



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0097CT-1 for Capitol Region Education Council

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 CREC builds upon a vision that the district has been creating for the past twenty years. CREC was established to provide a high quality, integrated educational setting. It is a district of magnet schools and approximately fifty percent of the students come from low socioeconomic status families. The vision is being modernized and is based on the four core assurance areas. The vision is clear and is very credible as the approach has had success in the past.</p> <p>CREC has adopted the Common Core State Standards which are college and career ready and will align a skill map to serve as the knowledge base and skill set students are to master. CREC plans to build a web-based learning platform to help personalize learning and will be available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Continued development of the evaluation system will help develop effective teachers and principals and identify those who are high quality.</p> <p>The proposal outlines strategies that have been successful with turning around lowest-achieving schools. With more intensive and targeted strategies in the proposal the applicant hopes to build upon their successes.</p> <p>Through throughout the application there are examples of what students will do, as well as teacher, but there is no clear description of what the classroom experience will be like for teachers and students. The application affects students and teachers at all grade levels.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant piloted a number of strategies in the past year. Some were successful while others were not success. Out of the piloted programs, some were chosen to be put into the proposal and will be scaled up to reach all of the schools.</p> <p>Based on the success of the pilots and readiness data, which included information related to school infrastructure and stakeholder buy-in, all of the schools in the district were chosen to participate.</p> <p>All schools were identified in the charts with the total number of participating students from low-income families and high-need students. The total number of educators participating is also included.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a high quality plan that will be used district wide-to increase student achievement by improving upon some of the successful strategies that have been found to help the student population with the current curriculum. The applicant needs funding to add the Common Core State Standards and design new curriculum to make all students college and career ready. The plan includes activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible.</p> <p>The logic model depicts an approach to personalized learning for all students. Partnerships with the community, colleges, state and federal support, school staff, and district staff will enable a balanced development to enable a well-rounded</p>		

student in a personalized learning environment.

CREC proposes to implement the grant in all schools in the district. The curriculum will affect all students district-wide because all students will participate. Neighboring districts in which these magnet students come can benefit from the plans that the districts finds to be successful. The applicant proposes to have training videos and best practices videos. These videos can be used to help other districts with the successful practices.

The best practices videos will contain not only curriculum, but delivery and development of Student Success Plans. These videos and labs are to ensure the development of successful teachers and principals.

Building a good data system will enable the applicant to measure student's growth and success while informing teachers and principals how to improve instruction. Rigorous evaluation of the data will help inform the applicant of the pilots' success. This will inform the stakeholders of the success of the various pilots to gain stakeholder buy in to all of the innovative ideas. Sharing user-friendly reports will also help with stakeholder buy in of the various innovative ideas.

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

10

5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The goals are quite ambitious and may be unachievable for some of the students. In just five years the applicant expects the ELL students to jump 44.9 percentage points to 100% mastery of the standards. In the same time frame the applicant expects students with disabilities to gain 35.8 percentage points, but white students need only to gain 4.7 percentage points and black students 22.8 percentage points.

Grades 5 and 8 Science, ELL students' baseline in 2012-2013 was 28.6%. In just five years the applicant expects a 71.4 percentage point increase to 100%. In the same time frame white students need only to gain 5.4% and black students 29.2%.

A high school example is 10th grade mathematics. Students with disabilities' baseline in 2012-2013 were 52.9 percentage points and needed to increase their scores 47.1% in five years. While in the same time frame white students needed to gain only 5.4 points, Hispanic students 29.7 points and black students 38.8 points.

While the graduation rate goal for students may be unrealistic, jumping 39.9 percentage points in six years, it does not match the college enrollment rates goal of the other subgroups. If by 2017-2018 the applicant expects all subgroups to graduate at a 94 percentage rate and the college enrollment rate for all subgroups, except students with disabilities, is 90 %. The applicant's goal for students with disabilities is 70%. This is contradictory to the other goals. The goal for students with disabilities is 94% for graduation rate, but 70% for college enrollment. The goal for the other subgroups is 94% for graduation and 94% for college enrollment. The two could be the same. The applicant had no explanation as to why they were not the same for each of the subgroups.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Using the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test results, CREC has documented a strong clear record of success of being able to raise student achievement particularly for reduced and free lunch students and the subgroup students.

Graduation rates were not disaggregated. There is no way to understand if there are achievement gaps among the subgroups. Therefore, it is hard to determine if there has been an increase in all students' graduation rates. The rates may have increase only for certain subgroups.

The data shows a clear record of success for the district, but without the data for each school, it is unclear if the applicant has had success in its persistently lowest achieving schools.

In the last five years the schools in the district have received many awards for closing the achievement gap, Montessori or magnet successes, starting new programs, etc. These accolades show that the district has a record of success in improving student learning outcomes and closing the achievement gap.

Performance Plus data management system has enabled teachers and data teams to keep track of all assessments taken by students to help improve instructional strategies. The program also has reports to keep students and parents informed of student progress. Being able to track the data to improve instructional strategies has been a way that the applicant has been able to improve student learning.

The applicant also has in place a system for secondary principals to track college readiness data for all students. The system collects data in four domains which demonstrates that the applicant is making strides toward making students ready for college enrollment.

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

The applicant indicated that information was sent to the SDE based on the F-33 survey and an example was shown, but was not detailed. The report shown was that the information included the items necessary in the total expenditures.

There is not a high level of transparency at this point and only to be place on a website at a later point with no explanation as to why it is not shared with parent groups or other stakeholders.

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

The CREC has its own autonomy because the district was made one of six centers to operate inter-district magnets. Teacher loads, teacher lunch periods, and teacher preparation periods are mandatory subjects of bargaining. The teacher's union is in favor of the application which will support the proposal's implementation.

According to the district's Turnaround model, the schools may change existing infrastructure, which may include, but are not limited to physical plant, reconfiguration of the school day and year, and use of time and schedule.

The state now mandates a Students Success Plan for every student in grades 6-12 which supports the application. This will help the applicant personalize the learning environment for all students.

CREC has already piloted the state's new teacher evaluation system and will continue with a similar Administrator Evaluation system. Both of which are necessary for the application.

CREC has shown that it has the legal, statutory and regulatory authority as well as the support of the union, teachers, and students to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap as addressed in its overall reform strategies.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	13
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided many letters of support which included key stakeholder, such as parents, business community members, Institutes of Higher Education, community-based organizations, and politicians.

The local teachers union or association signed the application. They have collective bargaining power over planning periods, workloads, and lunch periods. It was important for the applicant to gain their support. An example of teacher input was that teachers felt that effective teachers should be given more time to develop curricular units based on the Common Core standards and personalized learning practices. Master teachers were written into the plan to help fill the roles and provide support to the teachers.

