



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0119CT-1 for Hartford Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant provides a compelling description of the district's reform history, including the aggressive education reform initiative launched seven years ago that transformed the district into a portfolio school system with a managed performance empowerment theory of action. The district articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds upon the four core educational assurance areas (standards and assessments, building data systems, effective teachers and principals, turning around low-performing schools). The proposal focuses on adding the capacity to manage and monitor a deep level of change and systemic alignment over the next four years, with a systems/organizational development plan that will enhance group work and departmental process, improve communications with all stakeholders, allow for "real-time" management of issues and more effective decision processes, and provide a greater level of autonomy to schools to drive student achievement. A clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student learning is presented. Applicant clearly and effectively describes how both students and teachers will experience the new type of classroom the proposal envisions, with personalized learning environments. Full points are awarded.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant clearly describes the process for selecting participating schools and provides a list of those 41 schools, with all the requested data on students and educators. These schools were chosen because the rate of improvement moving from elementary to middle school declines, and that declines continues to impact the achievement of high school students. This approach is likely to support high-quality implementation at the LEA and school levels. Full points are awarded.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant provides a plan for building capacity by dramatically increasing the instructional capacity and resources of its teachers and by changing the culture of its schools towards a universal assumption that all its students must be prepared for college. The 5-year Strategic Operating Plan sets forth specific goals and action steps aligned with its logic model. The technology component of the proposed project targets only grades 9-12, although other proposed reforms reach down into grades 6-8. The proposal does not effectively present a plan to generalize educational practices through a district-wide scale-up, as insufficient links are made to K-5 instruction and practice and the reforms being implemented in grades 6-12. Additionally, several elements of a highly qualified plan, as defined by the notice, are missing in the narrative (for example, timeline and responsible actors, with specific reference to scaling up and translating the project into meaningful reform to support district-wide change. A score at the top of the middle range is provided.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly describes the state's new accountability system, including the District Performance Index, which measures the status of student achievement in a school, and sets forth LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes across all four required sub-elements (a) through (d). The narrative does not as effectively explain the rationale behind its selected goals or detail how they will result in improved student learning.</p> <p>In general, the goals are both ambitious and achievable on an annual basis (requiring strong improvement from year to</p>		

year on each performance measure selected), with some exceptions. For example, graduation rates are anticipated to increase every year by five to seven percent for students with disabilities (SWD), Hispanic, and English language learners (ELL); no explanation is given for how such huge gains will be achieved (40% gain in graduates rate over only six years for some of these subgroups). Additionally, some of the achievements gaps only seem to decrease over time for a couple subgroups (SWD and ELL), but not other subgroups compared to overall. It is not always clear who the top-scoring subgroup is that the other subgroups are being compared to. A score in the top of the middle range is provided.

