, such as electronic tutors. The data can be downloaded into standard spreadsheets.

In addition, the applicant does not describe the information technology systems available to parents and students but does discuss the possible support available to teachers.

The interoperable data system appears to meet the definition in the RTT-D application.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan for continuous improvement that includes an overarching purpose, key activities, timeline, reports, and the responsible parties. The quarterly schedule of reports is adequate to measure progress and the quantitative process outcomes described in the application will indicate whether or not key targets are being met. It is

difficult to determine how qualitative measures of the effectiveness of the training/implementation will be collected and communicated.

The applicant has proposed a reasonable schedule to communicate with parents and community stakeholders the results of the progress monitoring.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an adequate plan for communicating the results of the project with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant intends to hold regular "advisory" meetings but it is unclear if this is the report to the Advisory Board included in the organization chart. The applicant will also provide two on-line reporting mechanisms but does not indicate how it will publicize their availability and parents and other stakeholders to access them.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides appropriate performance measures for each of the grade spans that are aligned with the major elements of its improvement plan. It does not, however, articulate a rationale for selecting the measures included in the application. Many of the measures will use readily available data from either the state assessment or teacher reports. Other proposed performance measures may require additional definition or data points to effectively gauge implementation progress. For example, the performance measure on 3rd grade reading achievement indicates "increased reading achievement" rather than meeting a specific proficiency standard.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an insufficient evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness of District funded activities. It is unclear how it will actually implement the pre-post quasi experimental design to measure the effectiveness of the project rather than predictable growth over time. The disaggregation areas included in the application are focused on changes over time in terms of student achievement, subgroup comparisons, and gap reduction. It is unclear how the applicant intends to measure the degree of implementation of the project other than process outcomes which focus on when and how the trainings took place. Given the non-cognitive aspects of emotional intelligence as well as the implementation strategy, the current plan may not provide actionable information on the quality of the training, the use of district champions, or the depth of instructional change.

The applicant lists a number of variables it may track over time but does not provide sufficient information to determine the efficacy of its plan.

It is also unclear if the outside evaluator is to-be-hired or is a current employee of the partner organization (TRF).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The requested budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal and meets the established parameters for serving 3000 students. The total request is approximately \$8M for four years with no other funds allocated to the RTT-D project. It is unclear in the budget if there are other resources that will be used to support the project. The applicant states that major costs will be supported by RTT-D and explains that other costs might be borne by other sources. Approximately half of the budget will be used for contractual services including professional development, project evaluation, and teacher stipends. Given the project design this is reasonable and sufficient to carry-out the project. Approximately 4% of the total budget will be used for the District's indirect costs and the Three Rivers Foundation management functions. It is unclear in the budget and in the management plan if there are any duplicative costs between the District's indirect cost rate and management responsibilities at TRF. An additional 14 FTE's will be supported with project funds which does seem high given the size of the District and the possible lack of funds to sustain the project.

There are two areas within the budget that may not be as closely aligned with the project goals of developing personalized learning environments as described in the program narrative. The creation of a second Early Childhood Learning Center to serve more children in the district and the creation of the Education Transition Center will be resource intense and may not add to the overall effectiveness of the project. Both projects are worthwhile but their contribution to RTT-D project was not adequately justified.

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

10

8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high quality plan to transition the major on-going costs of the project to district and state funds. The rationale for its sustainability plan rests with the implementation strategy to train local teachers to be the "champions" of each component and therefore provide the on-going support within their buildings. It also explains how the costs of the Early Childhood Center and Transition Center will be absorbed within the district either through increased enrollment or by current employees absorbing the responsibilities. The underlying assumption that some of the support activities, for example the transition project, will be assumed within the current workload of middle school teachers and counseling staff, may be unrealistic.

The applicant presents an additional plan for building community support for and commitment to its schools that will provide more resources over time. There is no discussion if this has happened during previous projects nor the prospects for on-going support for the RTT-D project. As mentioned previously, it is unclear if the applicant's plan to involve stakeholders will lead to the degree of support necessary to create additional resources.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant identifies three different partnerships: two that support a major project goal to improve the transition of secondary school students to either college or careers and an additional partnership to provide across the board project level support. Given both the current high school graduation rate as well as the college entrance rate, the applicant has identified an important area of focus for additional supports. The partners include the local community college where a high percentage of District students chose to attend and the local economic development agency to provide career awareness. The third partner has an over-arching role to provide management and leadership resources for the project as a whole. The role of the first two partners clearly augments District resources by providing additional student and family supports. The third partnership, Three Rivers Education Fund (TRF), supports the capacity of District level leadership to implement the project.

Five of the six performance measures provide ambitious yet achievable results and describe the positive impact on students and their parents. The goal of reducing parent unemployment as well as increasing parent participation in college or workforce training is unique and, if met, will have long term impact on student performance and the resources of the whole community. The additional parent focused target of improving school engagement from its current estimate of 20% for English language learners and at-risk students to 70% at the end of the project is also very ambitious. The development of appropriate measures and tracking them over time appears to be one of the many tasks that will fall to TRF which is identified elsewhere as the management and implementation agency for the project as a whole.

The applicant does not provide sufficient details on how the two targeted partnerships would be implemented or specific strategies to build the capacity within the District to support these activities over time. It is difficult to determine if the partnership with TRF is part of a larger management function or if it will serve an additional role within the project.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposed plan does not include the essential elements necessary to coherently and comprehensively address standards and assessments, data systems, effective teachers and principals, and turning around low-performing schools. The current achievement data indicate that this is a low-performing school district that needs to better serve its students, teachers, and community. The proposed plan, however, does not address key academic and social areas in a systematic fashion. Each of the proposed interventions have value but do not represent a complete improvement plan as envisioned by RTT-D.

Total	210	104
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