



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0085TX-1 for Edinburg Consolidated Ind. School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, although its attention to the first core educational assurance area (adoption of standards) is too limited. Thus accounting for the lack of attention in this regard it deserves a moderate/high score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The district pays particular attention to one of the most important core assurance areas - teacher quality. It states that ensuring high quality teachers is the anchor to its plan and demonstrates a commitment (e.g. developing talent with mentors, etc.). The district also closely links student data as a means to improve quality, also a core area. - The approach is credible because of its focus on improving teacher quality and linking it to data, both core assurance areas. - The classroom experience is described well (e.g., students will be allowed to interact with peers, develop a "love" of learning). 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(A)(2).</p> <p>The district sets forth a process for selection of schools, however, it is not as clear in that it confuses selection for implementation and the actual activities it intends to administer. In other words, the description of a <u>process</u> that would account for selection of particular schools is not stated. In other words, the applicant could have included a more thorough breakdown of the schools that may have been targeted for recruiting teachers to participate in the educator reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The list is provided <u>See(A)(2)(b)</u> although it is not easily locatable - it appears after (A)(3). - If the applicant intends to have all students participating then all the high-needs students will be included. - The application also describes that actual training (e.g. 4 Day Professional Development) that will occur, however, this question really concerns the selection of schools in the grant. Again, the distribution of teachers selected among the various schools is not spelled out. Rather the district will have "270" teachers participating or 12% of the teachers in the district will be recruited from every grade level. Yet, it is unclear how they will be recruited and whether they will be distributed evenly among the grades and subjects. Some subjects may warrant participation from a disproportionate number of teachers (e.g, 8th grade math, versus art) 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant should be commended for its commitment to developing high-quality teachers. In the prior section the applicant does set forth a specific number of teachers over the 4 year timeline that will be included in its teacher reform initiative. To some extent, however, the scaling up into <u>meaningful</u> reform is lacking. Specifically, the district does not set forth an approach that guarantees that, as the program is implemented, the district is seeking out its most talented and promising individuals. Similarly, the plan is not clear as to whether there will be preference to certain schools in the initial</p>		

phases and then how the teachers will be dispersed among all the participating schools.

Thus, the applicant sets forth a plan to scale up the improvement of the teacher effectiveness. However, because it lacks consideration of the selection of teachers (in terms of talent) and their distribution among the district, translation into "meaningful reform" is not entirely clear. Thus, a moderate score is warranted.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The vision - transforming classrooms and personalizing instruction - will likely result in achieving the goals set forth by the district. However, the district does not sufficiently address subparts (b)(c) and (d), see below, warranting a medium score.

(a) The goal of 8% improvement on standardized tests over 4 years is an achievable goal. However, the achievement gap goals could be more ambitious.

(c) The goals here are not at ambitious. For instance, the district suggests that it will improve its graduation rate by .5% in the economically disadvantaged category (from 2014-2015). Over the term of the grant, the rate would improve from 85.9 to 89%. Over four years that is a very small improvement, especially given the district's suggestion that its reform will have a great impact on teachers delivering curricula aligned to college and career ready standards.

(b) (d) Indeed, the applicant's plan calls for lock-step improvement in each subgroup, thus it does little to deal with achievement gaps (e.g., at the beginning and end of the grant the achievement gap in Alg 1 between white and ELL students *remains* 36%).

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The school district is large, but on the whole, appears to have a track record of making improvements and achieving success. However, their success in achieving ambitious reforms, as noted below, make this a moderate/high score

(a) The majority of schools appear to have met the standards, and some with several distinctions, under state's accountability system. The data provided suggests that they have consistently fared well since 2010. Although it is difficult to discern how the achievement gap has been narrowed. That said, the district does appear to be making progress in the area of HS graduation (e.g., 3.8% increase since last year versus the state increase of 1.6%).

(b) The district notes that it has received grants to implement small learning communities in two poor performing schools. However, while they have implemented the grants, the application does not sufficiently address whether the reforms, to the extent they can be considered ambitious, have been achieved. Thus, although the grants are a sign that the district had a proposal that was found acceptable by a granting agency, the data are lacking with respect to whether the reforms in those schools have been achieved, thus calling into question the extent to which there is a clear record of success, as required under this subpart.

(d) The district makes this available in meaningful ways (e.g., superintendent roundtables discussing data with parents and seeking their suggestions)

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has a state report (AEIS) that they assert has the required information under (a)-(d) and appears to do this. However, compliance with state regulations demonstrates the minimum, not necessarily a high level of transparency.

However, in addition, the district holds public forums discussing its budget and appears to make use of the internet and social media to describe other events occurring in the district.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district's position here is vague (e.g., it asserts that it will continue to "comply with" state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements) and is limited to a reference to a piece of legislation HB5 that they contend requires them to give more opportunities for students to meet standards and graduation requirements. This apparently does free up district autonomy to meet state mandated graduation requirements and thus is one condition allowing for autonomy. Yet a more complete discussion, if possible, of statutory or regulatory authority that grants district's autonomy would be appropriate. Thus, a low/mid score is warranted.

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

15

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district deserves a moderate/low score because

- It adequately describes its development of the proposal including the stated stakeholders. (e.g., starting with roundtables soliciting and considering opinions).
- However, the applicant is deficient in provided evidence in letters, as they were not included in the materials reviewed, but the applicant did state that they received some (although they are limited as only 2).
- Although TX does not have collective bargaining, it is not clear through provided evidence that the teachers from the participating schools reached the threshold See(a)(ii) (requiring at least 70% of teachers to support proposal).

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1)(a)

The district has a promising approach to engage students in their learning (e.g., Common Instructional Framework, small learning groups.). However, it is not clear the extent to which these efforts have a direct link to (a)(ii). That said, the facilitation plans suggested by the districts are unique ways in addressing (iii). The relation to different cultures is broad and general lacking specifics. See (iv) (requiring access to diverse culture, etc.). Moreover, the applicant's connection to (v) is conclusory. In other words, the implementation of small learning groups, or common instructional framework will not necessarily lead to promotion of the objectives set forth in section (v).

(b)

The district has throughout the application demonstrated a commitment to personalizing instruction through facilitation plans, etc. and already uses a number of high-quality approaches that are considered "best practices" (Dufor) and use of portfolios and rubrics, providing useful data and feedback. However, statements regarding the use of technology are vague and do not demonstrate an approach to learning (e.g., "Virtual and long distance learning will become a norm.") In terms of high quality plan (timelines, etc.) this statement is weak. The application notes several recovery and remediation programs already initiated (eg. ACT-EXPLORE) to assist high-needs students.

On the whole, the district demonstrates a use of a number of promising educational ideas. However, two criticisms are warranted. First, elements of a high-quality plan are lacking (e.g., the CIF is noted as something that can be "scaled up" but the timelines and deliverables are lacking in detail at least in this subsection). Second, the subpart requires some input from the parents and details of experiences of students is lacking. Thus, a moderate score is warranted.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has a number of promising ideas. However, it lacks a few specifics required under a high-quality plan, thus, warranting a moderate score.

(a) The district should be commended for its work in this area and its apparent commitment to improving teacher effectiveness and personalize learning and including elements of a high quality plan.

- The district sets forth a clear and quantifiable plan for implementation (28% of teachers participating in the first year) and engaging educators in a 5-day training. The institute incorporates a number of best practices (mentoring).

- However, some of the discussion is general and lacking the details required of a high-quality plan (e.g., key deadlines and specifics). See e.g., ("District will develop performance measures").

(b).The district notes that it contracts with an outside collaborative to provide data and also notes that it must tap into this data in more useful ways. However, as to the specifics of a high quality plan are lacking this regard (e.g., the deadlines, specific deliverables leveraged from Eduphoria Aware). The description of Eduphoria is too general o sufficiently comply with this subpart. See(b)(ii) (noting that there should be evidence of "high-quality" resources).