The school advisory council, which includes principal, teacher representative, parent representatives, and community or industry partners, were involved in the application. The representatives received feedback from their constituencies and brought it back to the RTTD team.

The applicant described their process for meaningful stakeholder engagement. Of great note was a parent portal," where parents could receive information about RTTD and complete a survey. From information from the parent portal, the applicant found that there was great concern among the parents about multiage classrooms, looping and flipped classrooms. The results lead CREC to do a pilot study and communicate results in various formats. The applicant was also able to provide meaningful staff development from the data and deliver it to relieve anxiety. Many other examples were given.

An online survey was available for teachers and principals to give feedback. They showed strong support. A change made in the application due to their input was the addition of Computer Science as a curriculum area. It was added.

There was a lack of student input explanation.

Support for the proposal lead to the five district strategic goals for the year.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The plan is a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environments. The use of Skill Mapping and Student Success Plan (SSP) will help students, teachers and parents. Skill Mapping (aligned to make Curricula College and career ready) will help all know the skills the students have mastered and those they have yet to gain. This mapping and SSP will individualize learning; help students, teachers and parents set goals; and enable students to learn at their own pace. The assessments aligned to the skills map will enable the teachers to quickly show students and parents exactly which skills a student has gained and those which the student may need additional instruction. This will provide ongoing and regular feedback and enable students to understand what is needed to be successful learners.

CREC has adopted a clear definition of college and career readiness that encompasses four essential domains: Academics, Critical Thinking and Decision Making, Awareness, and Social and Emotional Preparedness. With the support of a Coordinator of Partnerships and Workforce Development, students will have an excellent support of internships, work experience, and social and emotional learning.

The applicant's employment of *academic habits of mind* will help students master critical thinking, problem solving individually and with teams, quantitative reasoning, self-advocacy, and many other essential skills and traits.

Teachers will be provided the tools and training to use data to drive instruction and inform individualized learning plans. STAR assessments will provide information about the student's current achievement level in various academic areas. The results will be used by teachers to individualize and target instruction in those areas needed most by students.

Technology is going to be essential to this strategy. Professional development is built into this application for students, teachers, and parents. 1:1 technology plan is essential for the low-income parents who do not have access to computers at home. The contract with Comcast Internet Essentials for a reasonable price will also help the low income parents with access to the parent portals. This is a strength in the proposal to help build personalized learning environments.

The variety of instructional styles and offerings (traditional, online, flipped classroom) will enable students, teachers and parents to find the right fit for student learning.

The applicant offers a variety of other programs to make students college and career ready, such as the International Baccalaureate Program, Advanced Placement Program, Cambridge International Board Examination, and Early College Experience.

Students with high needs, who live in high poverty, are homeless, or are far below grade level need to strengthen their self-regulation. Guidance teams and school-based health centers will be placed at the neediest schools that will be there to offer a myriad of supports needed by the students. Students and families will receive the help they need which will reduce time away from the classroom for health reason which will increase student learning and close the achievement gap.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has a high quality focused plan of support for teaching and learning in many ways. The following examples are only a few to describe the strong plan of support for educators individually or in their teams.

- Students will have Student Support Plans written by educators enabling educators to individualize the learning environment for all students from information obtained from the assessments put in the data system. The information will be analyzed by data teams to ensure on time graduation for college and career ready students.
- Weekly data team meetings and common planning time is already used by the district. Having frequent measure of

student's progress will help teachers use data to inform decisions. This will continue in the proposal which will enable teachers to adapt content and instruction for students.

- Videoing taping teachers, to provide constructive feedback by coaches is a useful tool.
- Having a new teacher's academy for teachers in their first **three** years of teaching is a unique way to offer support to new teachers who may not have the experience and background. Teachers are not left to their own devices after the first year. Having Master Teachers support teacher will help in analyzing data, aligning curriculum and personalizing learning environments.
- The new teacher and principal evaluation system enables those teachers rated "developing" to have Improvement and Development Plans. The plans identify resources, support and strategies to address the deficiencies.
- The district has an online P21 system where any teacher can find many resources for professional development will increase students who have effective teachers.
- Model lessons and videos will be produced so teacher can fully understand all aspects of new learning approaches. Teacher will be able to watch the videos to aid them in their approaches.

Improving principal and teacher practices using the new evaluation systems will help support teachers who need interventions and improvement. It was also find those effective teachers who can become role models to others. This will also increase the number of effective and highly effective teacher who touch students.

Having highly effective teachers providing aligned courses, units, and lesson plans to other teachers will increase the number of students who access to high quality resources.

Overall, the applicant has a high quality plan that has the components with specific activities, definite timelines, overall deliverables, and parties responsible for each of the goals related to teaching and learning to reach its goal by increasing the number of highly qualifies teacher who will be teaching students; adapting content and instruction to meet the needs of the students (i.e., flipped classrooms); frequent measures of student progress; and training teacher to use the tools and resources to structure effective learning environments.

The applicant describes how educators can grow professionally, but lacking from the proposal was a plan for increasing the number of students taught by highly effective teachers and principals in hard-to-staff school, subjects and specialty areas.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan has activities, timelines, deliverables and parties responsible. The applicant does include these in plan.

The LEA practices, policies and rules section is among the strengths of the applicant. Among those strengths is in the proposal is how the plan describes the roles of the overall rolls of the school leadership teams and how the central office provides them with flexibility over school schedules and calendars, school personnel decision making and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for school-based educators and non-educators, and school-level budget. The applicant's district is a magnet district and has many latitudes given by the state of Connecticut. Parents who have more than one student in the district asked for an adopted school calendar. This did occur in SY 2012-2013.

Students have been earning credits through demonstration of mastery and will be employing more ways this year. Two schools will be using mastery based grading. This will enable students to receive grades that have meaning. Instead of the traditional system, grades will tell the parents if the students are proficient in a particular standard or not. Again, this is a strength in the application.

CREC provides professional development for the region on best practices relates to instruction for ELL students. This shows the adaptability of the quality of resources that the district is using and that all students need and have access to the curriculum.

The district has fully implemented RTI which should help put in place interventions for students struggling regardless of the special needs status. RTI is an intervention model to help schools communicate and make decisions around the interventions needed for struggling students, regardless of their special needs status.

A weakness in the proposal is the lack of giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple

times and in multiple comparable ways.

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

The proposal has a high quality, comprehensive plan for LEA and school infrastructure to support personalized learning environments regardless of income by offering a 1:1 technology program for middle and high school students. The plan has activities, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible for the activities. For those parents of low income students, access to technology can be through the Family Resource Center. Another innovative solution for parents of low income students to gain access to technology is through Comcast's Internet Essentials program where parents of free or reduced lunch status students can for \$9.95 a month obtain internet and equipment rental and gain access to free digital literacy.

