



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0043IL-1 for Community Unit School District #116

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a detailed vision to include past, current, and future initiatives to support the goals detailed in this grant. The applicant has established Destination Excellence which is a scaled up model based on two successful district initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schular Scholars Program • Student Alternative Learning Through Technology Program <p>Each of these programs have been proven to be successful according to district data. The applicant will include all middle and high school students in the grant initiative.</p> <p>There is a detailed logic model describing how each of the four core educational assurance areas will be met. The applicant describes classroom experiences for English language arts and math classrooms. The applicant scored in the mid-high range because It is unclear as to what the classroom experience will look for students who are performing below grade level in math and reading.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant scores in the high range because they provide a detailed description of their process they used to select schools to participate. They include current practices as well as future support for meeting Destination Excellence Goals. The applicant conducted a thorough needs assessment, gathering and analyzing data to include demographic statistics, staff development surveys, and input from the communittee. They created their program goals based on the results of their needs assessment.</p> <p>A detailed list of participating schools is included. The district is including middle and high schools in the grant to support current successful district initiatives. A total number of participating students is included along with demographic data.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant details a plan as to how the needs of the middle and high schools supported by the grant will be met. The district's logic model details grant priorities and implementation processes. The district will adopt current district initiatives, Schuler Scholar Program and Student Alternative Learning Through Technology Program, for all middle and high school students. The applicant details how these two frameworks align with the grant application Destination Excellence Components. The table provides specific detail of their plan for their district-wide reform for middle and high school students. The applicant details action steps, responsible party, and the corresponding timeline. However, there is no detail describing how elementary students and staff will support this initiative. This is essential especially because the applicant has stated a concern regarding students entering middle school are performing below proficient in math and reading.</p> <p>The applicant scores in the mid range because they do not include how their high-quality plan will support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. This is a critical piece to meet this criterion.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicants vision is aligned with their projected goals. Their projected proficient and above for high school students and their projections for increasing reading and math scores for on grade level students are realistic and achievable. The applicant's vision includes building on current successful district initiatives that have shown positive results in improving student learning and performance. This is a significant part of their vision to improve student learning. They project a 25% increase in grade 8 reading proficiency by 2017-2018 and a 33% increase in grade 8 math proficiency.</p> <p>The applicant scores in the mid-high range because their vision to decrease achievement gaps, graduation rates, college enrollment, and post secondary degree attainment are ambiguous. They project low income struggling students to make roughly 40% gains in proficiency across grade levels. This is unrealistic considering these students currently perform at 30% proficient on state assessments. Also, it is unclear as to how they plan to increase college enrollment for low socioeconomic students who struggle, English Language Learners, and special education students.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>According to the district, data indicates that the students' proficiency on state assessments does not equate to college readiness benchmarks. The district displays a history, especially in eighth grade of positive trends on state assessments. However, in 2013 student data dropped when districts were required to take state assessments that are aligned to the state adopted Common Core Standards. The district has a shown history of increasing student reading and math achievement in grades 3, 4, 5, and 8, but there is lack of evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years.</p> <p>In 2013 the higher expectation of the adopted common core standards caused a downward shift in data. Grade six reading 40% of students meet or exceed proficiency. In grade six math 37% of students meet or exceed proficiency. There is a difference of -11% in white and black students, but no difference in white and Hispanic students. Achievement gap for students with disabilities is over 30% for both reading and math. Similar gaps occur for grades 7 and 8. Data tables are provided to include elementary, middle, and high school. It is not evident as to how the district has successfully closed achievement gaps or raised student achievement for low performing students, English Language Learners, or Special Education Students.</p> <p>The districts current Schuler Scholars program shows 100% of students in this program graduate and are successful on their ACT. The district intends to extend this program to all middle and high school students due to its overwhelming success. Data also indicates the district has increased graduation rates in their high school from 2012 to 2013.</p> <p>This section scores in the middle range because the district has a student information system in place that houses student achievement data. It provides parent, student, and teacher access to data reports and tools. However the applicant does not indicate how parents access the reports and utilize them for to improve instruction, participation, and services. Section B(4)(A) details parent involvement in the learning process, but does not indicate specifically how parents access and utilize student data from the system. There is a lack of clarity as to how the district has maintained a clear record of success over the last four years.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section scores a perfect score because of the current processes already in place by the district's finance committee. They maintain transparency throughout the development stage by making meeting agendas and minutes available to the public on the District website. Budget information is also shared through public forum and venues such as a weekly radio show. The budget details school level expenditures including salaries.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section scores in the high range due to the state and district having clear and succinct guidelines and policies in place</p>		

supporting personalized learning environments. Illinois State law does not restrict, but promotes the ability for school districts to implement personalized learning communities. The district has provided data supporting student achievement under the implementation of the personalized learning environment structures. The state supports and encourages flexibility in the utilization of these structures to meet the needs of students and instructional staff.

The applicant provides detail as to how the current structures will be maintained throughout the duration of the grant and sustained after the grant.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

To support the development of the proposal the district included multiple stakeholders in the development of the grant proposal to include:

- parent survey
- Workshop presentations
- Board of Education presentations
- Community partnership meetings including students, parents, community members

These stakeholders attended meetings and participated in surveys to aid in the development of the proposal. This is essential for stakeholder buy in and support.

The district has provided examples of letters of support from various community members and stakeholders. In the appendix the grant writing team is listed which indicates teachers assisted in writing the grant. However, it is not indicated specifically that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools support the proposal. It is also unclear as to whether the union supports grant initiatives. These are critical components to meeting the criterion of this section.

This section scores in the mid range because it does not address clear evidence of collective bargaining representation or input from a minimum of at least 70% of teachers from participating schools.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Starting in middle school students will have individualized learning maps that follow them through high school. These maps are designed to prepare students to be college and career ready. However, the applicant does not include detail as to how high quality instruction will support these students starting in elementary school. The applicant discusses that students are entering middle school below grade level in math and reading, but does not indicate how high quality instruction and alignment to college and career readiness goals will be achieved in elementary school

In addition the applicant details research that includes the need to have high quality instruction in math over a six to eight year span, but does not indicated how this instruction will take place in elementary school to support students performing below grade level. Without this instruction indicated it is hard to determine that the applicant will increase achievement for all learners.

The applicant provides detail supporting students participating in learning that is meeting their needs and interest. There is also a multi tier plan in place to support struggle students and English language learners. In addition struggling students have the opportunity to extend their learning time by participating in after school, weekend and summer interventions.

Details around technology integration is provided and supported through extensive professional development opportunities for instructional staff. Parents will also receive specified training in supporting their students through the parent university. Parents on the advisory committee will aid in monitoring data to provide feedback and recommendations. However, it is unclear as to how all parents will be involved in analyzing student data to support student achievement.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

All staff members will participate in a five day training to introduce and set the stage for Destination Excellence. Multiple professional development opportunities will be provided to include common core standards, English Language Learner development, data driven instruction and so on. Instructional staff will also participate in school based professional development that is based on their individual need and supported by an instructional coach. All instructional staff are required to create personalized professional development plans. Instructional staff are also required to analyze data to make instructional decisions in addition teacher teams will be created and facilitator will be formed for each group. However, it is unclear as to how the district will support this initiative or when or how the teacher teams will be formed and trained. It is also unclear of the purpose and intent of the teacher team facilitator and how these teams will be utilized to increase student achievement. It is also unclear as to how these teams will improve teacher practice to increase student achievement.