(c) The system for evaluation (PDAS) sounds promising and includes important domains to assess teachers (it includes links to teacher effectiveness and individual student performance. The district asserts that the PDAS system and evaluation is "Extensive" but it does not provide details about how it is so, other than it can be used to non-renew a teacher which is the last objective of an evaluation system. The first is to promote capacity. In other words, the use of the evaluation to continuously improve, as required under this section, is missing.

(d) The statements here are conclusory - 100% of teachers will have the resources, etc. to implement a high-quality plan. Yet, as noted above, the specifics outling some of these elements are lacking. See comments re (b).

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:		
<p>A moderate/low score is warranted here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The district is reorganizing its central office and adding two assistant superintendents. However, to the extent this reorganization reflects a high quality plan is not apparent (e.g., the new superintendents will be added for "academic and technology support." A further delineation of this (e.g., clear responsibilities, deliverables) of these and the remaining central staff would be helpful. <u>See (a)</u>(requiring the organization of LEA central office). - The district has building level teams (in each school_ that will, according to the district, have sufficient flexibility and control to assist in making reform and have control over, according to the district, schedule, budgets, personnel decisions, etc. <u>See (b)</u>. - The district 's application relative to (c) focuses on teacher use and development of alternative assessments and journals in (c) and (d). But again, the specifics are lacking (e.g., when are journals or portfolios used? all the time?) - The district should be commended for its specifics regarding technology.(e) However, it is not clear how this use benefits the specific subgroups mentioned in this part of the application. <p>As discussed, a number of elements and specifics required of a high quality plan are lacking, <u>See e.g.,</u> comments related to (e), warranting a moderate to low score.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district has demonstrated a commitment to using technology and they should be commended for this. However, elements of a high-quality plan to ensure that all students have access to these resources is lacking, as required under (a). For instance the district does suggest that it will make available mobile classrooms for schools without adequate technology, yet specifics are lacking (timelines, responsible persons, frequency of access).</p> <p>The plan has more concrete ideas in (b), making available of technical support. However, it is unclear to what extent parents will have appropriate levels (e.g., the district notes it will have "awareness meetings" but this is questionable as to how this ensure the appropriate level of support, as required by the application). as required under (c).</p> <p>The district's data systems (ITCCS) may not be interoperable and seem to hold mostly student/instructional data, not human resource data, required under (d).</p> <p>Primarily because the elements of high quality plans are lacking, the score should be moderate.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has identified key stakeholders (Program Assistants, Building Leadership), processes (interview, site visits), and appear to propose timelines (e.g., every 6 months will make readjustments, weekly administrator meetings, quarterly reports to the superintendent from the RTTT-D Program Director) consistent with a high-quality plan requirements to implement a rigorous improvement process. Thus, a high score is warranted. Significantly, the applicant suggests that the process will be used in an iterative way -- in other words, the feedback will be meaningful.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district deserves a moderate/high score here. The application makes note of a number of mediums that can be used effectively (e.g., email newsletters, public forums, roundtables). These are promising, however, elements of a high quality plan (frequency of these is not noted, for instance) are missing..</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Some of the performance measures are certainly important (e.g., standardized scores.) Yet the application lacks a specific discussion regarding its rationale, see (a) for selecting the measure. Moreover, the specifics and processes of reviewing these performance measures are lacking (e.g., "RTT-D Staff will guide the process as warranted by data). <u>See (b)(c)</u>. (sections requiring how the data will be used to measure and provide feedback in meaningful ways).</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Again, the rigor of the evaluation plan is questionable. The application speaks in generalities (E.g., district will participate in "any national evaluation of the program ... are consistent with plans to conduct a rigorous national evaluation of the program and of the specific solutions and strategies"). This is a circular approach to the question and lacks attention to components of a high quality plan.</p> <p>Importantly, and the reason that the district should receive a high score here is that the applicant does set forth those elements elsewhere in the application. <u>See (E)(3)</u>(defining the roles of various district leaders, stakeholders, and timelines for feedback and improvement). Yet, the <u>investment evaluation</u> is missing, thus warranting a reduction.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget does indicate that the district will use its own money for a number of indirect costs. (c)(ii).</p> <p>The narrative lacks sufficient discussion of its rationale. The table does have a column describing the tools/resources, but the reason for these are not supported sufficiently.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has developed a budget to sustain the grant. However, the budget does not include expenditures for</p>		

technology/equipment in the three years after the grant. Given the tech focus and need for data, this may call into question the sustainability, at least as it is presented in the narrative.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Not addressed.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The district has met this for a number of reasons, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Its commitment to developing teacher quality. Indeed, the plan is anchored in improving teacher quality. It has called for using its evaluation system (PDAS) to improve quality, developing effective teachers and pairing them in the district (INSPIRE program). School leaders, such as principals, have been placed on growth plans and improvement plans to improve their capacity. - The governance structure accounts for creating building level teams, teachers to use data to develop personalized instruction. - The district has set a number of goals to address achievement for its subgroups - The district does have access to data to drive instruction (EDU PHORIA). 		

Total	210	118
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0085TX-2 for Edinburg Consolidated Ind. School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a generally comprehensive reform vision by providing an overall theme that will		

provide the underlining reform plan- that is, by articulating that in order to change student achievement outcomes the plan focuses heavily on transforming teaching. The plan presented is comprehensive in that it addresses all areas needed to accomplish the reform vision including ongoing professional development, a focus on data, a focus on personalized learning plans, and providing teachers with motivations. Further, the plan puts forth a credible approach to achieving reform including a recognition that the social and emotional support piece is critical to success. The plan will be rolled out to 270 teachers the first year and increase proportionally in years 2 and 3 which shows the district has a realistic approach in understanding sustained reform is not achieved quickly. The applicant addresses the four education assurance areas by adopting standards and assessments, focusing on data, highlighting educators as integral to the reform plan, and focusing on low-performing schools to serve students whose current achievement level is below where it needs to be. The plan discusses the need to begin personalized learning as early on as pre-k. The plan also recognizes the importance of engaging with stakeholders to build wide support within the community. However, the response is vague in its description of what specifically the classroom experience will be for students in the district. For example, the plan states students will have 'a-ha!' moments but does not describe how the plan focuses on personalized learning to achieve the goal. More description is needed of what the classroom experience will be like for students and how a personalized learning environment is felt by students in a meaningful way. Due to the strong response on the first two selection criteria but relatively weak response on the last criteria, the response scores in the medium range.