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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant demonstrates a clear record of success in recent years, describing the improvements achieved through its portfolio strategy in place since 2007 (opening new promising modes, closing chronically low-performing schools, and using data and transparency to make these decisions). The district is now leading the state in school reform efforts and serving as a model for the state’s framework of accountability in areas such as the School Performance Index and the implementation of School Governance Councils. Data and evidence are provided demonstrating the applicant’s ability to improve student learning outcomes and close achievements gaps, reform it persistently lowest-achieving schools, and make available student performance data to students, educators, and parents to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. For example, 29 of the district’s 48 schools increased their Overall School Index (OSI) above last year, and 18 of those schools rased their OSI by more than four points, the benchmark set by the district that determines whether a school has made truly significant progress. Full points are awarded.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant clearly describes, but not does provide a sample of, how it makes available information on school-level expenditures from State and local funds across all four sub-elements (a) through (d). The proposed and approved budget figures for each school are available on its website and available in photocopied form upon request. End-of-year financial reports for the district and individual schools are also posted on the district website. Overall, the applicant’s narrative demonstrates that the applicant has a high level of transparency in its processes, practices, and investments. A score in the high range is provided.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a thorough description of how it has sufficient autonomy and supportive conditions under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement student-learning environments, including discussion of the state’s historic 2012 education reform bill and the state’s digital learning law, which assures that all students are eligible for publicly funded digital learning. Special state resources for lowest-performing districts are detailed (Alliance District Program, Commissioner’s Network). The state has also been a leader nationwide in expanding digital learning for middle and high school students. Full points are awarded.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	15
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant demonstrates deep and meaningful stakeholder engagement through the development of the proposal, via working groups and task forces (Family and Community Engagement Task Force, Graduation Requirements and GPA Ad-Hoc Committee, Homework Work Group, Student-Centered Learning in High School Work Group) as well as several focus groups. Input was received from students, parents, teachers, and administrators through this process. An extensive collection of letters of support from key stakeholders representing a wide range of organizations and perspectives are included. Full points are awarded.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant provides a detailed high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching (all elements, as defined by the notice, are included), as well as detailed descriptions for each sub-element (a) through (c) of its approach to learning. A strong research base is cited demonstrating the effectiveness of personalized learning in promoting student learning. A convincing case is made that the proposal will literally "blend" the school environment and the "real world" for the district's children, making the classroom experience extend far beyond the physical walls of the classroom.</p> <p>Despite the significant strength of the plan and narrative, there are a few weaknesses in this section of the application: The narrative does not adequately support sub-element (a)(v), and more focus is needed on how all students will be able to develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, and creativity. Additionally, at times, the narrative seems to imply that access alone to technology will lead to significant learning engagement and empowerment; more explicit description of strategies to be employed to use the technology to the benefit of high-need learners is needed. The district does not seem to be very far along in Common Core implementation, and the application does not adequately describe how such implementation will unfold and impact student's personalized sequences of instructional content and skill development over the timeframe of the grant.</p> <p>A score in the lower end of the high range is awarded.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Applicant provides a detailed high-quality plan for improving teaching and leading (all elements, as defined by the notice, are included) that clearly addresses all the sub-elements of this criterion. The district's plans create a structure of leadership, ongoing embedded training, and school-level collaborative learning among educators that is extensive enough to bring about the sustainable change they are targeting. Additional strengths are the applicant's focus on the curriculum-writing process and on training in project-based learning and technology that are likely to significantly support teachers' capacity to personalize learning in their classrooms.</p> <p>Additional detail is needed, however, on the district's digital learning curricula for providing teachers with best practices and strategies on how to use mobile devices in the classroom. It is also not clear how the district plans to proceed with replacing non-effective teachers who are not providing adequate value-added to their classrooms. A score in the high range is awarded.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly and comprehensively outlines its practices, policies, and rules facilitating personalized learning. The high-quality plans in sections (C)(1) and (C)(2) flesh out project implementation. Sub-elements (a), (b), and (c) are thoroughly addressed, with multiple examples of the current conditions in the district supporting each sub-element. A strength of the applicant's plan is the process by which higher-performing schools can earn greater autonomy and flexibility. The district is in the process of shifting to a system that gives students the ability to learning within performance and mastery-based students groups and will be implementing standards-based graded over the next three years in staggered cohorts. Thus, the facilitation of personalized learning will be improved over time, although not fully implemented and in practice in all elements at this time. A score in the high range is awarded.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly and comprehensively outlines the district and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning,</p>		

addressing each sub-element of this criterion. The School Leadership Network, a professional networking tool for principals and central office staff, allows the district to share mission-critical information and tools, collaborate, and provide feedback to one another in real-time. Additionally, educators and students have access to technical support through either the District IT department, Metro Hartford Information services (MHIS), or via school technology coaches that some of the School Governance Council purchase. Outside of the classroom, the district uses the Parents Engagement Framework to engage parents as learners, teachers, and advocates. A strength of the district's information technology system is its PowerSchool Parent Portal available on a SmartPhone application, allowing parents to check student attendance, grades, and behavior, plus communicate with teachers.

Despite the clear strengths of the narrative, the applicant does not adequately address the issue of how it might assist low-income families who do not have computers gain access to local web providers; its claim that Smart Phone ownership is almost universal seems unlikely and not necessarily sufficient for low-income parents seeking to be fully engaged in accessing and using data to support their child. Additionally, it is noted that the district has several separate systems for parents and students to access information in real time (PowerSchool, Performance Plus, Successmaker, etc.), and it appears that could hinder parents and students from accessing and using data if there are multi-logins and websites or web applications to be access for each student. A score in the high range is provided.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's narrative does not contain all the elements of a high-quality plan, as defined by the notice, with regard to implementing the district's continuous improvement process. For example, the timelines are very broad, and not all responsible actors are identified with specific action steps to be undertaken. Instead, the district appears to have more of a plan for developing a continuing improvement process that is not yet in the works (rather than a plan for implementing such a process). The district does describe, however, how the rigorous continuous improvement process that it eventually puts in place will assess the status of systemic alignment; develop a plan for optimal alignment, integration, ongoing assessment and communication of the work; and provide a structure to carry out and sustain that plan over time. A score in the middle range is awarded.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders includes a listing of multiple channels of communication to be implemented, but it is missing some of the elements of a high-quality plan, as defined in the notice (timelines, clearly defined responsible actors and action steps). Overall, however, the plan for ongoing communication and engagement covers a diverse set of communication channels (website, Intranet, principal newsletter, School Governance Councils, board of education reports, portfolio director meetings, community forum, among others), and collectively, these various channels demonstrate promise for the plan to be successful. A score in the middle range is awarded.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>In general, the applicant provides ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets. A weakness of the application is that the rationale behind the selection of these targets and performance measures is not always provided or clear. Additionally, some of the project gains may be unrealistic—for example, gains of 10-15 percent in college- and career-readiness over the several years of the grant's implementation. Further, there is a general lack of differentiation among the expected performance of subgroups (most subgroups are expected to advance at the same rate as others), and when differentiated performance targets are provided, it is not clear why that is expected (due to different strategies for different subgroups, etc.).</p> <p>The applicant describes how it aims to offer greater flexibility and freedom to those schools that are high performing or improving rapidly and to provide the greatest support to the lowest-performing schools. It also details how it will calculate</p>		