There is evidence that instructional staff are moving towards consistently utilizing data to make instructional decisions by working collaboratively in professional learning communities once a day. There is an expectation that site leaders will lead and support staff in this initiative. Data specialists will be hired to support district leaders in analyzing student data on a regular basis. There is evidence of a clear plan in supporting teachers and principals in this expectation. An implementation timeline has been created for the applicants teaching and leading plan.

The applicant scores in the mid-high range because it is unclear as to how the districts teacher evaluation system will support the teaching and leading plan for continuous improvement. There are structures in place to support professional development but the implementation plan for supporting hard to staff schools is unclear.

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:

There is comprehensive evidence that the central office is structured to provide support and services to participating schools. There is a Division of Teaching and Learning where the Deputy Superintendent will provide primary over site and leadership of grant implementation.

The District's Site-Based management model provides school leadership teams flexibility over grant implementation initiatives to meet the needs of students and staff members. The provided table details the specifications of the site based decision making process.

The applicant has moved toward a personalized approach to learning by implementing authentic assessment models, based on students demonstrating what they know and are able to do as opposed to the traditional seat time in class structure.

There is extensive evidence that the district continues to meet the needs of all students by providing district wide as well as individualized resources and professional development that enhance instructional practices. However, data does indicate there is an additional need in this area due to the large achievement gap among special education learners. There is no learning resource or instructional practice expectation addressed within the application that the intensive needs of intensive students, special education students, or English Language Learners will be met. The applicant does not detail how students will have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery standards at multiple times and in multiple way. There is no indication as to how low performing students, English Language Learners, or special education students will be provided these opportunities.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section scores in the mid-high range because the applicant has a current system in place where student information, data, grades, discipline, lesson plans, response to intervention is stored. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents have specific areas of this system. There is also a communication component for parents and teachers. The applicant will utilize grant funds to provide technology support at home for students who do not have the proper technology to access their student information system. However, there is no evidence that all students, parents, educators, or stakeholders will have appropriate levels of support or have the ability to export their information in an open data format. The applicant details the utilization of interoperable data systems, but it is not stated as to how these systems include human resource

data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has provided a detailed and realistic high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous improvement process. The plan details an implementation timeline which includes action steps, deliverables, and responsible party. The applicant will utilize grant funding to procure and implement a customizable system that will allow them to publish and publicly share reports. The applicant will design organizational structures to ensure that representation from multiple stakeholders exist to dig deeply into student data and make programmatic improvement recommendations. The applicant details a cohesive plan that will allow teachers, administrators, students and parents to have instant access to student performance data as well as school and district progress data. The applicant loses points due to the lack of clarity as to what types of data will be shared with the public, in addition there is no definitive timeline for sharing this information.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has described a plan to build communication among stakeholders to support ongoing communication and engagement. This plan includes the involvement of parents and community partners. This section scores in the mid-high range because the plan is unclear as to whether the applicant's list of communication vehicles currently exist or need to be established. The applicant will enhance their communication plan to include parents and community partners when identifying and developing strategies for removing obstacles for continuous improvement.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>This section receives a high score because the applicant has current measures in place they will continue to utilize as well as additional measures they will implement to meet the requirement of the grant. Each performance measure is research based and are grade appropriate. The applicant outlines a theory of action which includes common sets of data, a common curriculum with common resources, and build the capacity of teachers and leaders to triangulate student data. The applicant details each performance measure and the rationale for the selection. The applicant details their methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the measures. The applicant does not detail how the measures will be improved over time.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district will utilize internal and external stakeholders to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of grant initiatives. The newly hired data specialist will focus on monitoring grant initiatives through the use of student data. The applicants plan is not of high quality as it is vague in specific details of how they intend to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the grant.</p> <p>This section scores in the middle because the plan does not specify who the external stakeholders will be, but it does indicate community members. A data specialist will be hired to over see grant evaluation and effectiveness of investments.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

This section received a high score because the applicant's budget describes the utilization of all funds to include funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs. The applicant is building upon sustainable and successful current district processes and initiatives such as the SSP and SALTT programs. The applicant intends on hiring multiple staff members to institute grant initiatives. This heads sustainability as the district will need to supplement these staff members when grant funding ends.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is building upon current successful and sustainable district initiatives. The applicant has also provided community and stakeholder support to include post grant funding. The applicant is basing sustainability on organization and finances. To accomplish this they built in processes for building capacity on the district and at the middle and high schools. In addition the cultural shift from grant initiatives will continue post grant thus needing less support for implementation. The applicant has included a detailed Destination Excellence Sustainability plan that include a possible funding source.

This section scores in the mid-high range because the applicant indicates potential funding sources, but does not include additional sources if these funding sources should not come available.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

This section received a high score because the applicant clearly details the requirements of the competitive preference priority. Their plan describes current, coherent, and sustainable partnerships to include the Shuler Foundation, the College of Lake County, Nicasa Behavioral Health Services, Mano a Mano resource center, and the School Based HEalth Center.

The applicant will utilized current and continued contributions from their dedicated partners to obtain positive results for Destination Excellence. As a result the applicant predicts an increase in attendance rates for middle and high school students, district wide increase in parent involvement, an increase in student achievement, an increase in graduation rates, and an increase in college enrollment. District data supports current initiatives are having a positive impact on each of these areas.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has met absolute priority one by implementing personalized learning environments with continued support at both the state and district levels. The state supports the utilization of personalized learning communities by allowing districts the flexibility to meet the needs of all learners. The applicants goals detail how they plan to increase student achievement in addition to increasing the effectiveness of educators.

Total	210	148
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0043IL-2 for Community Unit School District #116

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant describes a comprehensive and coherent reform vision for 3,712 participating students which reflected the district's classroom practices and models for teaching and learning in grades 6 through 12 to best support each student's achievement by building on work in the four assurance areas. The district's plan, Destination For Excellence, will incorporate Common Core Standard and a data analysis system to measure student growth, inform instruction and create equitable opportunities for all students to be college and career ready following graduation. The Applicant developed a well developed flow chart outlining the district's plan in implementing each assurance area which aligns with a scale up plan reflecting outcomes, and the impact of the outcomes in articulating the proposal's vision accelerating student achievement.

. The Applicant describes two focused research-driven program models that addresses the proposal's reform vision: Schuler Scholars Program(SSP) which guides high needs and budding scholars to succeed in private and competitive institutions of higher education and the Student Alternative Learning Through Technology (SALTT) model which addresses struggling students who have not found success in traditional classrooms. The district's plans are scaling up both models to include all Middle School Students by providing the use of personalized learning plans which will focus on student's academic preparation, leadership development, exposure and counseling, technology integration, data systems and enhancing partnerships.

. The Applicant developed a detail graphic of their proposal's goals, indicators, measures and targets to increase student achievement so all students are college and career ready after graduation.

. The Applicant described a reasonable disciplinary literacy model that will be adopted for classroom instruction in English Language Arts and Math. The model will support personalized and differentiated learning. Both students and teachers will be supported with technology tools allowing them to communicate with others and teachers will be trained to use the conference process effectively.

.The Applicant did not provide evidence of how th district's plan will address students' academic needs in providing a smooth transition to Middle Grades.