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

10

3

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear description of how the reform plan will focus on teaching first and foremost as a key lever in achieving the goals of the reform plan. The responses include the number of participating students as well as how each phase of the plan will increase the number of participating students and teachers by year. However, the response fails to address the first two selection criteria: why the decision was made to include all schools in the district. The accompanying tables and data show the breakdown of subpopulations by school but again, no rationale is given as to why each school was selected. This is a critical piece of tied to implementation because it is directly linked to how the applicant envisions the plan can be successfully integrated into all district schools. The decision to include all schools in the plan is not supported by information as to why this decision was made. These important elements to implementation remain largely unaddressed by the response and therefore the response scores in the low range.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The response provides a clear response articulating how the reform plan will be brought to scale in the entire districts for all teachers and students including a phase-in approach, human capital capacity, and a comprehensive awareness campaign to ensure buy-in. Further, the response articulates how reform will be achieved throughout the whole district through the use of 'facilitation plans' that will guide personalized learning for all students including use of a data system to measure student achievement, teacher performance, and personalized student data. However, the reform plan articulates falls short of being 'high-quality' in that it lacks the detail necessary to support the applicant's position that reform will be implementation and sustained across the entire district. For example, the reform plans require a very specific plan which the response fails to articulate. While general goals are discussed (for example, the success of an awareness campaign) little detail is provided that provides and describes a meaningful plan that will be translated to district-wide change. The response is general therefore calling into question the quality of the plan to bring reforms to scale so that impact is felt in every school and for every student therefore a low-range score is most appropriate.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response articulates clear goals for improved student outcomes that link directly to outcomes on assessments, closing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates. For example, the applicant projects that over the grant term plus one year, the increase in overall students achievement will be 8%. Further, achievement gaps will be closed by 2%. However, the applicant does not provide the critical components necessary to result in each of the areas. The candidate does articulate goals but there is little substance as to why the goals are ambitious and realistic. For example, the response indicates that 90% of graduating seniors will graduate from programs of higher education as a result of the reform plan. However, the response provides no contextual information or supporting details as to why this goal is reasonable, aggressive, and achievable. The same is true for all stated goals within the response. As a result, the response scores in the low range.</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	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The response articulates several metrics which are tracking or have been tracked to show a clear record of success within the district. The applicant has been recognized for innovative changes in literacy from birth-12. The district has exceeded state standards under the state’s accountability rating system. Clear evidence is provided on how the district has addressed raised student achievement through improvements in college entrance exams, graduation rates, and college enrollment. The applicant provides details on specific data for each of the metrics. For example, the attendance rate shows a clear record of improvement above and beyond the state average (similar evidence for Drop Out rates). The responses addresses the second selection criteria by indicating that reforms in the district’s low performing schools through the implementation of Vision Academy. The applicant provides an overview of how data is available to parents and other stakeholders but acknowledges there is room for substantial growth in this area due the limitations of their current system. Given the complete and thorough response to all selection criteria the response has received a score in the high range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a detailed overview of the ways in which information is shared with the public regarding personnel salaries and non-personnel budgetary expenditures. Strategies to increase level of transparency include extension of technology to households who do not have the capability to access information as well as parent trainings how to use data but the response does not detail how those trainings will be structured, when they will occur, or what types of technology will be extended to households. The response does provide clear evidence of how the state education agency makes public summary data. On the district-level the applicant provides evidence of systems and processes that allow all stakeholders to access information including receiving a superior rating on the state system School FIRST for their work to promote public dissemination of data to in-district stakeholders and information housed on the district website. As a result, the response scores in the high range but not a perfect score given the lack of specificity around how access will be increased in households with little access to technology and how parent trainings will be structured and delivered to increase transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The response demonstrates evidence of the necessary conditions to support the reform plan as well as sufficient autonomies given by the appropriate authorizes to execute the plan. The applicant's reform vision aligns with recent changes to the state's assessments. However, the response lacks details as to how autonomies will be used to successfully implement personalized learning environments for all students. For example, the response references a change to state law (HB5) requiring schools provide increased opportunities for students to pursue individual career pathways but does not elaborate on how the new law will be implemented in the district. The response fails to make the connection between ample conditions and autonomy to support reforms with the actual reforms in the applicant's reform plan. As a result of providing a clear response but providing little detail on how the state context for implementation will be translated into the reform plan, the applicant scores in the low to mid range.

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

15

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant does provide evidence of support from the 'Goals Team' comprised of 40 members of the community including stakeholders there is little detail as to the recommendations of that Team as well as how the Team's feedback was used to develop the reform plan. Further, no details are provided regarding how the reform proposal was revised based on feedback from the Team or other stakeholders. In addition, the applicant fails to address major components of this select criteria. While the applicant references letters of support from stakeholders attached in an appendix, the letters have actually not been included. The response also fails to address either the lack of need to get approval for a local union (if none exists) or any approval from the local union (if one does exist). Given the general lack of detail and meaningful response to how feedback was used from stakeholders to develop the plan as well as failing to explicitly address the collective bargaining representation criteria, the response scores in the low range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates an overall reform plan that prioritizes improved learning and teaching through personalized learning environments for all students. The response provides a high quality plan for how students, with the support of parents and educators, will understand that learning is key to their long-term success. The responses provide details of the basic instructional framework (BIF) that will support student engagement. The response lays out a multi-layered approach to supporting students in the academic success including a focus on team work, writing, helping students understand how their prior knowledge is directly related to the curriculum. However, the response does not provide details as to how students' experiences will be directly related to college and career ready standards. The response does provide a strong response to how students will provided with deep learning experiences that are directly tied to their personal areas of academic interest. For example, traditional lesson plans will be revised to becomes personal facilitation plans that allows a teacher to guide learning, but the student to take the front seat on directing their own learning. In regard to exposure to diverse cultures and perspective, the response provides some evidence of how technology will be used to facilitate this exposure, but the response is not detailed in how specifically technology will be used. For example, the response indicates that technology will be enhanced in the classroom but does not provide examples as to how this will occur. Further, while the response states the plan will allow students to master critical skills in 'goal-setting, teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving' but does not elaborate in anyway how this will actually be accomplished leaving questions as to the

quality of the plan that will foster such skill building among students. The applicant response to part (b) of the selection criteria lays out a clear plan to focus on STEM based on the new state law, but fails to address how the plan will ensure each student will graduate on-time and college or career ready. While the response refers to instructional practices that are ‘high-quality’ and ‘research-based’ little specificity is given to how the instruction will be changed and actually felt by students. The responses refers to several pieces of credible research but does not provide specifics on how the research will be translated to changes in instruction. The applicant response does provide a clear strategy around how students will understand how to use the tools and resources available to them in order to track and manage their learning including support from support staff and engagement of external stakeholders. However, given the response to the other selection criteria is weak and lacks general specificity, the response scores in the low range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The response indicates an understanding if the basic need to provide teachers and staff with the resources critical to implementing the reform plan. This includes structuring staff to focus on Rttt-D activities and supporting professional development opportunities specifically for principals. Personalized learning environments will be supported by an inquiry-based approach that fosters critical thinking. Educators will be trained on the new approach during a 5 day training session where they will learn how to ask purposeful questions designed to gage whether students have ingested the material. The responses states that teachers will adapt content (selection criteria (aii) but the response does not provide a detailed overview of how the district will address challenges that may arise or how changes in instruction will actualized in the classroom. For example, the applicant states that ‘challenges will need to be overcome’ but the plan does include a discussion of anticipated challenges or how teaching will be changed based on response to these anticipated challenges. Similarly, in response to selection criteria (bi) the response states that the current data system, Euphoria Aware, will be restructured to house an early warning indicator system but little specificity is provided as to how the system will identify students and how the data will be sued to take steps to improve teacher effectiveness, school culture, or continuous school improvement. The response to selection criteria (bii) provides a strong rationale for the 5 day training for all educators will be designed to support increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps. This includes the sharing of best practices within staff, support provided to all educators from Rttt-D staff, and being sure teachers are kept apprised of relevant information throughout the duration of the reform plan and beyond. The response includes a description of the teacher evaluation system but does not include discussion or explanation of how the system will be used to specifically to help school leaders and school leadership teams to assess teacher effectiveness and take steps based in evaluation results. In addition, while the response discusses a plan whose stated goal is to increase the number of students who receive instruction for effective and highly effective teachers, the response is general and not reflective of a high quality plan likely to result in success because the response does not include examples of how effective teachers will be placed in hard-to-staff schools and subjects. Given a general lack of specificity on this selection criteria, the response earns a low range score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear overview of how school level teams will be structured to provide leadership in all schools (for example, all middle schools will have a 24 member leadership team and all high schools will have a 32 member leadership team) but the response provides no clear overview

of how the LEA central office will be structured or restructured to support services to all participating schools nor how the school level leadership teams will communicate. While the response does provide examples of how the current structure of one superintendent and three assistant superintendents will be restructured, there is no detail as to how this restructuring will support the plan nor how personalized learning will be at the center of the restructuring. In regards to student progress based on mastery as demonstrated through multiple ways (D1c & d) the response indicates teaching will be founded on inquiry based learning and mastery will be shown through meeting an intended learning outcomes but little detail is provided as to how intended learning outcomes will be developed or measured. A strong response is given in regards to the intention to provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students in that details are given on what technology will be available to all students in every classroom (3 unit work stations, i-Pad availability to students). Further, the response details training that all educators will receive on how to address the individual needs of ELLs, Special Education, and Gifted and Talented students. The district will use funds to update a facility to will be transformed into a center for educator trainings and a student enrichment center. Given strong response to some selection criteria and lack of detail provided on others, the response scores in the mid range.