an annual performance index to provide a measure of performance for schools and subgroups. A score in the middle range is awarded.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a narrative overview of its plans for evaluating the effectiveness of its grant investments, but does not include all elements, as defined in the notice, of a high-quality plan (timelines, responsible parties for each action step, etc.). An experienced outside evaluator has been identified to conduct an ongoing evaluation of the project. A strength of this section is the detailed list of questions that the applicant wishes to probe through its external evaluation. These sample questions indicate the extensive scope of evaluation activities over the four-year grant period, and the applicant appropriately recognizes the need to systematize evaluation processes and content during the first year of the project. A score in the middle range is awarded.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The budget is well developed and both reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of various projects within the applicant's proposal. All funds that will support the project are properly identified. A weakness is that the proposal is thin on identifying what specific non-grant funds will support the project and what specifically are the ongoing operational costs (distinct from one-time grant investments) that the district will have after the grant period ends. A score in the high range is awarded.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant broadly addresses the sustainability of the project after the term of the grant, but does not present a detailed, high-quality plan, as defined by the notice. Instead, the plan presented is largely a process by which the Strategic Innovations Manager will develop a plan in the middle of the grant implementation for what to do when funds are expended and the grant term ends. The applicant has demonstrated that it currently gets and anticipates getting a lot of public and private support for its reform implementation, but the sustainability of the project's goals is not addressed with sufficient specificity. The plans for sustainability identify support from outside grant resources, including Nellie Mae and Gates Foundation funding, State funds through the Alliance District grants and the Priority Schools grants, Federal Title I and II funds, and district funds. A score in the middle range is awarded.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The competitive priority addresses the expansion of two existing partnerships that it seeks to fund through this grant, the Hartford Partnership for Student Success and the Internship and Employer Engagement Advisory Group. Each partnership is detailed and adds to the district's ability to achieve the goals of this grant, as identified by applicant. It is not clear why the applicant chose to use the same performance measures as in (E)(3) to evaluate these partnerships. These performance measures do not seem well aligned given the type of partnerships described and their focus. The applicant provides solid support for how it plans to track the selected indicators and how it has developed a strategy to scale the partnership model beyond the participating students. The application also provides a strong level of detail for how it integrates education with other appropriate services for participating students, as well as how each partnership will help		

build capacity of the staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports. A weakness is that the applicant acknowledges that these existing partnerships "will go forward at some level whether or not resources additional to the [district] budget are available." In other words, this grant will make the two partnerships' work with the district's students happen more quickly, but not determine whether or not the partnerships' work will happen or not. A score in the middle range is awarded.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments. Under this proposal, students in participating schools will receive an enhanced learning experience that makes greater use of technology and blended learning, as well as greater personalized instruction. The applicant is responsive fully to the elements of Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	171
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0119CT-2 for Hartford Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA sets forth a clear, focused, and high-outcome reform vision, proposing to build significantly on promising practices begun over the past several years.

- Regarding the core educational assurance areas,
 - to implement standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy, they propose to extend and enrich existing initiatives for portfolio assessment. They frame this as "anytime, anywhere" learning using the city context as part of the learning environment. The district is aligning curriculum with CCSS, and proposes to invest in teachers', parents', and students' understanding of CCSS integration.
 - to build data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction, the LEA already uses MAP assessments to generate data, and proposes to invest in teacher capacity to use data. Moreover, they propose additional technology resources aligned with a Student Development Program to attune learning to individual learners' needs. They have sought and received additional foundation support for this work.
 - To recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most, the LEA targets recruitment of highly effective teachers and leaders in high-need settings. They use the Danielson / Teachscape evaluation system, a highly evidentiary and practice-based measure, which complements the quantitative data measures described above. They propose additional coaching and

mentoring supports to develop teacher capacity, especially around personalizing learning.