The district provides support to the technology through the Division of Data, Assessment, Research, and Technology (DART) which uses a unique Curriculum Unit Revision Infusing Technology (CURIT) model to adapt all technology to curriculum and the learning environment. CURIT develops teacher and administrator capacity through a training and coaching approach that builds knowledge of available technology, and supports teachers in practical applications.

Schools will provide training and information using multiple formats to students and families regarding the use of technology in schools for instruction, progress monitoring and enrichment.

The Learning Management System enables all stakeholders to have access to the appropriate information on a 24 a day basis. The proposal also indicates there will be professional development for all involved stakeholders. Stakeholders will have their own passcodes for their level of security. Parents will have access to their child's course material, homework, attendance, and grades. The exportability of the information will be in a .csv format for parents. This is universal and should promote ease of use.

During the day, technical support can be found online, by telephone or email.

The systems being utilized in the proposal are being synched with the Zone Integration Server so that all information can be in one location.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal lays out a focused and detailed plan of the continuous improvement process. The process has key goals, activities, rational for activities, timeline and deliverables, and party responsible for implementation which are sound and will enable the applicant to readjust their goals as needed.

The district strategic planning process will be followed. Schools and district initiatives are developed annually and monitored throughout the year. The district has school data teams, student achievement meetings, and academic walkthroughs to provide structures for regular monitoring. The applicant will employ a third party evaluator to help monitor the grant to review the information and document the implementation process.

Monthly reports based on the five projects and grant activities in the implementation plan will be discussed at the leadership meeting to detect struggles and successes in the plan. Copy of all reports will be shared with the leadership team.

Regular monitoring of student progress toward achievement of standards in order to determine needs for intervention and enrichment for students and professional development for the school will be performed monthly.

Use of the Director of Communications for the district will enable the applicant to get the information out to a wealth of stakeholders.

The applicant does not identify a mechanism for ongoing improvement for after the term of the grant.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal has a high quality plan with goals activities, rational, timeline, deliverables, and party responsible. The applicant uses a plethora communication tools to maintain ongoing communication with their stakeholders, internal and external. Newsletters, circulars, and websites are among the methods used. The project director, grant coordinator, district Director of Communication, Coordinator of Talent Development, and CREC Schools Marketing Specialist are among the many human resources used to dispense the information to the various stakeholders.</p> <p>The plan has ongoing communication with families, employees, students and the various other stakeholders.</p> <p>Utilizing the district's online professional development laboratory to post videos to other educators is an inventive way for teachers to gain access to professional development and for ongoing communication and engagement.</p> <p>Lacking is a face-to-face communication that some people greatly need.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The performance measures chosen were ambitious and most may be achievable. The performance measures are supported by sound and logical explanations of how the measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information to measure the success of the goal.</p> <p>The performance measures related to effective and highly effective teachers and administrators are both ambitious and achievable for all students. The pre-K - 3 and 4 -8 performance measures are ambitious and achievable as well and show a clear upward trajectory toward increased student achievement on the STAR assessment. The performance measures for 9 - 12 are ambitious. The goals around students completing the FASFA are also ambitious.</p> <p>The National School Climate Survey is a good measure of social-emotional security. The goals are ambitious for all groups, but hopefully attainable so all students feel safe and secure in school.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal again has a plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments. A third party evaluator is in the proposal to help with a non-biased view of the quality of the implementation and effectiveness of the plan based on the project's logic model. The timeline is missing from the plan. In order for the entire proposal to be effective, the rigorousness of the evaluation is imperative. Without specific timelines to get the information to the evaluator, this may not be possible.</p> <p>The questions proposed, to measure the quality of implementation and effectiveness, are detailed. The questions should be able to relate the strengths and weakness in the plans.</p> <p>In the long term the proposal is to help the district with graduation rates. All data will be housed in the SLDS and SIS system at the district and state level. CREC has entered into a contract with the National Student Clearinghouse to receive matriculation data about their students through postsecondary education.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's budget proposal is comprehensive and strongly supports the project. The budget is detailed in the specifics about each project in the proposal. There are five specific budgets that are requested. Each of the budgets specifically addresses the funds that are earmarked for grant funds and those by other sources.</p> <p>Each of the five projects first and foremost has a narrative that describes in detail the project and what the grant funds and local funds with support. Each of the five projects has specific itemized costs for the projects. Within each of the itemizations are budget categories for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, training stipends, and other. Each of the categories has cost descriptions and assumptions for each year of the project. The project clearly</p>		

states whether the budget items are onetime costs or will be ongoing. Each project also has a budget summary. This summary includes the above plus indirect costs and funds from other sources to come up with the total budget.

To give a small example of the reasonableness of the project is in project (3). The purchase for equipment will only be for those teachers who do not have access to computers or technologies that do not have technology to access student data at this point and time. The project is not requesting all new technology for all teachers.

The plan is well thought out, planning for the conferences that will help the school leadership team to implement CCSS and personalized learning environments. The conferences are built into the budgets. There are many other examples such as this.

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

The proposal has a high quality plan for sustainability of the projects goals after the term of the grant. The plan includes activities timeline, deliverables and responsible parties. The proposal includes an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant end.

In the proposal the timeline the plan is to begin fund raising in year three for sustainability of goals. The fund raising would start with partner organizations and revising CREC and school budget.

Quarterly and annual review of budgets which are built into the proposal may provide sound priorities for sustainability.

The applicant's district is growing as will revenue. The projected revenue over the next three years is \$122,355,886 which is an increase of over sixteen million dollars. This projection is without a per pupil increase. As the population increases, the district will benefit from economies of scale particularly at the administrative level.

The district will develop a replacement plan for the technology devices. Revising budgets at all schools may help to incorporate this expenditure.

The applicant will continue to develop private funding sources for the Family Resource Centers.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has a well thought out plan for the high-need students in their region. The success of the Family Resource Centers in their state has been proven to be a successful partnership. With the proposal, the Family Resource Centers will be expanded into some of the areas with the high need students. Academic as well as wrap around services will be available to make a personalized learning environment for all students. These services will make students either prepared for school, help them while in school, help them be ready for graduation or give them support for social, emotional, or health stability.

The proposal develops a high quality plan with activities, timelines, deliverables and person responsible to create a systematic process that pulls the energies and abilities of all members of the school community together in a goal-directed process to address individual cases as well as engage in preventative planning.

The proposal identifies nine population-level desired results for students that align with the RTTD district goals of educational and family and community supports. The results are to help students exit 3rd grade reading on grade level or achieving the goals on their IEP; help students exit 8th grade prepared to succeed in high school; help students graduate from high school with academic, critical thinking, and social/emotional skills to succeed in college and/or career opportunities; help students exhibit positive social behaviors; help students attend school regularly; help parents be actively engage in student learning; help parents have access to neighborhood social services; and help students and parents participate in substance abuse and bullying prevention programs.