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

10

9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The response provides a strong response regarding use of technology that will support all stakeholders in having accessing to tools and resources that will support implementation of the reform plan. For example, all classrooms will be equipped with work centers and mobile classrooms for students living in households that may not have access to technology will be used to increase assess. However, while teachers and students are included, a plan for access to parents and other stakeholders is largely left out of the response. Similarly, while a clear plan is presented for support intended to be provided to students and educators, no detail is provided on how other stakeholders will be given technical support. Selection criteria 'b' is given a stronger and more detailed response to how parents and students will be able to access data through online portals and how training will be provided online. The use and accessibility of interoperable data system that includes human resource data, student data, and budget data will be addressed through improvements to the two current systems (Euphoria and ITCCS). The response is strong earning a high range score.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a strong response indicating a high quality plan for how continuous improvement will be implemented so that all stakeholders can access information on the quality of investments both during and after the grant period. For example, weekly administrator meetings will focus on progress and the grant program assistant will disseminate information and data to stakeholders. Interim reviews will be help monitor progress towards goals. However, the applicant fails to address how on-going corrections will be made based on these feedback and communications. Though the overall response is strong, more detail is needed to support selection criteria requiring the applicant to articulate how corrections will be incorporated into the improvement process and timeline. Therefore the response scores in the mid high range.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The response provides multiple examples of how the applicant will communicate and engage with stakeholders to keep all affected parties apprised on progress and provide opportunities for feedback including newsletters, public forums, roundtable discussions, and in-person communication. As a result the response is strong and scores highly.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 While the response provides clear measures, not all the measures have goals (ie, information is missing in the tables) and the response does not provide any rationale for why measures were selected or how the measure will inform the plan or how the measure will be improved if it is not informing the plan. While goals are articulated in the table provided, the applicant does not provide any detail as to how the goals are ambitious or realistic. For example, the performance measure for increasing the number of high school students who are college and career ready increasing by 2 percent each year but no rationale is provided for why this a rigorous or realistic goal. As a result, the response scores in the low range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The response does not include details about or evidence of a high quality plan that is intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant in a robust way. For example, the response states that data collection and program design is consistent with plans to evaluate the program on a national level and that the applicant will comply with all local and state procedures but no district-specific plan is articulated nor even references. As a result the response scores in the very low range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The budget identifies all funds that will be used to support the project and all funds are reasonable and sufficient. For example, the budget provides allocations and line items for all the reform plan required programs/expenditures that have been previously discussed throughout the applicant including hiring of new staff, training costs, facilities improvements, and new technology. However the budget narrative the response does not include a thoughtful rationale for the amount of expenditures and does not identify funds that will be used as one-time investments versus those that will be incurred during and after the grant period. The overall weak response results in low score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 While the response discusses some aspects of long term sustainability of project goals including sustainable resources such as technology and training that will be integrated into teaching and learning, the response does not provide a comprehensive plan for how community leaders and other stakeholders will be invested in long-term success of the reforms. Further, no description is provided of how the application will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments. In addition, no budget is included for the three years after the grant term. As a result the response scores very low.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Applicant is not applying for the preference priority,		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The applicant has addressed how the proposed reform plan includes the adoption of standards and assessment that prepare students to compete in the work force including providing an inquiry-based teaching and learning plan. The reform plan articulates how it will build on the current data system (Euphoria) to make sure student and growth and success is measured and used as a tool for professional development. The reform plan includes a focus on training teachers and providing support to increase the effectiveness of the teaching workforce. The entire plan acknowledges that low achieving schools must be prioritized. A personal learning environment will be supported through technology and again, an inquiry based teaching and learning system. The goals of the plan include measures of growth in graduation rates as well. Overall the plan is coherent and comprehensive in its approach to fostering personalized learning environments for all students.		

Total	210	90
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0085TX-3 for Edinburg Consolidated Ind. School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The Applicant states that their comprehensive and coherent reform vision, "Empowering Our Students to be 21st Century Leaders," was developed as a result of feedback from meetings with community members and stakeholders; is aligned with recently adopted district mission and goals; and supports the focused reform of refining the delivery of instruction to meet the diverse educational needs of all of their students. The Applicant specifies ambitious and achievable district goals that frame the district's Vision 2020: A Plan of Excellence. These goals, which frame the district's Vision and Mission also frames their Blueprint for Success. These goals are integral to the Applicant's success in transforming the traditional classroom setting into personalized learning environments that actively and authentically engage students. The following are detailed descriptions of the Applicant's innovative reform goals including focused objectives for implementing reform: Goal 1-Excel in Academics and Ensure Equal Access		

Goal 2-Communicate and Connect with All Stakeholders

Goal 3- Innovate through Technology

Goal 4- Secure a Safe Learning Environment.

Goal 5- Develop and Retain Highly Quality Staff

Together these goals are ambitious yet achievable and they guide the Applicant's vision for reform.

The Applicant merely states that teachers need data that is readily available, is easy to understand, and can be relied upon for effective decision making; and for student achievement to occur, teachers must increase use of improved processes and implement more effective system designs for ongoing tracking and monitoring of student progress with personalized learning plans including a student interest survey, a student profile, self- created student goals, and teacher goals for the student; and a revamped grading system and policies to assess student learning.

Although data needs are identified, the Applicant inadequately ties these needs to the assurance requirements for data. Also, the Applicant states that the district uses data extensively; however most systems are independently managed and most of the reports provide static data that reflects test results. Although the Applicant acknowledges that their data systems are being improved for increased access to information that is important to parents, students, teachers, and staff, and the Applicant does not clearly explain whether they have the capability to receive or match student-level preschool-through-12th grade and higher education data.

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

10

7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's ambitious and achievable approach to implementation is to establish personalized learning environments (PLEs) in cohorts of teachers, which are focused on the implementation of research-based best practice strategies for inquiry based learning. The Applicant's focused approach to implementing its reform proposal appears feasible and will likely support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of that proposal.

(a) The Applicant states that a total of 44 schools and over 33,673 students will participate over the course of the 4-year grant period. In the first year, They estimate 270 teachers and 5,400 students will participate. The same applies to years two, three, and four. The district's approach to implementation is to establish personalized learning environments (PLEs) in cohorts of teachers. However, the Applicant provides insufficient details to explain the process used to select schools to participate and to ensure that the participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.

(b) The Applicant provides a list of schools that will participate in the grant activities. Evidence includes the detailed data charts that accompany the narrative for section criteria A.

(c) The Applicant provides the total number of students participating and schools as required by this criterion. Evidence includes the detailed data charts that accompany narrative for selection criterion A.

Full points are not awarded because the Applicant did not explain the process used to select schools to participate and to ensure that the participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements.

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Scale Up Initiatives

1. The Applicant states that the district is continuing the practices that have worked over the last few years of innovative change including **(1)** Pilot the program in manageable groups and phase it in over a period of time until 100% participation is reached, **(2)** Set the criteria, goals, and expectations at the onset to ensure teachers and their principals are aware of the commitment and implications resulting from their participation, **(3)** prepare a cohort of teachers to be the leaders of change and guide their colleagues through the process, **(4)** reward, incentivize, and compensate educators for increased responsibilities and for completion of assignments that are beyond the regular scope of their job, **(5)** have the tools and resources in place as well as the human support to facilitate immediate implementation of the strategies learned. This is a strong example of a scale up initiative.