- o To turn around the LEA's lowest-achieving schools, they propose to continue significant reform efforts around portfolio assessment begun seven years ago. They evidence will and focus regarding using data to drive decision-making around schools, closing and opening schools as needed. They propose that "schools need talent and autonomy, money needs to follow students, families need choice and the public needs to inform" these efforts. This emphasis on school choice for parents is grounded in theory and the LEA logic model for change. They propose to learn from prior experiences in school redesign to inform proposed grant efforts. They evidence will to change schools significantly when warranted through the "School Quality Approach," which involves regular accountability reports to the Board of Education meetings. The SQA reform teams are described and seem appropriate to effect intended changes. They describe will to shift funds from central office to school sites to support needed changes in teaching and learning.
- Regarding their approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity in learner-centered ways, they describe clear, connected, and concrete goals for the proposed grant, including closing achievement gaps, increasing teachers' skills at the middle and high school levels, giving additional options to students for blended learning, increasing student and family access to data, increasing college readiness measures, and revising central governance structures as needed along the way to support these efforts.
- Regarding the proposed classroom experience for students and teachers, they concisely describe several ways in which students and teachers would experience their daily activities during and after the proposed grant period.
- Their logic model is clear and well-constructed.

The LEA has set forth a very focused and strong approach to address each of the areas listed in this criterion, with a high degree of clarity and connection. As such, it merits a high score.

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

The LEA has set forth a strong and well-reasoned approach to implementing reform, and clearly specify how the major foci of the grant unfold over time.

- They have described the process used to select schools to participate. All students in grades 6-12 will be included. The LEA has already invested funds in reforming earlier grades, so the upper grades are now a priority for reform. Their rationale is warranted and clear. Planned technology reforms will be targeted at the high school level. Including all schools allows them to gather data on how effectively they are closing achievement gaps not only between the LEA and the state as a whole, but within and across various school sites inside the district. They plan to concentrate interventionist educators in the highest-need settings.
- They have provided a list of all the schools that will participate in the grant activities. 41 schools will participate, with 10,240 students and 1543 educators. Of these students, 83% are from low-income families and 30.1% are identified as high needs. They include data on the elementary schools, though these sites will not be directly impacted by the grant activities.
- They have shared the total number of participating students, and noted which of those are identified as low-income and high need, as well as participating educators in each school.

The description and rationale are fully aligned with the proposed grant activities, and seem likely to lead to high quality implementation, and so this criterion merits a high score.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has proposed most elements of a high quality plan describing how their reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform.

- Regarding enactment of change beyond the participating schools to the district as a whole, the proposed activities connect clearly to initiatives begun in elementary grades, such as the Third-Grade Promise, which targets reading proficiency of elementary students. The proposed initiatives mirror structures already in place in elementary settings (e.g. common core alignment, RtI). They propose mentoring structures led by the teachers participating in the grants, which will be effected by shared building space between elementary and middle school settings.
- Regarding their proposed high school technology infusion, the LEA clearly describes how teachers at the high school level will make use of devices to personalize students' learning experiences. They state that they will monitor educators' practices and "take the best of this work and move it to the lower grades." While they connect this to

practices begun in the Pathways Academy of Technology and Design, they do not relate how such practices would be transferred between practitioners.

- Regarding their plan to reach outcome goals and spread reform across the district, they set ambitious and focused goals toward elevating practices in middle and secondary school settings to better prepare college- and career-ready students.
- These outcomes are reinforced in their "Theory of Action (TOA) Strategic Implementation Approach 2001-2016" document, as well as their Curriculum Development and Instructional Improvement Plan, the ELL action plan, the Special Education 3-year plan, and the Family and Community Engagement Plan. The Curriculum Development and Instructional Improvement document specifies goals (e.g. supporting high quality implementation and curriculum), parties responsible (e.g. curriculum leads), and a timeline (2012-2015), however, no specific deliverables were specified. Similarly, in the ELL, Special Ed, and Family/Community plans, goals, actions, parties responsible, and timelines were presented, but no reporting structures/ deliverables were aligned.

In sum, the applicant has presented a largely strong case for their plan for change, though their plan to generalize innovative technology practices is inexplicit and they do not specify timeline-aligned deliverables, and thus merits a score in the high end of the middle range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Appropriate instruments and conditions are set forth to allow the LEA to assess whether or not its proposed activities result in improved learning, performance, and equity. They have set ambitious and achievable goals to improve student learning and move all students toward proficiency, with highest gains forecast for students with disabilities and English language learners. The LEA proposes to continue use of the District Performance Index (DPI). This measure assesses student achievement and college and career readiness, and includes performance in the math, reading, writing, and science.

These data have enabled the district to create an accountability index (OSI) at the school level, an innovation that has been adopted state-wide. Their aim is to have all students reach "Goal"(higher than NCLB Proficient.)