The applicant provides sufficient evidence of the integration of education and other services that will address the social-emotional and behavioral needs of participating students backed by scientific-based interventions

Data will be track in various methods depending upon the type of data to be kept. Educational and school climate

indicators are to be tracked though each school's regular cycle of progress monitoring. Family Resource Center will keep logs of family visits. Parent meetings will have attendance taken, while workshops will have attendance taken also. Referrals to socials services will be monitored as a tracking method.

The Family Resource Centers are currently in the schools in the neediest schools. The plan is to scale up the models into the other schools.

Educator capacity will be built through close collaboration with the family Resource Center and Intensive Intervention Team (IIT). School Improvement Plans will include goals for academic and school climate improvement. IIT will provide assistance in establishing goals for high-need students.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal has met the requirements. The students personalized learning environments have been outlined in the proposal with appropriate explanations addressed in the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant built its work in the four core educational assurance areas by personalizing learning using a variety of activities and services that are organized onto five distinct yet interconnected strategies: intensive and targeted services to students; expanded college and career programming; implementation of technology to support data driven decision making and individualized instruction; increased effectiveness of principals and teachers; and wraparound services.</p> <p>The plan met the goal and was coherent and comprehensive to the criteria on personalized strategies for teaching and learning; aligning curricula, assessment, instruction and professional development with college- and career ready standards; providing extensive supports and interventions for high needs students; closing the achievement gap for identified subgroups; increasing the effectiveness of educators and principal through data-driven monitoring, assessment, and evaluation of classroom and school-level influence; and improving college- and career-readiness of all students.</p>		

Total	210	178
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0097CT-2 for Capitol Region Education Council

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>A.1. The applicant, a regional education service center located in a large urban area in the state of Connecticut, proposes an extensive program to serve its 18 inter-district magnet schools. It is proposing programs that include accelerated student achievement, increased student learning, and increased equity in achievement in college attainment. Its programs are focused on the four core educational assurances and the aim of enhancing personalized learning.</p>		

Included in its programs are intensive and targeted services, expanded college and career programming, use of technology to support data-driven decision-making and instruction, greater effectiveness of principals and teachers, and outreach services to students and parents. The personalized learning program being proposed is comprehensive and includes a curriculum based on the Common Core State Standards, frequent assessment, use of skill maps, individualized instruction plans, competency-based learning, and ongoing student feedback. Specific activities include online learning as well as blended courses, teacher led lessons, peer collaboration, teacher collaboration, and independent practice. These activities are well organized and reflect a sound approach.

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

A.2. The applicant indicates that all schools will participate in the project and includes them in the list with the school demographics. The information included on the accompanying tables in the application indicates that the schools meet the eligibility requirements of the grant program. The percentage of participating schools with students from low income families ranged from a low of 35.4% to a high of 65.4%. In explaining its decision to address all schools, the applicant indicated that its previous pilot programs focusing on a learning management system, online, adaptive assessments, teacher and administrator evaluations, technology, and flipped classrooms were successful and made it well positioned to apply this grant in all schools. Including all schools in the grant reflects a responsible and equitable approach to implementing the proposed program at the district and school levels.

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

A.3. The applicant provides a plan that includes a logic model examining inputs, activity areas, outputs, outcomes, and the impacts of the program. The impact statements reflect the projects commitment to the four core educational assurances and offer a consistent approach to personalizing learning environments. The applicant includes a plan to ensure sustainability over the four years of the project. This plan includes annual activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The deliverables include a number of measurable products; e.g., 40% of principals and teachers will access online resources in month six, with a 10% increase in each subsequent month. All proposed activities address all students in schools and the regional service center by the end of the project. Overall, the plan is focused on the key areas of the project and covers the four year period of the grant. The information in the plan is specific and focused on implementing the project and using resources effectively. For example, in year one, the applicant will collect baseline data for continuous improvement during the month of January 2014 and will produce a user-friendly analytic report with the external evaluator. The specificity of the plan will enable the project to meet its outcomes and implement the project effectively.

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

A.4. Data from two standardized assessments are included in the application. Information includes current baseline as well as goals for the four years of the project for each of the student subgroups. Using the District Performance Index (DPI), the applicant reports that the state goal is a DPI of 88 by 2018. The proposed goals for the applicant by 2017 for all student subgroups are above the 88 state DPI rate with the exception of English Language Learners in science, grades five and eight. The applicant proposes to decrease achievement gaps for all student subgroups by 2017 – 2018 to 5%. The applicant also proposes that the graduation rate for all student subgroups will be 94% by 2017 (current rate for all students - 79.4%). The proposed college enrollment rate for all students is 90% as compared to 77.5% for all students in 2012. The accompanying tables include data for all subgroups and all grades. The projections provided by the applicant are ambitious in that they propose growth over the four year period. They are achievable based on the proposed activities included in the application and the vision developed by the applicant.

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	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

B.1. The applicant provides test data for all students in the district as well as for a number of student subgroups. Noting that the current state assessment tests are not aligned with the Common Core State Standards, the applicant reports that

the alignment will take place by the 2014 – 2015 school year. The scores, with the exception of math, show the total student achievement to be slightly higher than the state scores. In a second test, which focuses on academic performance, the students in the regional education center’s schools generally report scores slightly below the state averages, except in reading. Over the previous five years, the students in the applicant schools achieved slightly higher scores. In examining the student subgroups, the applicant provides evidence that substantial gaps exist in all subjects between black and white students. However in most cases, the gaps are smaller than those reported at the state level. Overall, the schools in the regional center have achievement gaps which reflect efforts to provide effective learning opportunities for students. In its lowest performing schools, the applicant indicates that early intervention processes and focus programs have resulted in improving student achievement. It cites a number of examples of schools which have improved, citing test scores and awards. For example, it notes that its magnet schools had a 19.0% gap between Hispanic and white students as compared to a 26.4% gap at the state level. The applicant reports that it uses an online student assessment data management system to track student achievement and report to all educators in the schools. The information provided by the applicant indicates that it has a clear record of success over a four-year period and has impacted on low performing schools. While the applicant reports that principals meet three times a year to share data, it is unclear if this information is available to students and parents.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 B.2. The applicant indicates that it submits all information relative to personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures to the Connecticut State Department of Education. It also indicates that it is available online. This online source will have a link to the website of the project. From this brief statement and listing of the required information, it is unclear who the intended audience is of these various reports and documents. It is unclear if they are easily accessible and to what level of technology a user would need in order to access some of them.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 B.3. The applicant indicates that it is one of six regional education service centers established by the State of Connecticut and is authorized to operate inter-district magnet schools. In addition, the center negotiates with the teachers union and complies with all legal aspects of the contract. In addition, the applicant uses a Student Success Plan authorized by state statute, which requires the schools to create an educational plan for each student. The applicant also is part of the Connecticut System for Educator Evaluation and Development, and evaluation process that include indicators related to teacher practice and performance, parent feedback, and student related indicators. A similar evaluation plan is also used for all administrators and staff.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 B.4. The applicant provides a description of its relationship with parents. Included are surveys and other ways of achieving feedback such as newsletters and online communications. The information generally indicates that parents are in support of the various activities in the grant. In addition the applicant provides a number of letters in support of the project from the schools participating. Involvement in project planning on the part of teachers and administrators is unclear. In the narrative, the applicant indicates that input was received from teachers, administrators, and parents to develop five goals for the school year. No information was provided concerning how the process was organized and conducted. Similarly, no information is provided concerning how planning was impacted by their input. Specific information or documentation of their support is lacking. In addition, the letters of support included in the appendix are internal to the organization. Letters from parents or community members were not found.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 C.1. The plan being proposed by the applicant includes three major strategies: Intensive and targeted services, expanded college and career programming, and data driven decision-making. The applicant indicates that the foundation of its