2. The Applicant describes how the district plans to will change the way they instruct and assess the academic content in lesson plans. The process will include selecting highly effective teachers to participate in a summer initiative where highly effective teachers write the following year’s curriculum. As the district shifts to personalized learning, the lesson plans will transition into “facilitation plans” that allow teachers to use their creativity and flexibility. Teacher will have the freedom to adjust the instruction according to their assessment of student understanding. **Although transitioning from the Applicant’s current lesson planning format to facilitation plans to promote personalized learning is an appropriate example of a scale up initiative; in describing this initiative, the Applicant does not adequately describe a high quality plan as defined in this notice. High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. Also, the Applicant inadequately describes plans for how this initiative will support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.**

3. The Applicant describes how the district plans to improving their data systems and increasing data capability to design new methods for measuring teacher performance. Specifically, the Applicant plans to utilize RTT-D funds to assist the district in securing a data system that builds into it the four indexes the State of Texas implemented last school year in its campus and district accountability ratings. The current data system, Eduphoria Aware, supports the upload of district forms and individualized educational plans that can include the responses on student interest surveys. The Applicant reform plan focuses on the integration of its data systems to provide additional information about the student’s interests, needs, learning style, attendance, behavior, academics and interventions. **The Applicant clearly describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools, and will help the Applicant reach its outcome goals; however, the Applicant does not adequately provide a high quality plan as defined. High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.**

The Applicant describes three reform initiatives; however, for all three initiatives the Applicant does not include a high-quality plan (as defined) describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools (as defined). High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities. Although these initiatives are achievable the Applicant insufficiently describes how initiative one will help the applicant reach its outcome goal. Therefore, points in the medium range awarded.

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

The Applicant clearly describes their LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes. The Applicant’s ambitious and achievable vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitions yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed the State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup, for each participating LEA.

The following are examples of strong support for improving student outcomes:

(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth). Examples of supporting evidence of the likelihood of successfully improving student outcomes includes the following information provided charts reflecting the summative assessments being used (e.g., name of ESEA assessment or end-of-course test): 2013 State of Texas Assessment and Academic Readiness (STAAR) – End of Course (EOC) Assessment; Methodology for determining status (e.g., percent proficient and above). these assessments are indicators of the likelihood of successfully improving student outcomes.

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps (as defined).- The Applicant’s realistically plans to close achievement gaps by 2% in each of the four grant years in each subgroup evaluated by the State of Texas by having open access facilities where students can complete assignments. Supporting evidence of the likelihood of successfully improving student outcomes includes information reported on data charts provided.

(c) Graduation rates (as defined).- The Applicant specifies that over 80% of students will be graduating college and career ready by the Spring 2017 due to an increased number of learning opportunities in and out of the school environment. A table included of graduation rate projections supports the likelihood of successfully improving student outcomes.

(d) College enrollment (as defined) rates.- The Applicant predicts that participation in RTT-D’s reform will also result in over

90% of graduating seniors enrolling in two or four year college or university of their choice. Supporting evidence of the likelihood of successfully improving student outcomes is included in college enrollment charts.

(e) Postsecondary degree attainment - The Applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals for each participating LEA in postsecondary attainment. The Applicant reports that The University of Texas - Pan American, located in Edinburg Texas had a graduation rate of 42% for students who began their studies in 2005. Only 17% of students who began at this time earned their bachelor's degrees within four years. According to the NCES, the retention rate for full-time students who started in 2010 was 78%, and the retention rate for part-time students who started at this time was 54%. These are strong indicators of successfully improving student outcomes.

The Applicant clearly articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that ensures that students and educators have appropriate, continuous support that facilitates student learning outcomes and personal learning environments. The Applicant's sound history of success and innovative reform initiatives increases the likelihood of successfully implementing their vision of successfully improving student outcomes.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps (as defined), including by raising student achievement

The Applicant clearly and comprehensively describes a clear record of demonstrating success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching, including a description, charts or graphs, raw student data, and other evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability. For example, the district is known locally and statewide for its continued success in student academics, athletics, fine arts, and extra-curricular activities, technology integration, and career and technical programs, as evidenced by their recognition as one of thirty awardees in the State of Texas who is currently making innovative and reformative change in its literacy initiatives from Birth – 12th Grade. These practices clearly support the Applicant's goal of improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps.

Closing the Achievement Gap

The Applicant reports that in 2013, the district not only **Met Standards**, but also **exceeded the combined state's average** for the four target score by 18.25 points (50.25 – 68.5). **When compared to the state, the district exceeded the state's scores in Indexes 2, 3, and 4.** The following are strong examples of the district's results for each of the indexes that include the target score and the comparison of results at the state level:

- Index 1: Student Achievement (50) Edinburg CISD Score = 73 State Score = 77
- Index 2: Student Progress (21) Edinburg CISD Score = 35 State Score = 34
- Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps (55) Edinburg CISD Score = 78 State Score = 71
- Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness (75) Edinburg CISD Score = 88 State Score = 85

The Applicant provides detailed charts and data that demonstrate convincing evidence of the district's record of success over the past four years. These results appear reasonable as measures of the district's progress in advancing student learning and achievement as compared to the state's results. For example, Based on the 2013 STAAR ratings, 14 (34%) of district schools received at least one of three distinctions that are earned by meeting a set of performance indicators in each of the distinction categories. Twenty-four percent (24%) earned two distinctions, and six schools earned all three. These data elements clearly demonstrate the LEA success towards closing the achievement gap.

College Enrollment Rates

Texas students taking the ACT college admission test in 2013 hit a new high of 20.9 according to a report released by ACT. The composite scores for Texas White, Hispanic/Latino and African-American students are at all-time high, matching or exceeding national composite scores in each of those student groups. The ACT data show how the district continues to make steady progress in college and career readiness, validating district efforts to improve rigor in the classroom. The

Applicant also describes similar successes for improved student performance nationally for Hispanic/Latino students. These data clearly demonstrate the Applicant's clear track record of improving student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps in college enrollment.

High School Graduation Rates- The Applicant demonstrates a clear record of closing the achievement gap in high school graduation rates with convincing data supporting lower attendance rates, lower annual dropout rates, improved four year completion rate, and increased enrollment in and successful completion of advanced placement courses.

Achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its low-performing schools

To clearly address the needs of the lowest performing schools and their high-need students, the district applied for and received an Early College High School designation from the Texas Education Agency in spring 2012. The primary goal is to provide these high-need students with personalized learning support that will facilitate completion of their Texas High School graduation requirements while at the same time enroll and complete a rigorous course of study from South Texas College. The Applicant's comprehensive plans also include course offerings through concurrent enrollment at STC and/or UT Pan-American in the Career and Technical Education and Fine Arts disciplines (areas that address the academic, career, and social emotional learning of the high need students).

Make student performance data available

The Applicant clearly describes how parents and the community have access to all data that is approved for public viewing and its availability with instructions to access is communicated through multiple mediums. Examples include parent portals with systems and processes to keep parents informed of their child's academic progress; schools host various informational meetings during the school year as well as send numerous notices (in English and Spanish) to keep parent informed of the instruction and services that are available to them and their child. Although the district lacks interoperable data systems for measuring teacher effectiveness that is based on student gains or value added methods; the Applicant plans an upgrade with RTT-D funds.

Make student performance data (as defined in this notice) available to students, educators (as defined in this notice), and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services

The current Eduphoria Aware system provides data that measures teachers by the percent of students meeting standard on state and local assessments. Although the new accountability rating system now includes a performance rating for student progress, the data is available only for the school and district, and cannot be matched to the student's teachers. The Applicant's goal is to expand the data system with RTT-D funding.