- Regarding performance on summative assessments, they use the CAPT (grade 10 only) and the CMT (grades 3-8), but will soon adopt Smarter Balanced tests aligned with Common Core. They express a preference for the DPI measure, which allows for more complex data analysis (e.g. movement / improvement as opposed to whether or not a student has attained proficiency.) Forecast gains range from 4-8%, with highest gain goals set for students with disabilities in grade 10.
- Regarding achievement gaps, they propose to reduce achievement gap by half by 2018, a goal aligned to yearly targets and emphasizing improvement most for the highest-need students. Their forecast gains range from 4-8%, with highest gain goals set for students with disabilities in grade 10.
- Regarding graduation rates, they began tracking high school graduation cohorts with the graduating class of 2010. These data led them to set a goal of reducing graduation rate gaps by half, with an eventual goal of 94% graduation rate. Forecast improvements range from 3-7%, with highest improvement goals for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Regarding college enrollment, no data or narratives were provided.
- Regarding post-secondary degree attainment, no data or narratives were provided.

These goals as set forth seem warranted by the data and are mostly accompanied by sound rationales. They are ambitious and achievable. Their lack of addressing criterion (A)(4)(d) is a weakness. In sum, this criterion merits a score in the high end of the middle range.

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:

The LEA establishes a strong and evidentiary track record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and

increasing equity in learning and teaching. They describe significant research-informed initiatives begun in 2007 around portfolio strategy of school improvement, focused on choice, autonomy, pupil-based funding, and partnerships. These gains are supported by the "Road to Success" in the appendix.

- Regarding improved student learning outcomes and reduced achievement gaps, focused on improved achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment, they have achieved 5 consecutive years of growth, including 22% growth in 3rd grade reading, 21% growth in 4th grade mathematics, reading and writing gains on the 10th grade measure of 8% and 14%, 25.4% increase in graduation rate, and 4.3% increase in college enrollment. The majority of schools increased their district-set evaluation measure, the OSI, and half of those making the largest gains were the lowest-performing schools. Several individual schools were recognized for their achievements, though it is unspecified whether these schools were previously strong. These gains were also recorded on state standardized tests, reducing the achievement gap between the district and the state from 37% to 26%.
- Regarding improvements in persistently low-achieving schools, they highlight some problems to be addressed, particularly in neighborhood (non-magnet) schools, and regarding the performance of ELL students. Both are targets of the current grant, and efforts to improve these schools have already begun, including coaching, community partnerships to reduce truancy, content area foci, and equity of access to enrichment programs. The School Quality Plan, ELL Plan and Special Needs students plan all reinforce and support these claims. They have increased the number of schools (39-49) to create smaller schools, particularly at the high school level. They have launched several magnet and themed schools, consistent with their portfolio strategy. This commitment to close and open schools when warranted allows for recalibration of faculty and leadership. School innovations have been accompanied by business and agency community partnerships. The School Quality Process is driven by Central Office and has a transparent leadership structure oriented around review of low-performing schools. These innovations are not only district-bound but include partnerships with charter school management organizations, showing ambitious and significant focus regarding this criterion.
- Regarding making data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services, the district shows a regular practice of sharing data in face-to-face meetings as well as through the use of PowerSchool, including a mobile app. The state website makes test results available. The proposed grant aims at making individual student performance data available electronically (not currently done). Schools offer computers for parents to access information, as well as a district Welcome Center and public libraries. Educators have on-demand access to performance data as parents do, as well as NWEA/MAP data, though the proposed grant aims to increase their ability to use those data.

The LEA has set forth strong evidence of their record of success across all criteria for this section. As a result, it merits a high score.

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

The LEA has made budgetary information accessible to the public, largely through the district website.

- The district website provides access to all key documents related to district leadership and governance (Board of Education).
- Personnel salaries, including broken out by instructional staff only, teachers only, and non personnel expenditures are identified.
- A high degree of transparency is evident in these documents, and the LEA makes printed copies available to the public through school and district offices.
- the district makes its end-of-year actual expenditure data available on the district website and the City of Hartford website as well.