. The Applicant provided a reasonable description of what a classroom would look like for students and teachers participating in personalized environments. The teachers will work collabotatively in teacher teams with use of online tools for immediate feedback of student's work and progress. Students will be provided tablets, netbooks and laptops for writing in all content areas and will receive immediate feedback from online essay scorer. Students will be provided mentors and after school they will be provided tutors to work with them in improving their learning.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided evidence of a reasonable process in selecting participating schools that focused on the need to narrow the achievement gap for all 6 through 12 grade low student income population and diverse ethnic groups. The Applicant identified the district's only two Middle Schools and one High School that will participate in the program. Over 75% of the students receive free or reduced lunch which was an indicator of the schools selected.

. The Applicant presented a table that provided thorough information about their school's demographics. The presented raw data of each participating school's focused grade level subjects, numbers of participating students and educators, numbers of participating students who are high need and low-income students, and the percentage of the district's total low-income families.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>. The Round Lake Community Community Unit School District has provided clear and compelling evidence of how it plans to impact change at all of it's schools and how those changes will be supported after the funding of the grant expire. In addition to personalized plans for students, the district will provide a plan to scale up their Scholar Scholars Program by developing college and career readiness preparation during middle grade and refining the skills during high school. The district will utilize their Career Cruising Program which is an online tool beginning in middle school to assess student's career interest and to develop students's learning plans.</p> <p>.The Applicant presented a chart reflecting an achievable plan for implementing the district's proposal for reform and change. The plan's objectives focused on :1. Grades 8-12 use of personalized learning plans, 2. increase of educators rated highly effective 3. expanding parent involvement.4.developing college and career readiness preparation during middle grades and refining the readiness skills during high school. The plan outlined objectives, rational. action steps, responsible parties, deliverables a timeline and ongoing and summative indicators of success.</p> <p>. The Applicant did not provide evidence of how their scaled up reform proposal will be implemented beyond the participating schools.</p>		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>. The Applicant provides a comprehensive chart that reflects the extent to which the proposal's vision will increase learning performance and equity over a 4 year span and one year postsecondary after the grant funding. The chart reflects students' summative assessments for proficiency status and growth which includes baselines and goals. The chart provided clear details of their improvement goals for all subgroups' learning performance from grades 8-12 with a proficiency rate target that increase 4 or 5 percent each year which is ambitious and achievable.</p> <p>. The Applicant proposes a realistic goal of reducing the overall achievement gap among subgroups by 50% over five years. The annual graduation rate goal (2% increase each year) and the annual college rate goal (2% increase each year) are achievable. Implementing this plan will result in improvement of students' growth, which leads to success in academic achievement, success in college enrollment and graduation and future careers.</p>		

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

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

<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>. The Applicant provided evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years which was evident in the following areas: 1. The district's Reconstruction Plan increased staff support and established a new literacy program and curriculum alignments for grades K-8 2. An Evaluation and Training Improvement Plan was developed for administrators and counselors. 3.The district's 3-8 grade students showed growth in meeting and exceeding standards on state standards and achievement test in areas of reading and math during a three year span and positive change was noted the district's ACT High School Achievement test 4. English Language Learners proficiency in graduation rate showed evidence of student achievement gap continuing to close for grades 6-11 in Math and Reading. 5. At Risk Students in their Student Alternative Learning Through Technology Model showed improved achievement for two and a half years. A table was provided in the proposal which summarizes the student's success over the past two years.</p> <p>. The Applicant provided evidence of making data available to student and teachers that inform and improve their</p>		
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participation in the district's use of Skyward, the district's student information system, and the Illinois Report Card district tool, in making student performance data available to students, educators and parents.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of achieving ambitious and significant reforms in it's persistently lowest achieving schools.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

.The Applicant has provided reasonable evidence of increasing transparency in the district use of their plan's website which enables stakeholders to obtain informal data regarding school's practices, processes and investments. The district will make public all information to their school's communities regarding the actual school level expenditures for K-12 instruction and actual personnel salaries at the school level for all instructional staff and support staff. Information will be shared through an annual public forum, agendas available at meetings, and a weekly radio show that highlights positive district news. The district's budgeting process began with the development of a budget calendar of events that outlines the steps and approximate dates of each step in the budgeting process.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provides evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under the State of Illinois to implement a personalized learning environment for students' achievement.

. The State and district provided clear guidelines to supporting the proposal by establishing initiatives to address implementing personalized learning environment in the LEAs participating schools.

. The State provides strong support to Race To The Top grant implementation through the following Initiatives: 1. Teacher and Principal evaluation system 2. Adoption of college career ready standards 3. Individual teacher identifiers with student matches through the state Student Information System 4 Student level matches preschool through grade 12 and higher education and High School to College Reports 5 State focus and policies on personalized learning environments 6. Illinois Pathway Initiative which focuses on STEM education 7. Integration of the Illinois Interactive Report Card and the Rising Star Improvement System through the Center of Innovation 8.Implementation of a Vocational Education Program which is designed to support students with disabilities during transitional years from high school to career readiness prior to their 22nd birthday

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

15

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

.The Applicant provided evidence of stakeholders participation in the development of the proposal and their commitment to the goals of the proposal.

. Round Lake Community Unit School District provided thorough evidence of stakeholders engagement and support of the grant by organizing a grant planning team comprised of teachers and leaders, creative and innovative thinkers from every school and community program to: 1. Review and discuss the proposal's plan and 2. To encourage wider participation in the grant development to include students, parents, school leaders,, district and community partner in the implementation of the grant Letters of strong support and a list of community partners were noted in the Appendix.

. Through funding of the district's Destination For Excellent proposal, parent and community engagement will be expanded by inviting parents and community representation to join the Advisory Committees at the participating schools to oversee the proposal's implementation

- . The Applicant needed to provide evidence indicating parents actively participating in the grant's implementation.
- . The Applicant did not provide evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposal's participating teachers in the participating schools with collective bargaining representation.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

.The Applicant provided thorough evidence in implementing ambitious strategies for all participating students to accelerate their learning aligned to college and career ready standards and college ready graduation requirements

.The district's proposal reflects several strategies to offer high-quality instructional approaches in developing personalized learning environments at their schools by : 1. Developing new tired interventions to help struggling student accelerate their learning of concepts and skills. 2. Incorporating blended learning coursework to provide immediate feedback to student's scores displayed in students and parents portals to facilitate monitoring of progress. 3. Providing training sessions for parents in the use of online message boards that allows them to share progress and concern with other parents and teachers in assisting their children in attaining mastering their coursework. 4. Encouraging students to set personal goals in their online cumulative folders and to track their progress. Providing teachers access to all data to drive instruction.

.The Applicant's plan includes supportive learning environments for Students with Special Needs, English Language Learners and othe struggling students. Literacy Teachers will work with these students in providing them with tablets that contain instant access to level library books and provide the student with exposure to diverse cultures that will deepen and motivate individual student learning.

. The Applicant developed a reasonable Three Year Personalized Learning Plan Focus for Middle and High School to provide focus and direction in supporting student progress. The plan focuses on: Self Exploration, Transition, Partnerships and Ownerships. A timeline with action tasks and deliverables are provided.