Full points are awarded for this selection criterion because the Applicant clearly demonstrates a clear track record of success in the areas required in this selection criteria. The Applicant provides convincing evidence (i.e.. data, promising practices, effective strategies, including a description, charts or graphs, raw student data, and other evidence) to support their track record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Making Public A high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments

The Applicant states that various departments assist in assuring transparency in the district dissemination of information through audio, print, television, face-to-face, social media, and online. For example, the district makes web content available to the public regarding district initiatives, its progress towards meeting academic goals, financial status and progress, and showcasing students' talent and accomplishments. In addition the district Facebook and Twitter accounts are also maintained with current district events.

The district provides opportunities for parents to participate in the decision making process. The Applicant plans to use RTT-D funds to extend the technology resources to households that lack communication devices or internet accessibility to increase equity of the information and accessibility and feasibility of communication with the district and its schools.

Two main summary reports are used in the State of Texas. The Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) system is mostly related to academic performance and college and career readiness indicators. The Public Education Information System (PEIMS) is used to maintain student demographic data. These two reports were used in the completion of the data tables required of this application. They comprise a District Summary Report and individual campus reports with like information for each report type.

Salaries

The Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) system also provides average actual salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, (b) average actual salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (c) average actual salaries at the school level for teachers only; and (d) average actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

A high level of transparency in LEA investments

The Applicant describes how transparency of their investments and finances are available through the School FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) reports public school district financial accountability ratings, as authorized by Senate Bill (SB) 218 of the 77th Legislature in 2001. Two measurement vehicles, the Annual Financial Report (AFR) and the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), supply School FIRST with most of the measurement data from which the ratings are calculated.

Full points are not awarded because the Applicant does not fully explain how the LEA provides transparency by school and actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, which is required by this selection criteria.

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

The Applicant describes how their RTT-D grant's proposal in aligned with the reform vision in the State of Texas for college and career readiness and particularly with the reform vision at the district level. For example, the state assessments were changed from testing minimum knowledge and skills to a more rigorous and challenging assessments that tests for higher order thinking skills and application of processes. The district has made changes in the way teachers teach and provided some training that included strategies for differentiation, scaffolding, and levels of questioning.

The Applicant states that the recent passing of HB5 provides LEAs with regulations on high school graduation. It requires LEAs to provide more flexibility and choice for students to pursue a rigorous course of study. For example, students will be given opportunities to select the career pathway of their choice and take courses that meet state standards for academic credit and also prepare them for the career of their choice when they graduate.

By participating in the RTT-D grant, the Applicant intends to continue these initiatives and will continue to comply with State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements, using RTT-D to meet the required expectations of HB5 with increased effectiveness and timeliness of implementation.

Full points are awarded because the Applicant adequately describes successful conditions for implementing reform including changes in assessments, changes in the way teachers teach, and the provision of HB 5 providing more flexibility and choice for students to pursue a rigorous course of study. Together these initiatives adequately reflect successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements for the Applicant to implement the personalized learning environments described in the their proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	3
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

The Applicant describes meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. The Applicant stated that the development and planning for this proposal was a collaborative process with the Superintendent's Vision, Mission, and Goals Team, which consists of 40 members representing the community and included parents, students, teachers, principals, City Council members, Board Members, business leaders, and key administrative personnel. Key administrative personnel facilitated the meetings and allowed every committee member to express their own vision of leadership and student success. The District began planning and developing the Vision 2020: Plan of Excellence in February 2013 and is continuing its formation through November 2013 when the Campus and District Site-based Decision Making committees give it their final approval. In total, over 100 stakeholders invested time and effort to produce a plan that will support the district vision as we work in partnership with Race to the Top Districts to educate and prepare students for college and career in the 21st century.

Although the Applicant states that evidence **of this support is attached hereto as Appendix I**, Page 9, the application did not include letters of support/ memoranda of understanding (MOUs) from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education. The Applicant indicated that letters of support from Mayors are included; however, these documents were not in the Applicant's proposal.

The Applicant's LEAs is without collective bargaining representation. The Applicant provided a pie chart showing evidence that at least 70 percent

of teachers from participating schools (as defined in this notice) support the proposal. However, the chart does not clearly show results from participating schools.

Points in the low range are awarded because the Applicant does not provide convincing evidence of key stakeholder support.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

C (1) Learning

The Applicant’s ambitious and achievable vision for improving learning and teaching in a personalized learning environment (PLE) that supports college and career ready graduates includes focusing on providing learning experiences that will authentically engage students in academics and that are taught and supported by highly effective teachers who are attuned to student academic interests and abilities. The primary goal of the reform is to give students the opportunity to participate in deep, inquiry-based learning experiences that result in mastery of critical academic content and that enables students to pursue a rigorous course of study to ensure college and career readiness. For example, the learning environment will provide opportunities for students to learn through problem and project based activities. Key to the likelihood of success of the Applicant’s proposed reform is teacher training that appropriately focuses on preparing teachers with tools to authentically and effectively engage students.

C (1)(a) i, ii

The Common Instructional Framework (CIF) is the basis for the delivery of student services and personal and academic growth. The Framework has been implemented with the Early College High Schools with great success and has sufficient simplicity to scale it up across the district. The Common Instructional Framework is effective for increasing student engagement and facilitating higher order thinking. It creates support systems for study and helps students gain academic self-sufficiency.

Although the applicant clearly explains why the components the Common Instructional Framework (CIF) are effective for increasing student engagement and facilitating higher order thinking, the Applicant does not adequately explain how the CIF model supports parents and educators, and all students in understanding that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. Also, the Applicant does not adequately link the CIF model to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. **The Applicant does not connect the CIF model to helping students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals.**

C (1) (a) iii -Are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest

The Applicant’s ambitious and achievable plan is to provide opportunities for students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest by changing the lesson plan format and the delivery of the lesson plan format from traditional to the facilitation plan format. In the proposed facilitation plan format the teacher becomes a “Facili-pal.”

C (1)(a) iv, v - (iv)

The Applicant clearly describes how the district is working to increase accessibility and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning by providing technology-rich classrooms. The district is shifting from a print-rich environment to technology enhanced classrooms, which will increase opportunities to extend student learning experiences beyond the physical classroom setting. The Applicant plans to support their proposed technology-rich environment with RTT-D funds. The clear benefit of providing technology-rich learning environments is to ensure students gain access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives. Focused district planning is likely to ensure success in providing educational experiences that include opportunities for students to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

C(1)(b) i- (b) With the support of parents and educators (as defined in this notice), each student has access to—

The Applicant clearly describes how the academic requirements in HB5 aligns to the district’s RTT-D’s proposal and how it provides for a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development that is likely to successfully enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals for college and career.

For example, students may earn an endorsement by successfully completing curriculum requirements for the endorsement (one additional year in math and in science and two additional electives) and enrolls in STEM related courses. Those courses include: Science, Environmental Science, Technology and Computer Science, Engineering, and Advanced Math. Students achieve their goal to graduate on time and college and career ready

because the same guidance counselor is assigned to them when they enter high school as 9th grade freshmen until they graduate in 12th grade. Clearly HB5 provides a reasonable framework for the district to successfully implement a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

C(1)(b) ii- A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments

The Applicant clearly describes how the district has used a variety of high quality and research-based best practices for its instructional approaches and environments, including the works of highly respected researchers, authors, educators, and experts in various fields that impact the education system and learning processes such as Robert J. Marzano (lesson plans/formative assessments), Carol Ann Tomlinson (differentiated instruction), Eric Jensen (brain based instruction), Art Costa(cognitive coaching), and Robert Dufour (professional learning communities).