A high level of transparency is represented in the narrative description, though no supporting artifacts were provided regarding these claims in the appendix or the narrative, and so this criterion merits a score in the high range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA provides clear evidence regarding their degree of autonomy and local control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state of Connecticut empowers towns and cities with responsibility for public education. Despite prior state-control of the district, they have been independent of this oversight for 10 years. • Public Act 12-116 was passed in 2012, targeting support of reform in low-performing districts. This act led to the creation of the Commissioner's Network, which grants schools autonomy and funding to support turnaround. One of the LEA's schools, Jumoke Academy at Milner, is in this network. • State support is provided by the Alliance District initiative, with the LEA receiving a portion of \$150M in state funding, with sufficient autonomy to use these funds. • Innovative technology initiatives are exempt from class-size restrictions and teacher-student ratios. These and related initiatives are supported by Public Act 10-111. • No constraints appear to exist that would impair the proposed activities in any way. <p>Because of the high degree of autonomy enacted in state educational policy, this applicant has demonstrated necessary and sufficient conditions for implementing the vision set forth in the proposal, and merits a high score.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
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<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA included multiple and comprehensive materials evidencing engagement of stakeholders in the development, revision, and refinement of the grant proposal. These included multiple letters of support from various individuals and groups. They make clear when and how suggestions from these groups were selectively incorporated into the grant. It was not specified how the focus and working groups were composed or recruited for, making it unclear whether the reported suggestions were representative of the district as a whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding student engagement, working groups and focus groups discussed the initial and revised proposal with students. The focus group yielded data around student use of technology and understanding of available supports for their learning at the school site. • Regarding family engagement, they provided a letter from the family and community engagement taskforce, a PTO leader, and school governance parent chair, as well as membership of the family and community engagement task force. They describe outcomes of the parent focus group as well as how their suggestions (around access to devices, e.g.) were incorporated into the proposal. • Regarding teacher and principal engagement, there was educator representation on the Strategic Operating Plan group, which was instrumental in the design and revision of the proposal. Educators were also represented in multiple subgroups, such as the Graduation Requirements and Homework Work Groups. In the focus group held with educators, there were many points of consensus with the parent perspectives (e.g. excitement about device access for students and teachers. Both identified needed guidance around maximizing utility of proposed tools. • Regarding union engagement, they provided a letter of active support from the Hartford Federation of teachers making clear a strong allegiance to support the proposed activities. The proposal states that keeping union leadership informed and updated was preferred by union leadership to engagement in the planning of the proposal. • Regarding letters of support, they included letters from the state, city, Board of Education, Superintendent, national congressional representatives, state education commissioner, mayor, business leaders, foundations, professional education organizations, education advocacy groups, museums, parent organizations, higher education, public library leadership, a disability advocacy group, and the local Archdiocese. • No letters of support represented student organizations or student perspectives. <p>The LEA has provided substantial evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement for each criterion listed, and a strong disposition to continue engagement throughout the proposed project. However, the lack of description about composition of the focus groups (and the representativeness thereof), lack of letters of support from students and student organizations, and lack of evidence of focus/working group data/evidence (e.g. minutes, notes) were points of weakness. As a result, this</p>		
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section merits a score in the low end of the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has set forth a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. Their efforts to personalize learning began in 2006 with their reform plan and continues through their Strategic Operating Plan. They effectively define personalized learning and link it to elements of the proposed activities. These focus on increasing the level of personalized instruction, enacting Rtl, and increasing teacher capacity.

Regarding their proposed approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, to fully engage in learner-centered and goal-oriented experiences in schools:

- They plan to help students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals by redesigning the Middle Years experience and focusing on college readiness in middle and high school. They propose to link classroom learning with college-readiness through an Advisory program in middle and high school settings, small group meetings of students with faculty members. Several elements of these advisory practices are described, and this program aligns with state requirements around Student Success Plans (SSPs). SSPs are currently used for students in high school; the grant proposes extending this to middle school and linking them to PowerSchool (for parent access).
- They will help learners identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards/ requirements, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals via the Advisory Program and SSPs, and will be aligned with the district College and Career Counseling Conceptual Framework (which includes internship participation, leadership development, college awareness for students and parents.) These activities are well explained and appropriate for the goal.
- They will involve learners in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest through the capstone and internship programs, use of mobile devices to monitor learning, and bridge to college project. High school level students will use these devices, and specific goals around their use are linked to innovative resources such as Dreambox and Khan Academy. Few particulars around how those resources would link to specific deep learning experiences are specified, though the LEA describes it is engaging in this specification this year.
- The plan to ensure access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning is largely focused on the access to a device, without specifics provided about the means for engagement. They do state that they plan to provide professional development in cultural proficiency. The relationships built in the Advisory Program are a good social emotional element related to this, but it was unclear how exactly they plan to develop and assess these connections and abilities.
- They propose to develop learners' understanding of critical academic content and skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving by ensuring that teachers know how to use the data available to them to inform classroom decision making. The focus on teachers' use of data measuring content knowledge did not adequately address the traits mentioned above. Access to devices alone does not enable the development of these traits.