. After carefully re-considering the applicant's proposal relating to Preparing Students for college and Careers, I see where the applicant presented a high quality plan.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

.The Round Lake Community Unit School District has set forth a comprehensive plan to ensure all educators receive adequate professional development to support the reform efforts in the district. A detail and focus plan has been developed to increase educator's effectiveness in developing a personalized approach to professional development which will focus on teaching and learning strategies that includes : 1. Identifying six teachers during the first semester of the proposal's implementation to become model classroom teachers for literacy and math . The teachers will use technology tools in their teaching delivery using their trained workshop model in a manner that personalized learning. The Teacher Model Classrooms will be placed and open to their teacher's peers by the winter of 2014. 2. Providing a Five Day Summer Workshop in 2014 for all teachers to learn how to use the new technolgy tools in order to deeply delve into content and learn to implement personalized learning. The Workshop courses are listed in the proposal. 3. Forming teacher teams at each school with a trained facilitator.who will provide professional development on the use of data to design and deliver instruction that meets students' learning in an personalized environment.

.The school district has developed an Educator Evaluation System that addresses principals, teachers and counselors. Training will be provided annually for principals and leaders that will focus on identifying indicators of the CCSS application.

. The Applicant provided an ambitious 3 Year Teaching and Leadership Improvement Plan that will be implemented in three phases (Building a Foundation, Equity and Adjust and Sustain) during the 3 Year span. The plan includes: persons responsible, actions , deliverables and resources to ensure that all teachers, students the school communities will know how to use digital tools in implementing effective instruction.

. The Applicant did not provide clear evidence of how the district will manage all of the proposed programs and strategies to increase student achievement.

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:		
<p>. The Applicant provided evidence of a comprehensive plan to support the proposal's implementation through comprehensive polices, and infrastructure that provides every student and educator an educational system which support resources needed.</p> <p>.The Applicant provided an organizational chart that clearly describes the district's goverance structure and the responsibilities and roles of the directors and other administrators who will support the proposal and it's implementation. The Applicant provided a graphic illustrating the process of site-based decision making in the school district.</p> <p>.Participating schools and their administrators have autonomy by providing more site-based flexibilty to create the environment to support school improvement and personalized learning environment plan located in the proposal. Schools will determine bell schedules, make personnel decisions and control the school -level budget.</p> <p>. The district central office will provide training for principals and all administrtors in ongoing professional development of effective teacher practices, data -driven instruction, site-based management and walk throughs to support implementation of the proposal.</p> <p>.The Applicant provided evidence of students having opportunities to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. In moving toward a more personalized approach to learning, more authentic assessments will be provided based on students choices which wll allow them to earn academic credit based on knowledge demonstrated in various ways and less seat time work. Additionally, students will complete real-world projects that are based on students' interests and goals.</p> <p>. The Applicant provided evidence of providing resources and practices adaptable to all students. Instructional technology programs will be provided by the district for all students and teachers through direct and indirect instruction. Imagine Learning Program will address and support English Language Learners and the Lexia Program will be used as a support to increase comprehension skills for students in special education classes.</p> <p>. The Applicant did not describe how both programs ,Imagine Learning Program and Lexia, would specifically support support students with disabilities or ELL students. The supports of the programs were vague and not at a high rigor</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided evidence to support student learning by ensuring that students, educators, parents, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, content and other learning resources through a range of strategies at the participating schools.

. The district will provide both resources and curriculum sofeware application to faculty, staff and community using their district's Skyward Management System that intergrates finance, student information and human resources in a centralized database and common online portal. The Skyward Management System will provide a family and student access module for parents to have access to their children's grades, schedules,attendance, discipline and commuication with teachers. Teachers and administrators will have access to assessments, data, grades, lesson plans, discipline and responses to

interventions.

. The school district's proposal plan(Destination For Excellence Plan) will expand student and parent access to computers through the purchase of tablets, netbooks and laptops that will allow student access to educational resources whether on campus or at home.

. District technical support staff will be available at each school during and after school hours via web-based ticketing system, email information and a 24/7 support phone line.

The Applicant provided evidence of all schools' use of interoperable data system throughout the funding of the grant which will allow the district to share human resource data, student information data and budget data regarding instructional improvement.

. The Applicant developed a reasonable Policy and Infrastructure Plan which identifies the plans goals, activities, timeline, deliverables and responsible parties .

. The proposal does not reflect how the district will address students and parents who lack internet connectivity in their homes,

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>. The Applicant developed a thorough plan with a strategy for implementing a rigorous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward the proposal's goals for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.</p> <p>. The Applicant provided evidence of an achievable plan by developing a Continuous Improvement Plan which identifies the plan's goals, activities, deliverables, responsible parties and a timeline that addresses the school district's practices, policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning.</p> <p>. The district's organizational structure outlined in their Continuous Improvement Plan is created to ensure that all stakeholders acquire deeper understanding of student achievement data to monitor progress and have a voice in determining strategies that foster continuous improvement after the term of the grant.</p> <p>.The Applicant provided evidence of how the proposal will be monitored,measured and publicly shared regarding the quality of it's investments. Data from the district Report Card System will be reviewed and dicussed publicly during both district and school level meetings (Community Forums, School Open Houses, Curriculum Nights, Board of Education Meetings, Community Partnership Meetings)</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>. The Applicant provided a high quality plan of implementing strategies for on-going communication and engagement with all stakeholders. The district will communicate with stakeholders through a variety of modes (district website, Facebook,Twitter, Monthly newsletters, comminity and parent school meetings, Board of Education meetings) to share the proposal's plans and progress and to keep staff members focused on the proposal's goals. The Applicant listed a number of vehicles that will be used to maintain open-line communication with schools, community and the district.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>. The Applicant identified 12 achievable performance measures for each target group based on project goals and grade span. Attention was given to the anticipated growth of the subpopulations based on the baseline numbers with the plan showing differnces in subpopulations. Rationale was provided for each performance measure but were not sufficient in</p>		

providing quality evidence in addressing the selected performance measures. .

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

. The Applicant provided evidence of a reasonable evaluation plan and provided outcome measures for evaluating effectiveness of the proposal's investments.

.The Applicant's Evaluation Plan identifies the plan's achievable goals, budget categories, data indicators for analysis, deliverables, responsible parties and a timeline. The plan demonstrate evidence of being achievable and focuses on looking at each budgeted category to determine how they will be evaluated.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>. The Applicant has prepared a comprehensive budget required for The Race To The Top Grant to be successful. The budget is prepared as a total for each project. The narrative is included for each budget that explains the rationale for the needed funds.</p> <p>. The budget project level cost is described over a 4 year span. Each project cost item includes the title of the funding position, the importance of the position funding, the roles and responsibilities for implementing the budget during a 4 year span as outlined in the proposal.</p> <p>. The Applicant did not provide sufficient evidence of the sources and percentages that will be used for one-time investments and of the funds alignment to the fund sources.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>. Sustainability is built into the district's budget supported with state, local taxes, public and private foundations and community partnerships for budgeted projects requiring ongoing support.</p> <p>. Additional funding sought from the State, foundations, partnerships and local sources will be ranked ordered and evaluated to determine which resources are of highest priority for future funding.</p> <p>. The Applicant provided evidence of a high quality plan to strategically utilize the Race To The Top grant funds by developing a Sustainability Plan which includes the plan's goals, rational resources, deliverables, activities, responsible party and possible funding sources. The plan is created to build capacity to ensure a sustainable budget that support the proposal's goals during three years beyond the grant funding.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>. The Applicant provides an ambitious plan to use existing partners to provide social and emotional support for students and families. Examples of supports include: supporting social/emotional family needs, immunization compliance, empowering immigrants, establishing a School Based Health Center whose objectives are helping students and parents to make effective and informed decisions about coursework selection for high school, college and careers.</p> <p>. The partnership goals focus on leveraging the home-school-community partnership such a decreasing and eliminating barriers to student attendance and ensuring social, emotional and academic needs of each student met so he/she can succeed. The proposed goals are appropriate and will address the needs of students and families.</p>		