Although the district has integrated many of these strategies, the Applicant reports that reform is still needed in the effective use of instructional approaches that center on conceptual knowledge, academic language problem solving, creativity, innovation, critical thinking skills, technology, student-led learning environments, authentic assessments, proper feedback, and student's taking charge of their learning.

The Applicant plans to utilize a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments to reform these practices including portfolios, journals, rubrics, feedback, and authentic assessments will be the major reform for how students will take charge of their learning. Also, the Applicant plans to focus on training teachers to develop learning targets and create rubrics for each activity that supports an authentic assessment of student learning, including feedback for learning that is based on a predetermined learning target. The Applicant's plan for reform is ambitious and achievable and is likely to help improve student learning through these high-quality instructional approaches and environments.

C(1)(b) iii, (iii)

The Applicant's ambitious and achievable plan to provide high-quality content, including digital learning content as appropriate, is through technology-enhanced classrooms. Increased access to technology will facilitate teacher success in increasing rigor in the classroom and in challenging the student's creativity and problem solving skills. For example, a technology-enhanced classroom will provide increased opportunities for students to study, research, and present solutions to real-world problems, making virtual and long distance learning a conduit for providing high quality content. **Although the Applicant clearly described the benefits of technology-enhanced classrooms, the Applicant did not clearly connect using digital learning content to aligning with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.**

C (1)(b) iv (iv) Ongoing and regular feedback, including, at a minimum—

The Applicant documents the district's regular use of ongoing and regular feedback, by citing examples of how students have created goal-accounting templates (similar to K-W-L charts) so that they can track their daily effort toward meeting a goal and generate their own feedback. The Applicant clearly describes how a K-W-L chart is used over the course of a learning exercise, individually or as a group is continuous feedback from teacher to student as progress towards completion is observed and assessed. .

C(1)(b) v, The Applicant assures that the district does not place limitations on participation by high-need students. To ensure high-need students are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, the district offers high need students a variety of credit recovery, remedial, and accelerated learning opportunities in the areas requiring academic improvement. The students are offered tutorials after the regular school day, and the district designs Specialty Camps and Academies to provide hands-on opportunities for learning the content and context of the topic, unit, or theme being taught. All 8th and 10th grade students take the ACT-EXPLORE and ACT-PLAN, respectively, to measure their progress towards meeting college and career readiness levels.

C(1)(c) Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

The Applicant clearly describes the focused district mechanisms that are in place and planned to provide training and support to students that will likely ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources. Strong examples of current and planned successful mechanisms include:

- The Career and Technical Education (CTE) –charged with providing learning opportunities and communicating the availability of those opportunities..
- District Partnerships- Continue building relationships and partnerships with the community and businesses leaders to sustain a level of rigor and real world experiences that prepare students for the workplace and college.
- University Partnerships- Partnerships with the University of Texas Systems and two 2- year colleges in the Rio Grande Valley help guide this reform.

Combined, these sound and executable district mechanisms will successfully provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

Points in the medium range are awarded because Although the Applicant clearly described the benefits of technology-enhanced classrooms,

the Applicant did not clearly connect using digital learning content to aligning with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements; and The Applicant does not connect the CIF model to helping students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**C(2)(b) (i) Actionable information that helps educators (as defined in this notice) identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests;**

The Applicant describes how they partner with the Region One Education Service Center to provide the web-portal and maintenance programs that give teachers the information they need to adjust the curriculum and instruction in response to individual student academic needs and interests. Eduphoria Aware includes data based on student test results from state and locally developed assessments that include college preparation exams and diagnostic tests. The Applicant's reform plan includes scaling up the technology data retrieval systems to accommodate the district's move towards improving teaching and learning in personalized learning environments. The Applicant's reasonable improvement efforts are likely to be successful because they focus on using Eduphoria Aware as an early warning data system by documenting the type and frequency of the services students receive for accelerating learning, and the results thereof. The Applicant's plan for improving access to actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student and academic needs and interest appears to be sound and reasonable approaches to informing curriculum and instructional support students need as the progress from teacher to teacher in each grade level of their school career.

(ii) -The Applicant provides insufficient information describing high-quality learning resources (e.g., instructional content and assessments), including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), and the tools to create and share new resources. Rather the Applicant describes the focus of the district 5-day Avant Garde Institute, designed to train teachers by modeling personalized learning environments and learning approaches used for inquiry-based learning. The Applicant does describe some of the ongoing professional learning events designed for the individual learning needs of each educator including: on-demand e-videos for teachers to view and learn about personalized learning environments, web-based course offerings for educators to select as needed and be able to complete at their own pace, district videos of the trainings presented, and an on-line network community that is widely used in the State of Texas known as Project Share; however these examples did not clearly describe how high quality learning resources are aligned with college-and career-ready standards or college-and career-ready graduation requirements .

(C)(2)(b)

The Applicant provides insufficient descriptions of the processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs. The Applicant's focused on the systemic elements that should surround and support inquiry learning to be addressed in the implementation of their RTT-D activities and parental support.

C (2)(c) c)

The Applicant explains that the approved instrument for appraising teachers in the State of Texas is the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) which helps in identifying areas where teachers would benefit from staff development. The PDAS system components include a minimum of one 45-minute observation and the completion of the Teacher Self-Report form. Although the Applicant provides a detailed description of the district's Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS), the Applicant provides insufficient descriptions of how all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have 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 standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements

C2(c) (i) The Applicant clearly describes how the performance indicators of the district's Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) is extensive and is a useful tool for school leaders and school leadership teams to assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate. Performance targets and decisions to renew or not renew a teacher's contract stem for the results of the PDAS evaluation. The PDAS is also the basis for developing teacher growth plan for the purpose of continuous school improvement. All teachers are trained on the system and its purpose of improving the instructional practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

C2(c) (ii)

The Applicant did not provide a description for this selection criterion.

C2(d) -The Applicant’s plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects and specialty areas includes the following strategies and activities:

- Providing educators with multiple avenues for providing feedback and communicating their concerns.
- Provide mentors and coaches to all educators provide technical assistance as the program progresses.
- Focused approach to implementing Teaching and Leading addresses various elements including:

Although the Applicant includes a variety of executable activities and strategies, the Applicant does not provide a high-quality plan (High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.

Points in the middle range are awarded to this criterion because the Applicant provided insufficient descriptions and supporting evidence for several of the components of this criterion as described above.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	6

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

D (1)

The Applicant states that the district is governed by federal and statutory regulations that are operationalized through local policies approved by the Board of Trustees with procedures formulated by District Administration personnel as appropriate.

However, the Applicant does not describe how these district practices, policies, and rules facilitate personalized learning. The Applicant describes how the district is undergoing reorganization and the new organization will include the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Technology who was instrumental in the writing the district RTT-D proposal and planning for the technology infrastructure and the activities that are included. **However, the Applicant does not adequately describe how this change in leadership facilitates personalized learning.**

D (1) (a)

The Applicant’s response for this selection criterion is missing.

D (1)(b)

The Applicant clearly describes the district’s ambitious vision of creating school leadership teams responsible for establishing the governance structure in participating schools. For example, school leadership teams will be composed of two teachers from each grade level in elementary schools and each grade level and core content in secondary schools. In total, elementary schools will be comprised of a 14-member school leadership team, middle schools will have 24 members, and the high schools will have at least 32 teacher members. The Applicant clearly describes how school leadership teams in participating schools will have the support of the campus administrative leaders and ongoing teaching and learning will be facilitated by the assigned Program Assistant, a Mentor and/or Coach. Leadership teams in participating schools will also be given decision making authority to make school recommendations, including having sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets. **The Applicant provides convincing details to support this selection criterion.**

D (1) (c)

The Applicant response to this selection criteria lacks a clear explanation of how the Applicant plans to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The Applicant describes how a teacher survey reflects teacher support of the district's vision and proposal for implementing a 21st century environment with personalized learning approaches for preparing students for college and careers. The Applicant also describes paired teacher cohorts, technology, the focus of teacher facilitation plans on inquiry-based learning approaches, increased use of self-directed learning and authentic assessments. **However, these explanations do not clearly explain how the Applicant's plans to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery.**

D (1) (d)

The Applicant adequately describes how the district plans give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Examples include the improved use of student portfolios and academic journals, the effective use of differentiated instruction, the use of brain-based strategies and developing skills for addressing the varying learning styles and abilities of each child. The Applicant assures that the level of understanding is not being measured by what students don't know, rather it is being assessed by the gains a student makes in his/her continuum of learning.