Regarding their proposed approach to granting access to learners:

- They propose 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 by

- o helping teachers build better instructional approaches and environments for learners within the Rtl framework and integrating parents in the process, and building a promising Bridge to College initiative to ensure that students start strong their first year of college, though students' agency and articulation of individual learning goals is not mentioned;
- o encouraging a variety of instructional approaches including project-based learning, early intervention, 1to1 device access for high school students, a capstone requirement, and internships. These are aligned to Common Core, a process begun in 2010-2011. Few specifics are provided though they evidence a willingness to explore options;
- o feedback and personalized learning recommendations through the Student Success Plan electronic portfolios.
- o accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students through the Rtl system. They state that technology devices will "help students track their progress toward their goals and build self-organization skills" without any concrete examples. Similarly vague were the optimistic forecasts about the ELL students' use of devices.

Regarding mechanisms 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 LEA states that they will provide training but do not specify the nature of these planned supports.

The LEA has provided solid description and evidence regarding their capacity to improve learning and teaching, though the lack of specificity regarding cultural diversity and development of successful traits were areas of weakness. Moreover, the enthusiasm for the potential of mobile devices was unmatched with concrete plans for their use, particularly with high needs students. Lastly, though they present a high quality plan for most of the elements, there was limited evidence about their planned supports for students' use of tools and resources. As a result, this merits a score in the high end of the middle range.

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

20

16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has effectively addressed most of the required elements of a high-quality plan to help educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements for all learners, particularly those with high needs. This continues work begun in 2012 to build teacher and leader capacity. They plan to:

Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments by:

- Continuing to develop Portfolio Teams, which include various key constituents to work with site-based leadership to create professional learning communities in schools.
- Connecting Rtl initiatives to efforts to redefine instructional coaching roles to better support teachers.
- Developing teacher leaders in school sites as part of PLC initiatives.
- Creating positions for Coordinator of Instructional Coaches for STEM, Coordinator of Instructional Coaches for Literacy, and Coordinator of Job-Embedded Professional Development, and two part-time interventionists for Literacy and STEM (also connected to Rtl).
- These professional structures seem likely to support the proposed initiatives in effective ways.

Adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches by:

- continuing promising practices such as Project-based learning initiatives, Capstone project requirement, Expeditionary Learning schools, and STEM redesign in Middle Years.

- completion of curriculum alignment with Common Core.
- providing technology resources and training, oriented around an IEP for each student, though it was unclear how the work of the instructional coach would lead to teachers' uptake of these practices or learners' benefit thereof.

Measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators by:

- continuing universal use of NWEA-MAP and related professional development for teachers' use of the MAP data.
- extension and full district-wide adoption of standards-based report cards, connected to unspecified parent engagement initiatives.
- coaches' development of site-based leaders to help struggling teachers improve in data analysis and use.
- planning for work teams to analyze policies on graduation, credit earning, and homework. No specifics are yet provided regarding plans for alternate credit earning.

Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems, including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement, by:

- using the Danielson framework to evaluate all teachers (educators in the classroom, as well as out-of classroom certified faculty, such as library specialists and interventionists), which is a strength.
- measuring principal effectiveness through a school leadership rubric.

Support key constituencies in learning how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements, by:

- developing teacher capacity to use and interrogate NWEA/MAP data;
- training teachers in RtI,
- engaging teachers in professional learning communities;
- continued and extended use of (unspecified) digital resources;
- implementation of an (unspecified) learning management system to allow monitoring of different methods of learning and related technical support;
- instructional-coach-led data teams.

Provide training to school leaders and school leadership teams around creating high level learning environments to support this work by:

- the use of the Danielson Framework for educator evaluation;
- administrator evaluation plans;
- a district-administered school climate survey related to school improvement plans;
- leadership coaching led by the district as well as outside groups (e.g. Aspiring Leaders, higher education partnerships, teachers in residence);
- a resident principal program (district-charter partnership).

Present a high quality plan to increase students' access to effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects and speciality areas by:

- the above, plus talent management and recruitment strategies. Teachers may self select into teacher leader programs and receive training and support;
- local partnerships with graduate schools of education to identify promising newly certified school leaders;
- national recruitment events;
- resolution to improve or remove persistently low-performing educators (though mechanisms for removal are unspecified) and encouragement of low-performing teachers and administrators to "self-select out" (also unspecified).

The LEA provided copious and strong evidence for this section. Their high quality plan contains all required elements and is appropriate and warranted. The lack of specifics regarding goals for the mobile device use by teachers and students was a gap, as well as concrete strategies for "removing" persistently low-performing teachers and administrators. As a result, this merits a score in the low end of the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA sets forth a clear and evidentiary high quality plan that supports project implementation through policies, infrastructure, and support and resources for educators and students. Most of these elements are already in place in the district, with only a few new elements introduced for the proposed grant activities.