- . Each school's Leadership and Advisory Council will monitor the desired results indicators so they can quickly identify remediate areas not showing improvements
- . The district will integrate the partnership services of their Nicasa Behavior Health Care Center which addresses the socio-emotional and behavioral needs of Middle and High School students and families and the Mano and Mano Services which support the needs and acculturation of new immigrants and refugees.
- . The Applicant provided evidence of building capacity by: 1. involving the district's partners in decision making at participating schools. 2. Encouraging teachers and leaders to integrate what they do with how the partners can help . 3. Encouraging teachers to access students needs and strengths more accurately using precise student and subgroup data. 4. Using the district's integrated technology system.
- . The Applicant provided a clear detailed chart outlining the district's Population - Level Desired Results which reflects : population groups, indicators of types of results. Annual achievable Performance Measures will be used to assist partnerships to identify and inventory needs and assesses of the community.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposal shows thorough evidence of how the participating schools will build on the core educational assurance areas to improve learning and teaching through personalization of strategies, tools for students and teachers and the alignment with college-career ready standards and graduation requirements. The proposal addresses accelerating student achievement and learning and increasing the effectiveness of educators. The proposal showed evidence to decrease the achievement gaps across student groups and increasing rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p>		

Total	210	182
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0043IL-3 for Community Unit School District #116

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The RTT-D proposal is a single, comprehensive project that is a scale-up of two successful existing programs. Logic</p>		

models illustrate alignment of existing and scaled-up instructional resources that will address the four core educational assurance areas. Outcomes and impacts of each of the four areas are tied to the two instructional resources categories. Overall, the project plan is cohesive and aligned to current LEA and state standards, as well as Common Core State Standards. Establishing teacher and other instructional personnel collaborative teams, changing the culture and format of classroom instruction to expand personalized learning for students, increasing access to online resources for parents and families, and ongoing use of data from a needs assessment are some key implementation components of the project which address the four core educational assurance areas. Based on information included throughout the Narrative and in the Appendix, students entering grade 8 are generally far below grade level in reading and math skills. Not found in this section is detailed information about steps that will be implemented in grades 6-7 to ensure students who enter grade 8 will have reading and math skills closer to grade level in order to concentrate project resources, teacher professional development, and instructional time less on extensive remediation and more on subject mastery in grades 9-12.

The state graduation rate requirement is 85%, with the LEA rate currently 76%. In part based on the need to improve and expand services to reach the state requirement, the project will focus on all students in grades 6-12 (middle and high school), with screening beginning in grade 6 for individualized language and math needs. Personalized learning will be facilitated through investment in technology tools, personnel, and services that provide hands-on learning, tutoring, and options for student directed learning and experiences. Expansion and scale-up to include elementary grade levels will occur at the end of the grant period. Not found in this section is an overview of the project components that may be implemented in grades K-5.

Included are descriptions of past, present, and project designed classroom experiences, accompanied by anecdotes from students, such as those who have received college scholarships from a partner foundation. The information supports the applicant's contention and data that students who successfully transition to postsecondary education are likely to be more successful and productive students and citizens.

A priority outcome is stated to be preparation of students to successfully transition to ". . . elite universities and Ivy League schools." Less focus appears to be placed on preparing all students to be career and college ready to transition directly into careers, career and technical education institutions, online postsecondary degree granting institutions, and community colleges or institutions of higher education that may not be considered elite or Ivy League.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Data from a needs assessment was analyzed and used to inform a collaborative project vision that was developed by a team of district educators; teachers, administrators, and support personnel (e.g., counselors, literacy coaches). The needs assessment data, student career readiness view based on MAP and ACT alignment, outcomes of the existing two programs that will be scaled up as part of the RTT-D project, and an assessment of existing investments informed the decision to include all 3,712 students from the two middle and one high schools. Student demographics are provided for each of the three project schools, literacy and math will be the primary subject focus for all students in grades 6-12, and with 75% of all LEA students FRL qualified, overall the entire LEA student population meets the RTT-D low-income eligibility requirement. Included in this section is a list of the schools that will participate in the project with total number of participating high-needs students and those from low-income families. All teachers and principals at the two middle and one high schools will participate.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a summary that succinctly defines how the project will be implemented to achieve Objectives 1-3. As described in this section, the project builds on college readiness "pillars" from the current successful scholarship program, as well as components of the existing program that addresses the needs of highly at-risk students. Pillars are aligned to the two existing programs, as well as how the RTT-D project will expand and scale-up components. To achieve objectives, a rationale for each one is provided and based on research, action steps are outlined that include responsible key personnel, and a general timeline is provided. Ongoing summative indicators of success, deliverables, and requirements for implementation are aligned to each of the three objectives.