program to provide a personalized sequence of instruction and deep learning experiences will be achieved through the development of skills maps which are aligned to Common Core Standards. These maps include a systematic method for identifying individual strengths and need. The maps will assist in the development of personalized instruction. The overall plan has a number of components of a high quality plan and includes a series of activities aligned by grade level. It is supported by specific activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. Each of the strategies addresses learning and development goals. For example, the strategies have goals which seek to deepen learning experiences, master critical content, and provide a personalized sequence of instruction. While some goals lack measurability, they do provide a basis to assess how the proposed programs of instruction will impact on student achievement and development. In the description, the applicant identifies a number of programs which are likely to improve academics, critical thinking and decision-making, and social and emotional preparedness. In its third strategy, the applicant indicates it will use computer-based assessment processes which will make data available to all stakeholders, report student progress, and engage students and parents in collaborative goal setting. Information concerning these activities is vague and also lacks specificity. It is unclear what the level of participation will be for parents and teachers. The applicant does not indicate how it has identified key community and industry partners who will serve in an advisory capacity. Overall, the description of the programs includes what the applicant intends to do without providing specific procedures and processes to accomplish them or to measure them. The applicant also addresses students with high needs and will support academic progress with the assistance of nearby mental health outpatient clinics and school-based health centers. In addition, the project will provide an extensive student service program which will focus on strengthening the transition services for students with disabilities. The narrative, in general, lacks specific information about staff training to support the proposed projects as well as training for students and parents who will use the data systems.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C.2. In its narrative, which includes a number of elements of a high quality plan, the applicant describes how it will use teacher and principal evaluation processes to guide professional development. All educators will engage in training and select professional development activities to meet their needs. The specific programs will focus on personalized learning strategies that emphasize project-based learning, differentiated instruction, student directed learning, web based learning, and other activities. The applicant also indicates that it will have a district platform for professional communication in a shared virtual workspace. To support its statement, the applicant describes a professional development continuum which is designed to build capacity. It also identifies a number of professional learning opportunities such as weekly team meetings, common planning time, workshops, partner school sites visits and demonstrations, instructional coaching, action research study groups, and a New Teachers Academy. Overall, the description provides an excellent theoretical foundation for professional development it will carry out. However, the statement lacks specificity in terms of how the professional development being described impacts on the three strategies identified by the applicant. For example, it is unclear what professional development experiences will enable teachers and students to better use data to make decisions about instruction and learning. Similarly, it is unclear which professional development that it described will have an impact on improving student achievement and raising graduation rates. While the individually proposed activities represent potentially helpful professional development, the applicant does not relate these training activities to specific programs being proposed. Also unclear is the type of training and professional development which will be offered to administrators and other stakeholders that specifically address their needs through the New Teacher Academy. Nonetheless, the basic plan and its components reflect appropriate activities which will assess the applicant and developing a personalized learning environment. The applicant briefly addresses students with high needs, but does not address hard to staff schools, specific subject areas, or special education. Overall, while the narrative includes many positive programs, this statement lacks focus and specific details.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

D.1. To support its narrative, the applicant provides a plan that has elements of a high quality plan. Included are activities, the timeline, a series of deliverables, and key personnel. Lacking objectives, the plan provides only some direction to the management of the project. The applicant indicates that it will add additional staff including a project director, project coordinator, and additional staff to coordinate partnerships, community service, and technology. In addition, the education service center has qualified and experienced staff to support the project. The project will also hire four master teachers. From the description, it is unclear how the project will be managed between the central office and the 18 individual

schools. Equally unclear is how the district will offer alternative means for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. The applicant does not seem to have a means to offer students access to learning at multiple times and in multiple comparative ways to its current programs. The applicant does describe a number of services which are available to students with disabilities and special needs (including English Language Learners).

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

D.2. In order to provide full access to the program, the applicant indicates that all schools are equipped with wireless access to a learning management system and online services. To assist households, the applicant will establish a Family Resource Center which will offer Wi-Fi. All schools and programs will be supported by a technology team to ensure that all stakeholders have access to online information about the services. Staff will be trained to use technology to communicate with parents and students. An open data format is assured through the proposed learning management system which will include learning materials such as reading assignments, short videos, and a web based platform allowing students to access their courses and assignments outside the regular school day. The applicant reports that its various data systems will be inter-operable data systems. The proposed learning management system and the current student information system will work together to provide student achievement data, attendance, and other information to stakeholders. The applicant supports this description with a table that provides activities, deliverables, and responsible personnel for the activities. Some information provided in the graphic (e.g., the timelines) is very general. This lack of specificity will impact on the overall ability of the staff to measure progress and set benchmarks. More specific information on when these deliverables will be available is needed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

E.1. The applicant provides a high quality plan for continuous improvement that includes performance measures, supplemental evaluation, data collection and analysis, and assessment toward reaching project goals. The process will be implemented with the assistance of a third-party evaluator. The plan includes five key goals, activities to reach those goals, and a rationale for the activities. Additional information includes a timeline with deliverables as well as identification of personnel responsible for the activities. The plan addresses such key areas as the implementation process, improvement in student learning and development, and positive changing student aspirations and expectations. Activities are also designed to assess changes in the attitudes, knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators. Baseline data that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature will be collected and publicly shared with stakeholders. Monthly updates will be used to monitor the overall process. The response is comprehensive and will enable the applicant to achieve improvements.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

E.2. Communication activities described by the applicant include information distribution to staff, families, and students through such means as newsletters, weekly circulars, and project website. The applicant identifies key goals for communication and engagement with all stakeholders. Each goal is supported with activities, a rationale, timelines and deliverables, and key personnel. The plan is somewhat general and reflects very traditional approaches. For example, the use of technology is minimal. While the statement includes a brief discussion of a website, there is little or no mention of social media, online learning communities, and use of e-mail and other forms of electronic communication. Such means of communications would greatly enhance the statement.