D (1) (e)

The Applicant clearly describes how the district provides a variety of instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. Examples include the implementation of differentiated instruction, providing technology integration training for all teachers, providing teacher training that will support classroom practices including strategies for inclusion of struggling students that supports the students' need for acceleration, remediation, intervention, or character building. The Applicant also clearly describes how the district will provide learning resources that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. For example, in the classroom setting, the individualized needs of all students, particularly the special groups identified as, ELLs, Special Ed., and Gifted and Talented will be addressed. This will be accomplished through strategies such as eliminating inclusion "pull out" programs to facilitate increased participation in collaborative group work and inquiry-based and problem solving activities for students with disabilities and English learners. Other sound instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students include extended day learning opportunities, expanded opportunities for day and evening classes, opportunities for students to earn college credit, and using the student learning center as a satellite location for students to take college credit courses.

Points in the medium range are awarded because although the Applicant describes some policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning, the Applicant does not provide a high quality plan as described in this criterion.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

D (2) (a)

The Applicant clearly describes how all participating student, regardless of income, educators, parents, and stakeholders will have access to the necessary content, tools and learning resources in and out of the school to support implementation. For example, classrooms will be equipped with 21st century tools such as online learning platforms, computers, and mobile devices to enhance technology literacy; Mobile Technology Classrooms will be provided for rural students; internet will be available for student use; multi-functional learning centers will provide teacher professional learning activities and extended learning opportunities for students; and student transportation to the learning center and for planned weekly field trips will be provided.

D (2) (b)

The Applicant clearly describes how the district will provide technology enriched learning centers that will be open after the regular school day to ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies. Examples of appropriate levels of support at the technology centers include providing technology instructors, providing students with necessary technical support in and outside of the classroom through personal attention or online using the instructions created within the program or by the teacher; providing parents, educators, and other stakeholders with appropriate levels of technical support through education and

awareness meetings as well as online help that will be imbedded in each program and service that is available for access; and providing students enrolled in STC classes a personalized learning center environment with areas for hands-on work.

D (2)(c)

The Applicant describes how the district's information technology management system provides limited access to student data when such data is confidential, or not authorized for public view. **Although student information is available to educators, principals, students, and parents after a written request for access and investigation into the person's need for the requested information; the information technology system generally does not allow parents and students to export student information in an open data format.** To ensure data integrity, not all users have authorization to enter all of the data elements for decision-making reports. The data restrictions and access limitations have been imposed to secure and safeguard confidential data. The Applicant reports using the data in other electronic learning systems such as students who participate in online learning platforms have software with help capabilities and generally provide recommendations and assessments on the student's progress.

D(2)(d)

The Applicant reports the district has a variety of independent systems that are used by each department; however they are not interoperable systems that work in conjunction with each other. For example in order to use the systems interchangeably, district personnel must complete a special report from designated programmers which sometimes results in incomplete information or irrelevant data. The Applicant plans to use RTI-D funding to implement an interoperable data management system that uses a common, established structure such that data can easily flow from one system to another.

Points in the medium range are awarded.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
(E)(1) Continuous improvement –		
<p>The Applicant describes how the district Superintendent holds weekly meetings with senior staff and campus administrators disseminate information and share timelines for upcoming activities as well as report on areas that need attention or improvement. The Applicant plans to add RTT-D to the meeting agendas to inform attendees of the progress, timelines, processes, or procedures for scheduled events. Although these meetings provide a forum for the departments and schools to come to discuss district operations and collaborate on the planning of events or resolution of pending issues, the Applicant does not clearly explain how these meetings will provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals after the term of the grant.</p>		
Monitoring Progress for Continued Improvement –		
<p>The Applicant plans to utilize RTT-D Assistants to provide technical support and guidance in implementing program activities, the process and procedures for accountability, tracking and monitoring through weekly visits to each campus. Through feedback or observation, the RTT-D staff will identify and make recommendations for improvement, or will adjust the processes or procedures for ensuring efficiency and effectiveness.</p>		
<p>Although the Applicant describes practices that appear to be reasonable approaches to providing timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals, these practices do not constitute a high-quality plan (High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. Points in the medium range are awarded.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement –		

The Applicant describes a variety of bilingual (English and Spanish) mediums to be used by RTT-E staff to communicate and engage stakeholders such as scheduled meetings, electronic media, public forums at the Learning Center, parent roundtable; however, these practices do not meet the requirements of a high quality plan as defined in this notice for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Points in the low range are awarded.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Although the Applicant includes a total of approximately 12-14 ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup with annual targets for required applicant-proposed performance measures, the Applicant does not clearly and adequately describe how their performance measures will provide rigorous timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action. Although the Applicant states that the district will use baseline data to gage progress and will discuss best options for making improvement when data shows that no improvement is observed or documented; these practices do not constitute a high quality plan (High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible) for implementing the activities for how the Applicant will review and improve their performance measures over time. Points in the medium range are awarded.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Although the Applicant plans to comply with the U.S.. Department of Education Evaluation protocols and State and Local procurement procedures, the Applicant does not provide a high-quality plan (High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top-District funded activities. Also the Applicant does not describe a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans. Points in the low range are awarded.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant identifies all funds that will support the project including Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; and district in-kind costs to support the program that appear reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of their proposal. However, the Applicant did not clearly describe a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities in the narrative. The Applicant identifies equipment costs and the building upgrades as one- time costs; and the Applicant is not requesting indirect cost reimbursement in order to allow those funds to be expended directly on the RTT-D activities. The Applicant's budget narrative did not include a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. Points in the middle range are awarded.

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

10

2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Although the Applicant states that their plan for sustainability includes sustaining and maintaining resources purchased that will carry no additional expenses and maintaining the initiatives implemented by the RTT-D project; the applicant does not have a high-quality plan (High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The Applicant did not adequately describe in the narrative how they will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. Points in the low range are awarded.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The Applicant is not participating in the Competitive Preference Priority.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Although the Applicant enthusiastically addresses their ambitious plan for implementing personalized learning environments; the Applicant did not provide a high quality plan (High-quality plan means a plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) that will build on all of the core educational assurances areas. The Applicant does describe ambitious goals and executable activities to create personalized learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. Examples include their focus on teacher training, facilitating teaching model, inquiry based instruction model and differentiated instruction to address the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners. However, these practices were not framed in a high quality plan for implementation. The Applicant adequately described supports for students and educators that are aligned with college-and career-ready standards and accelerating student achievement. Examples include their Academic Career Center and planned partnerships with local colleges and universities. However, the Applicant did not provide letters of support /Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) demonstrating the existence and support of partners. The Applicant's plan to deepen student learning and decrease achievement gaps across student groups includes providing technology-rich classrooms and extended learning opportunities for students at their proposed Academic Career Center. Four ambitious goals frame the Applicant's innovative vision for reform, including excel in academics and ensure equal access, communicate and connect with all stakeholders, innovate through technology, secure a safe learning environment, and develop and retain highly quality staff. Although achieving these goals are key to the success of the Applicant's vision, the Applicant did not sufficiently explain how these goals build on the core education assurance areas.		

Total	210	112
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