As described in this section, the summative indicators of success for Objective 3 are vague and do not include examples of quantitative data that will be collected and analyzed to adequately determine achievement of project objectives. Not found in this section is a description how the project will be scaled-up and translated into meaningful reform districtwide, beyond the participating schools (e.g., K-5 students, teachers, principals, external stakeholders). Successful outcomes for participating students and educators throughout the project and particularly post-grant period may depend on inclusion of all students and teachers districtwide as the project is scaled-up.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Ambitious goals for student progress and achievement have been set for the four years of the project and one year post-grant. Achievement rates on state and national reading and math assessments for all students range from approximately 5-10% per year over 2012-13 baseline data. Based on the described success of the two existing programs which forms the foundation for the RTT-D project and the ambitious RTT-D project, these target achievement rates may be realistic and attainable. The target graduation rate for all student subpopulations combined is 90%, which will exceed the state required 85%. No targets are set for postsecondary degree attainment; however, by the end of the grant period the overall target college enrollment rate is 61%, an increase of 16% over the 2012-13 rate of 49%.</p> <p>Not described in this section is how the referenced data will be used to inform project activities that will be likely to result in improved student learning and performance, as well as increased equity. How the goals were determined to be ambitious and realistic is not clearly explained. The basis for the determination of goals that are realistically achievable is a key element to ensure that the project is feasible and the investment of funds and resources will be maximized.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For three years, the LEA has been actively implementing a coordinated plan for districtwide improvement initiated by the appointment of the first superintendent in 10 years. Regaining local control has afforded the LEA an opportunity to advance student learning and demonstrate the LEA has the ability to implement a cohesive, ambitious plan of significant reform. Beginning with a districtwide needs assessment, the LEA acknowledges that state assessments do not meet college readiness benchmarks and are not aligned to recently adopted Common Core State Standards. Ambitious project goals and objectives are expected to be met by building on the current success of two specific programs that provide scholarships for students enrolled in postsecondary education and address highly at-risk students. Merging existing human capital and educational resources with a one-time infusion of RTT-D funds is a realistic and feasible plan to support expansion and continuation of the existing programs and successfully implement the grant project.</p> <p>Student performance data will be collected and accessible to students, parents, and educators utilizing existing data systems. Not found in this section is a specific plan to utilize RTT-D funds to expand data systems and reporting of student and school performance data to improve access and services for all stakeholders. It is unclear what data is currently provided to stakeholders that does not meet their needs and/or specific requests for additional data and access.</p> <p>LEA teacher, counselor, and administrator evaluation systems are designed to ultimately improve secondary student achievement and college readiness while narrowing achievement gaps between student subpopulations. It is unclear if the existing teacher and counselor evaluation systems, as well as the new administrator evaluation system, have been successful or inadequate and will be used or modified, or a new or revised system(s) will be implemented. Based on the information provided, it appears the existing systems will be utilized; however, not clear in the evaluation protocols are ways in which deficiencies may be mitigated so that potential negative impact on student learning and project goals can be eliminated.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As described in this section, a high level of transparency currently exists at the state, local, and LEA level that meets the RTT-D transparency requirement. LEA budget information is accessible by the public via the state and LEA websites. Transparency of all facets of the project is critical to engagement and ongoing involvement of external stakeholders. External stakeholders who have access to accurate and clearly defined budget and assessment data are more likely to remain engaged and support ongoing implementation and reform post-grant period.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information on past and present state laws that support and encourage LEA autonomy. The laws establish how individual LEAs may meet state requirements and support or expand programs that address student needs, such as personalized learning and dual credit. Included is a list of state initiatives that support the LEA project goals and provide state aid that may support achievement of those goals. Each of the seven initiatives listed appears to align to the key components of the grant project, including but not limited to, teacher and principal evaluation systems, adoption of college and career ready standards, and state policies on personalized learning. Ongoing support from and involvement of state lawmakers is critical to successful reform.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Information provided in this section describes a diverse group of community partners who support LEA programs with funds and/or resources and provided letters of support for the project. An unspecified number of recent graduates and parents completed a survey asking for feedback on college readiness. A sample of responses to three survey questions was included; however, not specified is how many people completed the survey, their demographics, and how qualitative responses will be analyzed and used to inform project development. Not found is information about the survey respondent demographics and if there was a limited number or no responses from some subpopulations.</p> <p>Information is not found in this section that external stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, community-based organizations) were solicited to actively participate on the RTT-D committees or in groups that were directly involved in the planning and development of the project and grant proposal. Absent from the project planning team appear to be external representatives for parent groups, businesses, students, and organizations. Representatives other than educators are important contributors to ensure the four core educational assurance areas are adequately addressed in the reform vision design and implementation and to ensure sustainability. Planning and ongoing project inclusion of external representatives in the decision-making process may ensure that all student academic needs are identified and addressed, parent/family priorities are considered, and key stakeholders in the community continue to be supportive partners. Based on letters of support, external stakeholders support the project; however, without active involvement in the project development and continual improvement process, there is less likelihood that the project will be successful as expected.</p> <p>Although the President of the Local Teachers Union/Education Association signed one required assurance form, not found is a letter endorsing the project. Three assurance forms lack one or more required signatures: Superintendent, Local School Board President, President of the Local Teachers Union/Education Association. It is unclear if this is an oversight or an indication that all parties have not yet reached agreement. Without all stakeholders actively supporting the project, the potential for successful reform is diminished.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>learning through tiered interventions and blended learning coursework. Not found in this section are specific details about the interventions and coursework; descriptions are generic or vague. Specifically on what basis students will be assigned to receive a specific tiered intervention and how they will be assessed to be ready to move to the next tier is unclear.</p> <p>An approach to learning to engage and empower all students includes multiple formats and times to earn credit through demonstration of subject mastery rather than seat time. Two programs cited are vaguely described so that it is unclear how students will demonstrate mastery, how often and at what times the programs are accessible (e.g., 24 hours/7 days, evenings only), and what entails "multiple comparable ways" to master subject content. It is critical to project success to identify specifically how programs will impact student success and ensure that assessment of student mastery is directly tied to program components.</p> <p>Parent access to an Online University and membership on the project Advisory Committee is expected to expand parent</p>		

support of student subject content mastery through alternative learning environments. Not found in this section is a description of an outreach program or other means by which parents and/or family members will be informed about these opportunities, as well as how they will receive training or assistance to be able to utilize the systems. Not found is how non-English speaking and limited English speaking parents will be informed and provided tools and assistance that meet their needs to be able to use online and other systems that support their children. To ensure that this large population of parents and/or other family members have access to support services will be critical to successful project outcomes for non-English speaking and limited English speaking students.

Technology is described as a major key for students to understand what they are learning, develop goals linked to college and career readiness, become involved in self-directed deep learning, and access information that motivates students to learn, and supports mastery of critical academic content. Briefly described are new and more time efficient ways in which technology can be used to address individual student needs. Examples include tablets for special needs, ELL, and other struggling readers, automatic scoring of essays, and online access to a library of "appropriately leveled books".

A detailed plan is presented that will provide students with a personalized sequence of instructional content, a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments, high-quality content and ongoing feedback on progress and achievement. A 3-year plan includes Vision, Action Plan, and Key Understandings. Key elements of the action plans are emphasis on student involvement in the community and developing partnerships and internships with businesses and organizations. To ensure student success and ongoing partner involvement, it will be critical to solicit partner involvement in design of an evaluation process to determine efficacy of student internships and community involvement.

Not clearly defined in this section are mechanisms that will provide training and support to students to ensure that they understand how to use tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Professional development will be provided for teachers to learn to effectively use all of the new intervention tools and it will be the teachers' responsibility to ". . . assimilate this information and assist students to use these tools . . .". Not described in this section is how students will learn to use the tools and resources while the teachers are in the learning process. Some teachers are not technologically literate and may be unable to assimilate on their own what may be required to effectively teach using new technology tools. It is unclear who will provide ongoing technical support for these teachers and whether or not access to support is available on a daily basis. Teachers who may need additional time and support may not be able to implement some project strategies according to established project timelines; therefore, it is imperative that project design and implementation take into account these factors.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A 5-day professional development conference is scheduled for summer 2014 to launch the RTT-D project. Described in this section is a comprehensive professional development program emphasizing collaboration and teamwork for teachers and other instructional personnel. Based on the description in this section, teachers will develop personalized professional development plans to ensure they are an integral member of dynamic teams. Each team will be assigned a facilitator for ongoing training. Facilitators will be trained with a focus on three specific capacity building courses. Beginning with the RTT-D project, student growth will be increased to 30% of teacher evaluations. Critical to success of an evaluation protocol is the involvement of teachers in selecting criteria that will measure student growth.

Using tablet technology, supervisors will conduct monthly walk-throughs in teacher classrooms. When the supervisor leaves the room, teachers will receive feedback and online links to access support resources. Rather than wait days or weeks for an evaluation summary, this method provides teachers with same day information to immediately begin to mitigate deficiencies and continue or expand instructional excellence. Within the formal evaluation protocols, individualized plans for improvement can be designed to address specific needs of teachers, administrators, counselors, and other instructional staff who may receive negative evaluations. It is unclear if teachers will have immediate access to support and the time required to modify curricula and/or instructional strategies.

Rating Administrators evaluate school and LEA administrators at minimum three times annually, with student growth the basis of 50% of the evaluation. Based on the number of project strategies that are planned, three times annually may be insufficient to evaluate and provide support for administrators to mitigate any deficiencies.