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

E.3. In developing its performance measures, the applicant indicates that it is defining effective educators as any teacher or administrator receiving the rating of "proficient" on the current evaluation system. In supporting tables, the applicant provides performance measures for all student groups. In addition, the applicant explains which tests are used to calculate the projections. The tests described are appropriate for the various age groups and grade levels. The applicant also

includes projections for college and career readiness and for students completing and submitting the free Application for Federal Student Aid form. Performance measures are also available to track students who are career ready. The projections are appropriate for the project and will assist in benchmarking the activities of the programs and services. The rationale associated with the projections reflects competent professional judgment. The projections made by the applicant are consistent and are reasonable in nature.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

E.4. The evaluation process proposed by the applicant focuses on implementation and overall effectiveness. Using a series of evaluation questions, the applicant identifies key activities it will carry out to measure the overall of effectiveness of the project as well as measure such areas as student persistence and postsecondary graduation. It will construct a data warehouse and a number of data management information systems. It will also work with the National Student Clearinghouse in order to maintain contact with graduating students. The process will include both demographic student data as well as program information and statistics. In general, the plan lacks specific goals and a timeline for the activities to take place. In addition there is limited information about who will carry out the evaluation process and work with the project director and third-party evaluator. As a result, the evaluation plan is less than high quality and weakens the overall evaluation and assessment of project activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

F.1. Over the four year project, the applicant is seeking approximately \$22.1 million. In the budget narrative, the allocations are lined with the five major projects the applicant is proposing. In addition, the applicant provides summary costs as well. The budget document contains appropriate allocations in terms of personnel, fringe benefits, and travel. The funding is also associated with the Core Educational Assurance Areas. For year one, the applicant provides a breakdown of federal, state and local funding for each of the project areas. All allocations appear to be for ongoing operational expenses. These allocations are reasonable and reflect appropriate amounts as indicated in the narrative that supports the budget document. However, the applicant has several allocations that are substantial but lack sufficient detail to estimate their value. For example, in the project budget for Intensive and Targeted Services to Students, the applicant includes approximately \$2.5 million for supplies in year one, and \$495,000 for each subsequent year. The description is very vague and does not provide sufficient information. Similarly, under the Contractual Line Item for the same project, the applicant allocates \$1,250,000 per years 2 and 3. While the applicant provides a general description, it does not identify the recipients of the contract or the qualifications of the proposed contractor. The budget document lacks detailed information for this large expenditure of money.

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

10

6

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

F.2. The applicant indicates that several schools have relatively low enrollment and will receive additional financial support when enrollment is at full capacity. Additional funds will also come in the form of per-pupil grants with these additional enrollments. In spite of this potential funding, the applicant estimates that it will need \$2.6 million per year of additional funding to support project activities. To meet this need, the applicant plans to develop private funding sources for components of the project such as the Family Resource Centers. The applicant includes a plan designed to continue full implementation of the reforms initiated by this project. Included in the narrative are activities, general timelines, deliverables, and personnel to be involved. Overall, the plan is very general and lacks specific measurable components. The statement also lacks focus and does not identify any potential funding sources such as corporations, community agencies, or grant programs.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes its relationship with 35 cities and towns in Connecticut whose students attend the various magnet schools. Through the Family Resource Centers, the applicant has developed such key programs as its Early Intervention Services and the Intensive Intervention Teams. These programs and services has enabled the applicant to develop partnerships with the National School Climate Center, the University of Connecticut's Center for Behavioral Education and Research and a number of mental health clinics, foster care programs, and similar organizations. In addition, the project will employ a Director of Community Services and Support who will further develop these partnerships. Beyond identifying these groups and briefly describing services, the applicant does not relate these two specific goals and objectives of the project. The timelines presented in the application are very general and lack specificity.</p> <p>The applicant identifies 10 population-level desired results which focus on education as well as family and community supports. The desired results included (e.g., Students attend school regularly for pre-K through 12) are appropriate. The applicant provides an explanation of how it will work with partners to survey students and develop appropriate programs using the Intensive Intervention Team. As a result, students will have programs and services designed to meet individual academic, behavioral, and health needs. Included will be academic interventions, referral to community resources, parent workshops, and support from the Family Resource Center. However, the desired results provided by the applicant are very general; e.g., for grades PK-12 , students attend school regularly. As a result, while the goals are achievable, they're not ambitious or measurable as written.</p> <p>The applicant provides both baseline and target performance measures for all participating students and student subgroups. The information is measurable and reflects substantial and progressive improvement over the four years of the project. For example, by the end of the project, all students will indicate that they feel safe at school.</p> <p>The applicant describes how it will build capacity through close collaboration with the Family Resource Center. The explanation is focused on identification and intervention services. It is unclear if other collaborations are in place or are planned to address other students and build staff capacity in those areas.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has developed a proposal that addresses the four core educational areas of the Race to the Top program. Its application includes programs and services that seek to personalize learning for each student through its five projects, engage and support families of the students, support the educators in the schools, and incorporate technology into the overall program. The overall focus of the program is to prepare all students to attend college. The applicant has developed a needs assessment that will identify gaps which serve as the basis for their proposed services and activities. Its programs are focused on the four core educational assurances and the aim of enhancing personalized learning. Included in its programs are intensive and targeted services, expanded college and career programming, use of technology to support data-driven decision-making and instruction, greater effectiveness of principals and teachers, and outreach services to students and parents. The personalized learning program being proposed is comprehensive and includes a curriculum based on the Common Core State Standards, frequent assessment, use of skill maps, individualized instruction plans, competency-based learning, and ongoing student feedback. The applicant indicates that the foundation of its program to provide a personalized sequence of instruction and deep learning experiences will be achieved through the development of skills maps. All educators will engage in training and select professional development activities to meet their needs. The specific programs will focus on personalized learning strategies that emphasize project-based learning, differentiated instruction, student directed learning, web based learning, and other activities.</p>		

Total	210	158
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0097CT-3 for Capitol Region Education Council