The curricula adoption process will be data informed and expand to involve parents and students. Selection of appropriate curricula will be aligned to Common Core State Standards. To initiate support for 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 are college and career ready, a districtwide School Counseling Plan will be implemented by the end of grade 7. Students will begin working with counselors to assess the students' needs, interests, and goals, as well as engage students to participate in activities as they plan to transition to high school. Counseling will focus on development of skills and goal setting, motivation to learn, communication, and development of initial personalized learning plans that are aligned to Common Core State Standards, adopted curricula, and individual student needs, goals, and rate of learning. Using technology tools for evaluation and immediate feedback of teacher and student performance and progress, the student and teacher personalized learning plans can be easily modified. It is unclear how "easily modified" is defined and if any specific timeline for modification will exist.

A three phase plan will be implemented to ensure all educators have access to and know how to use technology and other tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. The plan outlines some initial actions, teacher and administrator deliverables, and resources to ensure a foundation is established for equity in teaching and learning and adjustments to the project for sustainability. Critical to success of each phase of the plan will be time. It is unclear how time will be allocated for teachers and administrators to assess how each phase of the plan is appropriate for students. Sufficient time to learn how to use technology tools and integrate them into instructional delivery is critical to ensure ongoing project support from teachers. It will be imperative that administrators, teachers, and students have access to immediate technical assistance to avoid project implementation delays.

As described in this section, all school administrators, teachers, and other instructional personnel will have access to training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. Teacher, counselor, and administrator evaluations will be used to inform the development and modification of educator personalized learning plans and collective educator effectiveness that leads to school and LEA improvement. Training and professional development appears to be designed to maximize investment of funds and resources through collaborative teams and continual improvement and adjustment of team needs. As described, the goal is to ensure 100% of teachers, administrators, and other instructional personnel are highly effective and have access to appropriate tools, data, and training for continual improvement. Not found in this section is a plan to replace ineffective teachers and administrators temporarily or permanently. With an ambitious goal of 100% highly effective educators, it is critical to project success to eliminate negative impact on the project timeline and student progress, as well as teacher learning communities and collaborations. A plan may be designed that can be tailored to mitigate deficiencies of each educator and provide daily support and feedback as needed.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As described in this section and the Appendix, organization of the LEA Central Office is designed to provide support and services to all schools through three major divisions. Depending on the division, internal and external stakeholders are provided with information, oversight, screening, fiscal information, and data. The Division of Teaching and Learning will provide primary administrative oversight to ensure the RTT-D project is implemented with fidelity. The Division of Business and Operations will be tasked with ensuring grant funds are appropriately managed. Not clearly articulated in this section is how the roles and responsibilities of LEA personnel may or may not be modified during the grant period based on a defined plan to evaluate LEA personnel performance related to project activities and timelines.

Site-based management models were introduced districtwide in 2011 to provide school leadership teams sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, personnel decisions and staffing, roles and responsibilities for educators and other personnel, and school-level budgets. State law supports and promotes school autonomy that addresses the specific needs of student subpopulations.

The project is designed to facilitate student progress and earning credit based on demonstrated mastery, rather than the amount of class seat time. The project expands student choices that are personalized for identified student needs and interests. Traditional classroom models can be combined with blended learning and other alternative formats. To accommodate the shift in paradigm, grading protocol was standardized so that all teachers use the same categories and weighted percentages to evaluate student work. It is unclear why Formative Assessment is assigned 0% of the overall grade (Summative Assessment 90%, Homework 10%).

As described in this section, students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, with one of the grant project foundation projects specifically addressing the needs of highly at-risk students. Not included is specific information about multiple methods and opportunities. Information can be found throughout the Narrative; however some methods and opportunities are generic and not clearly defined.

In 2011-12, 30 teachers and leaders participated in a professional development program that will be expanded and implemented as a foundation for the grant project. Not described are specifically defined instructional strategies learned in the training and how teachers may have improved instructional delivery and support for student subpopulations with special needs. Technology based resources will continue to be provided for ELL students with special needs, as well as special education students and students who choose alternative learning formats. Not clearly defined is how the LEA Central Office will these students who will likely require specialized training and ongoing technical assistance.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Access to resources and software applications is provided to all students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders through a "centralized single database and common online portal". Additional systems are available for students to access resources on-site or at home. Identified special needs grade 9 students who do not have computer access at home will be provided with technology tools purchased with project grant funds. A "24/7 support phone line", online tutorials, and various project related additional IT support is available to teachers. Students and parents can access the "family portal" during sessions facilitated by school personnel and special projects specific IT vendors.

As briefly described in this section, students and parents will have access to the LEA data system as described throughout the Narrative. The LEA system will integrate with the state SLC tools. As described, "The state SLC is working with the State Board of Education and other states, foundations, educators, content providers, developers and vendors on an open application programming interface (API) based on common core standards-aligned resources data aggregation and interoperability. All schools currently use and will continue to use interoperable data systems."

Not found in this section is an outreach program or other plan to inform external stakeholders, particularly parents who are non-English and limited English speakers, of the availability of and how to access information, tools, and technical support. To remain involved and receive assistance to remove barriers to access of information, parents and other external stakeholders need ongoing outreach and support not only via phone line and online, but face-to-face with trainers who understand and can assist with mitigation of stakeholder issues. Not clearly defined in this section is how the LEA will ensure all external stakeholders have access to the technology and tools (e.g., computers, internet service, software) to be able to use the data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Described in this section is a summary plan for continuous improvement. Information includes a basic timeline, action steps, deliverables, and responsible parties. The plan includes availability of disaggregated data to internal and external stakeholders through daily, weekly, and monthly data reports. Individual student level data will be available to students, teachers, and parents. Data from the classroom, grade, school, and LEA levels will be available "next day" to inform the need for timely intervention and support best practices that can be continued and expanded. The "District Report Card" is available to all stakeholders and is publicly discussed during forums, meetings, and school events. The continuous improvement plan is aligned to a goal to ensure "timely graduation and college and career readiness" for students in grades 8-12.

As described in this section, the project includes activities that are intended to support continuous improvement and project

modification as appropriate. The waiting time for student, classroom, grade, school, and district level data will be decreased, thus allowing teachers and administrators to determine immediate interventions that may be required. For example, teachers will have "next day access to aggregate reports of student performance" instead of waiting days, weeks, or months. This will provide teachers with the information to design and implement interventions that will immediately address student needs.

Although a plan summary is presented, as described the plan does not meet the definition of a high-quality, comprehensive, detailed plan that will support project efficacy. Data from the "district report card" is "reviewed and discussed publicly"; however, how the discussions will inform project improvement and continuation plan modifications is unclear. Without a specific, defined plan to analyze and determine what data will be used to inform specific project components, continuous improvement strategies design and implementation may be delayed and investments inefficiently utilized, resulting in negative impact to the overall project and student progress.

As described, the plan of action includes a timeline limited to "monthly" and one "weekly" time period for 2014 only. Although deliverables are described as ensuring technology supported, data based assessment of the project is continuous throughout the grant period and "leading indicators of success" will be used to monitor progress, the deliverables are generic and limited to "Monthly Report of Progress" and a roster of groups of stakeholders. How the leading indicators of success will be analyzed and applied to a plan of continuous improvement is not adequately defined. Although timelines are modified throughout projects, clearly defined, detailed deliverables for Year 1 and informative Years 2-4 timelines need to be more clearly aligned to project objectives and outcomes. This will more likely result in internal and external stakeholder access to information about the efficiency of investments of funds and resources for technology, professional development, personnel, and other project expenditures.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The plan to ensure ongoing communication includes dissemination of information through multiple venues to promote two-way communication between internal and external stakeholders. Stakeholders will be able to access and provide information through the LEA website, social media, required Board of Education meetings, parent meetings, and other communication formats; the plan intends to "harness the knowledge and wisdom" of stakeholders.