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a. The applicant has set forth a high quality plan that builds on the its current work in the four core educational assurance areas. The plans for development include highly ambitious goals such as continuing to develop an evaluation system to ensure highly effective teachers and administrators are given opportunities to share their knowledge. The plans provide strategies that will build on the turnaround model currently in place and provide for increased student achievement.</p> <p>b. The applicant provides concrete components to implement their model of personalize learning including key activities such as frequent assessment of all students coupled with collaborative goal setting and online/blended and flipped learning. These activities described will likely lead to increased student learning and increased equity. However, while the applicant did indicate that student interests would be taken into consideration, the applicant did not describe how the individual tasks are based on student academic interests.</p> <p>c. The applicant did adequately describe what the classroom experience will be like for students participating in personalized learning environments. In particular, students will progress through the curriculum at their own pace through the mastery of skills. However the applicant did not describe what the classroom experience will be like for teachers who participate in personalized environments.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a. The applicant provided high quality comprehensive evidence of a process of how they determined the selected schools that would participate including, a review of achievement data, and collecting feedback. The process included a thorough review of the qualifications of schools that ensured that the schools will be able to meet the RTTD eligibility requirements.</p> <p>b. The applicant provided comprehensive evidence list of all of the schools that will participate in the grant activities based on the needs of each school.</p> <p>c. The applicant provided evidence of a comprehensive list of the total number of students participating from low income families, high need students and educators based on comprehensive data on each student.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has provided a high quality plan that describes how the proposal will be scaled up to effectuate meaningful reform for the selected schools and students. The described activities in the schools explain a thorough plan to move from implementatoin to sustaining the program. The applicant describes a plan that will implement targeted professional development based on the individual needs of teachers and principals. Further the collaborations described between partner organizations will ensure that all students will be college ready. The timelines, deliverables and activities identified</p>		

by the applicant are achievable and will result in meaningful change. However, the applicant does not provide evidence of how the reform will support district wide change beyond the participating schools.

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

a. The applicant describes a comprehensive vision that includes ambitious yet achievable annual goals that will increase student performance on summative assessments over time. The goals are incremental as each subgroup will achieve higher on assessments as the plan becomes more fully integrated into the district and highly achievable to address all student subgroup needs.

b. The applicant demonstrated a comprehensive vision that includes ambitious yet achievable annual goals that will increase subgroup student academic performance and decrease achievement gaps over time. The goals are incremental in that they take into consideration the current gaps that exist within student groups and increase incrementally as the plan is implemented into the schools and highly achievable to address all student subgroup needs.

c. The applicant describes a complete vision that includes ambitious yet achievable annual goals that will increase student graduation rates over time. The goals are incremental and will likely increase in this fashion as the plan is implemented and highly achievable to address all student subgroup needs.

d. The applicant describes a convincing vision that includes some ambitious yet achievable annual goals that will increase student college enrollment over time. The goals are incremental and highly achievable to address many student subgroup needs. However, the applicant did not provide ambitious goals for college enrollment for students with disabilities. The plan proposes a .8% increase for college enrollment for disabled students over a 7 year period.

e. n/a

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	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant has sufficiently demonstrated that for the past four years their students have performed at or above the proficient levels on state math and reading statewide exams. Additionally, the applicant provided evidence that students in several subgroups including those who are eligible for free or reduced lunch consistently out perform free/reduced lunch students statewide. The applicant provided sufficient evidence that their graduation rates have decreased over the past four years, however, it was explained that the state did change the method by which the graduation rate is calculated which is the reason for the decrease in graduation rate. The applicant did not provide any evidence of college enrollment rates over the past four years

b. The applicant did provide comprehensive evidence that they implemented significant reforms in their persistently lowest achieving schools. The goals they implemented were significant, ambitious and effective to effectuate considerable growth in literacy and mathematics scores.

c. The applicant provided some evidence that student performance data is readily available to educators through PerformancePlus, however, it is not indicated that this data is provided to parents or students.

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

a. The applicant provided high quality evidence that the LEA maintains a high level of transparency by reporting to the State Department of Education actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff and maintaining. These data are available to the public through the Civil Rights Data Collection website.

b. The applicant provided high quality evidence that the LEA maintains a high level of transparency by reporting to the State Department of Education actual personnel salaries at the school level of instruction staff only. These data are

available to the public through the Civil Rights Data Collection website.

c. The applicant provided high quality evidence that the LEA maintains a high level of transparency by reporting to the State Department of Education actual personal salaries at the school level for teachers only. These data are available to the public through the Civil Rights Data Collection website.

d. The applicant provided high quality evidence that the LEA maintains a high level of transparency by reporting to the State Department of Education actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. These data are available to the public through the Civil Rights Data Collection website.

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

The applicant has provided comprehensive evidence that there are necessary conditions and autonomy under the State's legal, statutory and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. The applicant is sufficiently authorized by the state to operate as an inter- district magnet school and as such they are authorized under state regulations to operate under a state evaluation system that rewards effective teachers and principals. Additionally, the applicant has provided evidence that the teachers' union is engaged to to be involved in the proposal goals through letters of support by the teachers.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a. The LEA has demonstrated insufficient evidence that meaningful stakeholder engagement was used throughout the development of the proposal and that there is meaningful support for the proposal. All administrators and teachers were asked to share feedback on the design and direction of the proposal that was developed by district staff. Additionally, parents provided feedback on the design of the proposal through email, surveys, and individual parent groups. No evidence that students were engaged in the proposal design was offered.

1. There is no evidence provided that the teachers collective bargaining union supports this proposal. No letter of support was offered.

b. The applicant provided a plethora letters of support from many stakeholders including local non profits such as museums, the YMCA, elected officials, over 100 letters from parents and local institutions of high education.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

ai. The applicant has provided high quality evidence through their college and career counseling program that all students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

ii. The applicant has provided a thorough, high quality plan that identifies that all students will pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and evidence that they understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. The applicant has identified key stakeholders in addition to school staff that will assist to guide students through the college readiness goals. This plan is likely to result in increased college readiness for students.

iii. The applicant has not provided any evidence of a plan that emphasizes that students are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest

iv. The applicant has not provided any evidence that students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that will motivate and deepen individual student learning.

v. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that shows that students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits including as goal-setting, critical thinking, and creativity. The applicant will enforce

competency requirements that include project based learning under this proposal that will likely result in students gaining increased creativity and critical thinking skills.

Bi. The applicant has provided complete high quality evidence of an adequate plan that allows for a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development that is designed to enable students to achieve their individual learning goals that will ensure that they graduate on time and college/career ready. The targeted services identified throughout the grade levels will likely result in personalized instructional content for students in all grade levels. Further, parents, students and educators will be able to efficiently track their progress through their online platform.

ii. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence of an adequate plan that will provide a variety of high quality instructional approaches including flipped classrooms, skills mapping, online platform, flexible grouping, and project based learning.

iii. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence to show that high quality content including digital learning content will be used and be aligned to college/career readiness standards; their online learning platform will provide high quality access to assignments, videos and other instructional materials.

iv. a The applicant has provided comprehensive evidence that through their online portal parents, students and educators will have access to individual student data that can be used to identify progress toward the mastery of goals.

b. The applicant has provided comprehensive evidence that through their data system, educators will be able to easily identify individual student levels of achievement and translate that data into instructional resources best suited for each student.

v. The applicant has provided sparse evidence that they provide high quality strategies for high need students that will result in an increase in preparedness for college/career goals. Although they do indicate that they will provide students with related services in the areas of mental and physical health.

c. The applicant has not provided evidence that they have mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

ai. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence of a highly effective professional development system whereby teachers advance along a continuum of professional learning that is based on their development of skills as identified by the evaluation system and district initiatives. Throughout the evaluation system, the district system continues to cultivate talents of each educator. This system is likely to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

ii. The applicant has provided complete high quality evidence that teachers will engage in professional development activities where they will assess and modify their instructional practices related to project based learning and differentiated instruction.

iii. Through the use of common planning time, weekly data team meetings, exemplar artifacts and video exemplars, the applicant has comprehensively provided sufficient high quality evidence that they will frequently measure student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards.

iv. The applicant has comprehensively provided high quality evidence that through the use of the district evaluation system that addresses educator needs at the application, reflection and independent level that teachers' and principals' practice will be improved through feedback.