Not found in this section is a high-quality, in-depth plan to ensure ongoing communication and engagement of internal and external stakeholders. Absent is an explanation how what may be an enormous amount of data and information will be sorted and filtered, as well as how a determination will be made about which data and stakeholder feedback are relevant to project modification and improvement. For example, there is not an explanation how parent e-mails, technology fairs and districtwide competitions, and bulletins on regional broadcast channels will produce stakeholder feedback. Missing is a plan to solicit qualitative and quantitative input from stakeholders. Without a clearly defined, high-quality, two-way communication plan, the project is less likely to maintain stakeholder support and buy-in, which is critical to project success.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A rationale is provided for each of the 13 performance measures for students in grades 6-12. The selected performance measures are based on the need to "aggressively address school behaviors" in order to maximize student progress, achievement, and document the efficacy of disciplinary tiered interventions. The Theory of Action is designed to utilize common data sets, common curricula and resources, and expanded capacity of teachers and leaders to "optimize student learning".

Somewhat confusing is the introduction of school behaviors for what appears to be the basis for selection of performance measures. Two frameworks are not defined; therefore, their connection to student behaviors and performance measures is not evident. Not found in this section is a plan to improve performance measures if they are insufficient to assess student achievement and project implementation progress.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

An evaluation plan with timeline, data indicators for analysis, deliverables, and responsible parties is aligned to project budget categories. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analyzed to determine project progress and efficacy. As described in this section and presented in an Evaluation Plan table, the plan is somewhat vague, lacking sufficient detail and rigor. For example, the data indicators for Equipment are maintenance and use records; however, what

specific information will be collected is not defined. Surveys are the data indicators for Supplies; however, the type of surveys is not described.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed budget for investment of RTT-D grant funds appears to be realistic and sufficient to support activities designed to achieve objectives. Allocations are supported by a rationale and some include the cost basis for each budget item. Overall, RTT-D funds investments are aligned to goals and objectives. A list of partnership opportunities is included; however, not clearly defined is how those opportunities will directly address project achievement of objectives. It is unclear how community partner funds and resources will be evaluated for effective investment.</p> <p>The overall budget summary appears in Table 3-1: Project-Level Budget Summary Table. Not found in this section is a separate cost breakdown by budget category for external matching funds and/or in-kind resources that will be invested during and after the grant period. In this section, some expenditures lack a clear cost basis or explanation how allocations are estimated. It is difficult to determine if those allocations will be adequate to fund one-time investments, as well as ongoing operational and potential expansion needs. For example, costs are estimated for "Classroom Technology Tools" without specifically identifying some of the types of tools and expected service use time; an estimate of the numbers of students, teachers, or other users who may be expected to utilize the tools; and an estimated number of specific items (e.g., computers, software) and cost per item gathered from price quotes from a vendor(s) to support the investment estimate.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Beyond the project's major investments for four years during the grant period, sustainability will focus on organization restructuring and prioritization of financial needs; maximizing and sharing personnel expertise; ongoing training of teachers, principals, and other key personnel; continual data system improvements, expansion, and access; and other identified key components of the project. Based on expected success of the project, sustainability will rely on teacher and leader teams who continue to promote and model teaching excellence; student and parent support with current prioritized funding; a focus on sustaining a new and revitalized school culture; and coordinated use of resources developed during the project. The applicant intends to search for funding streams that will support continuation of project level investments.</p> <p>The LEA describes a contingency plan for sustainability if ongoing revenue and/or resource streams cannot be secured. The LEA will, at minimum, prioritize and rank order key components of the project that will be supported with limited funds and resources if additional revenue and resource streams beyond federal and state allocations cannot be secured. Not addressed in this section is how the applicant will evaluate and document productivity and outcomes supported by post-grant investments.</p> <p>Although a post-grant period 3-year estimated budget is not included in this section, possible funding sources are identified and aligned to post-grant activities. Federal Title I and Title II funds and state general funds are listed as the primary sources to support sustainability, with continued support from a partner foundation that provides scholarships for students entering postsecondary institutions. The applicant intends to search for private and corporate funds during the project and post-grant period. Not provided in this section is an adequate outreach plan to specific private and corporate partners that may be solicited if reliance on continued federal and state funds is inadequate at a level needed for sustainability. As described in this section and documented with numerous letters of support from educators and community stakeholders, the LEA has widespread support for the project. Not evident are commitments from stakeholders to invest funds and/or resources beyond the grant period.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes six diverse, key partners that will contribute to the expected success of the RTT-D project. A foundation currently provides scholarships to students enrolled in college and is one of two partners that will continue support throughout the grant project. The other partners provide a diverse array of services for students and families. For example, the community college provides a bridge for services that may not be available in the secondary schools. A nationally recognized behavioral health services non-profit addresses substance abuse prevention and treatment and is a partner with the criminal justice system to provide Teen Court, an alternative to the traditional court system. A family resource center provides services and support to immigrant families and provides among its programs, GED attainment, kindergarten readiness, health evaluations, and employment connections. Another partner provides social and emotional education services. A new health center will be built on the high school campus and is expected to open in 2015.

Six population-level desired results for students that align with and support the broader RTT-D proposal include both educational and family and community support outcomes. The desired results are aligned to project goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

Partners will collaborate to provide services, act in an advisory capacity, and exchange data (as allowable and appropriate) in order to maximize student progress and health. Attendance and graduation rates, college enrollment, school suspensions, and effective parent involvement data may inform partners where the greatest needs exist and for which student subpopulations to target resources.

Integration of partner services with the RTT-D project is expected to produce positive outcomes that enhance and provide an avenue for successful project results. For example, fewer disciplinary issues may occur as a result of partner interventions. Student attendance may increase, which can result in more successful personal and academic progress and increased student achievement. Increased achievement may transfer to an increase in graduation rate and college enrollment.

The collaboration between the LEA and is intended to build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of students that are aligned with the LEA and partner goals for improving the education and family and community supports; expand the perspective of teachers and leaders through collaborative information dissemination and decision-making; and building capacity. Partner contributions and data sharing will inform project scale-up to include all five elementary schools; address parent and community issues that are barriers to full participation in student and school success; and integrate services to ensure all student needs are addressed.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant comprehensively addresses capacity building based on the core educational assurance areas to create student personalized learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. Through the personalization of strategies, use of technology tools, and access to supports for students and educators that are aligned with Common Core State Standards, LEA and state assessments, and college and career ready graduation requirements, the applicant described how a focused approach to substantive districtwide improvement is expected accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning. By meeting the academic, social, emotional, cultural, health, and language needs of each student, the project is designed to remove barriers that decrease the value of education and instead allow students and teachers to focus on ambitious and feasible education priorities. Through collaborative teams of teachers who complete professional development and support and mentor each other, instructional practices are expected to be improved and refined to meet the needs of individual students and streamline teaching. The expanded use of technology for teaching, learning, and parent and other stakeholder involvement is expected to maximize resource investment and result in a decrease in achievement gaps across student groups, as well as increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Total	210	154
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