B.

i. The applicant has provided complete high quality evidence that data teams will meet weekly to analyze student data to plan instruction. This information will help educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student

academic needs and interests.

ii. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that teachers will be engaged with high quality learning resources that are aligned with college and career ready standards including that teachers will be filmed demonstrating best practices related to personalized learning.

iii. The applicant did not provide adequate evidence of processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

C

i. The applicant provided comprehensive high quality evidence to demonstrate that the professional learning opportunities identified will be used to reveal areas of common need among teachers and principals which will be used to develop school wide and/or district wide professional development opportunities. '

ii. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence of training, systems and practices that will be used to continuously improve school progress toward increasing student achievement. In particular, the instructional coaching system and video reflection/lesson study will directly impact teacher/school needs.

d. The applicant has provided a complete high quality plan of targeted professional development activities that will be used to increase the skill level of low performing teachers. If teachers are not evaluated as being deemed adequate within a timely fashion, the teacher will no longer serve in the school.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that the LEA Central Office provides high level support and services to all participating schools. The central office content area directors provide guidance with respect to instructional support and content areas to all schools by directly working with with teachers.

b. The applicant has provided complete high quality evidence that demonstrates that each school has a school leadership team whereby high level of instructional practice is shared and developed with colleagues.

c. The applicant has provided inadequate evidence that they give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery not seat time through the description of one school within the district that has implemented a proficiency based system to gear credits toward high school graduation.

d. The applicant has not provided evidence that they are offering students an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.

e. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that they are providing learning resources and instructional practices to special needs students and ELL students through the use of their scientific research based interventions and the response to intervention mode.

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

a. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that all stakeholders will have access to tools and learning tools. The applicant indicated that students will have access to online learning in and out of the school day. Further, the applicant is offering a family resource center which will offer wi-fi for families who need to access the internet.

b. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence to demonstrate that all stakeholders will have access to appropriate technical support through the designation of having at least one network administrator per school who is responsible for providing immediate technical support to stakeholders.

c. The applicant has not provided evidence to demonstrate that stakeholders will be able to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems.

d. The applicant has provided complete high quality evidence to demonstrate that they have maintained an interoperable data system to ensure the integrity of their data. As a result, teachers always have an accurate class roster, and parents and students have immediate access to course materials irrespective of course changes.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided comprehensive evidence of a high quality plan to implement a rigorous continuous process that will provide regular feedback toward goals during and after the grant. This will be achieved through the applicant's plan to use a third party evaluator that will implement a high quality improvement plan that will regularly review grant activities, timelines, indicators of successful implementation and outcomes. The applicant has provided a high quality plan that demonstrates that these review systems will be shared publicly through the evaluator.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided limited evidence that demonstrates that they have a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through their Executive Director monthly newsletter and Superintendent's quarterly newsletter that is sent to all families. Additionally the district website will maintain up to date information that can be accessed by all stakeholders on a regular basis. However, the applicant did not provide any evidence of any two way communication between stakeholders and the applicant to engage stakeholders in plan revisions.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: a. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence to demonstrate the rationale for all of the performance measures they have chosen. The measures adequately allow educators to monitor the academic growth of students. b. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence to demonstrate that each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. c. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that demonstrates they will review and improve each performance measure over time.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence to demonstrate that they will implement a high quality evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness of RTTD funds. In addition to state data collection systems, the applicant will work with a 3rd party evaluator to provide qualitative and quantitative data collection to measure the quality of implementation of the plan and the effectiveness of the plan.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

- a. The applicant comprehensively identifies all funds that will support the project through their budget analysis. Each project was presented in a well thought out manner with projected budget guidelines for each. Additionally, the applicant indicates how many funds will be used from RTTD as opposed to those used by funds from other sources.
- b. The applicant provides an comprehensive budget that is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. The applicant provides extensive evidence to show how each proposed project will be supported with the budget through their project level itemized costs.
- c. i. Throughout the budget, the applicant comprehensively provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities that includes a clear description of all funds that they will use to implement the proposal.
- ii. The applicant comprehensively demonstrates which funds will be used for one time investments as opposed to those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period, including

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has inadequately described a plan of how the implementation of the plan will continue after the term of the grant. The applicant has not provided evidence of support from state and local government leaders as required. Although funds from the current project will sustain the project, it is unclear if the applicant has not yet been able to support government support thereafter if the plan will be able to be sustained and if the gains will maintain. The applicant has adequately described how the LEA will evaluate the effectiveness of former projects in the district in order to inform the future of RTTD projects.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

1. The applicant has provided comprehensive high quality evidence that this plan is being implemented in collaboration with the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, City of Hartford Recreation Centers, Community Health Service and the Urban League of Hartford.
2. The applicant has comprehensively provided high quality evidence of 2 population-level desired results for students in the LEA that align with and support the applicant's proposal. The results have included family supports including healthy development and educational outcomes for students.
3. The applicant has not provided evidence for these questions.
4. The applicant has comprehensively provided evidence that through the partnership with various community organizations to integrate education and other services such as mental health, for participating students.
5. a) The applicant has not provided evidence of how they will assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership;
 - (b) The applicant has comprehensively identified how they inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports through the use of their Early Intervention Process.
 - (c) The applicant has not provided evidence of the creation of a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students and support improved results.
 - (d) The applicant has not provided evidence of how they will engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs.
 - (e) The applicant has not provided evidence to demonstrate how they will routinely assess the applicant's progress

in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurances through the proposed plan, to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching through personalization. All of the programs detailed in the plan are designed to narrow the achievement gap, increase the number of students achieving at grade level, promote the learning and development of students who are high risk of not successfully transitioning to postsecondary education or careers, implement a data driven process of school reform and instruction, and accelerate the process of turning around schools with moderate levels of learning and developmental outcomes.</p>		
Total	210	169