- Regarding organization of the central office to provide support and services to participating schools, the district describes a "balanced theory of action" with differential autonomy for schools, in keeping with Marzano's theories of school reform. Student-based budgeting enables money to follow students, one of the key ideas of the RTTD proposal. Less than 10% of operating costs are directed to Central Office. As described elsewhere in the proposal, district leadership structures rely heavily on Portfolio teams, which mentor principals. No mention is made here of the Coordinator roles mentioned elsewhere in the proposal.
- Regarding autonomy and flexibility of school leadership teams, the managed performance theory of action grants greater autonomy to higher-performing and significantly improving sites. Lower-performing sites are subject to intervention, in keeping with their "improve or remove" concept mentioned elsewhere in the proposal. Mid-range schools are provided with "defined autonomy" (which is not itself defined or elaborated) and new/ redesigned schools proceed under a continuous improvement model. Leadership teams at schools have control of schedules, inform hiring, advise on budget issues, and allot staff to responsibilities.
- Regarding opportunities for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, the district is in the process of shifting to performance- and mastery-based assessment. The graduation policy supports progression based on mastery. Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment support college credit earning, and a policy adopted in 2000 and revised in 2002, 2005, and 2008 supports graduation based on demonstration of mastery. Performance standards are aligned with Common Core. Other task forces on homework and online credit are actively engaged in work.
- Regarding opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery multiple times and ways, schools are supported in assessing learners' needs differentially. Mastery demonstrations may include service learning, in-depth high school study projects, and a high school capstone project completed through various methods.
- Regarding access and adaptability of resources for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, the district has the highest number of ELL students in the state, and this population is a focus of the grant because of persistent patterns of low achievement. They have invested in additional coaching structures and support for all faculty to infuse their instruction with ELL strategies. As with funding, services follow students. Central Office offers tutoring and translation for students and families. Very recent initiatives are related to a

Strategic Plan for English Language Learning students.

- An Assistive Technology Coordinator is charged with supporting students with disabilities (and their families.) A web-based IEP program also supports this population. Support for students with disabilities extends to age 21. A Strategic Plan for students with disabilities targets staff development/ curriculum implementation, increasing quality and keeping students in district, and delivering services through a variety of high quality models.
- Regarding new roles, the goals, parties responsible, deliverables, and timelines are indicated clearly in C(1).

The LEA plan to support implementation through infrastructure is very solid. As such, it qualifies for a score at the highest range.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has set forth some elements of a high quality plan to support personalized learning by:

- already having 100% internet and wifi access in all school sites, with sufficient resources for teachers and students in classrooms.
- an online School Leadership Network for principals and central office staff, with plans to expand to all educators (though how they would use this for mentorship and professional development is unspecified.)
- community partnerships to engage parents, with particular success in the past with Achieve Hartford (from whom a letter of support was gained.)
- proposing a 1:1 device initiatives for high school learners, providing students with either a tablet or a laptop for home use. How families without access to the internet would help their student access the various rich digital resources described is unspecified.
- a proposed intranet to engage all faculty and staff to share information, tools and resources related to their local and district-wide PLC.
- these supports intersect effectively and comprehensively.

The LEA will provide technical support for planned initiatives via:

- continuing existing district-based IT supports for teachers and schools.
- a parent engagement framework, to enable and empower parents to support their student's work and understand data about their achievement.
- an app for accessing school information (though not all families have internet, they claim near-universal Smart Phone access in families.)
- planned trainings for parents on PowerSchool.
- District Parent Welcome Center and partnerships with libraries and Achieve Hartford! to engage parents who may not have access to computers or internet access from home.
- proposed Technology Town Hall! annual event, in which students will formally mentor parents and present their work.
- extending PerformancePlus into an educator intranet (mentioned above).
- use of tools to support student networks, such as EdModo and Ning. It was unclear how these might connect to proposed learning management system investments mentioned elsewhere in the proposal.

The LEA will use information technology systems to allow for exporting of information in an open data format by

- PowerSchool, Performance Plus, and SuccessMaker are already in place.
- working to develop connections between the Student Success Plan and the tools mentioned in the previous bullet.

- creating connections to an existing web-based post-secondary career planning portal.
- It is unclear how these would connect to each other, and the item regarding exporting of information in an open data format is unaddressed.

The LEA will ensure interoperability of data systems by:

- charging the Executive Director of Data Management with ensuring access to data.
- connecting data on student achievement, transportation, intervention and SSPs into PowerSchool for full alignment.
- Investment in human capital for PowerSchool support.
- connection with Munis Pulse to engage in data collection, data processing, and two phases of data warehousing.

The high quality plan listed in criterion C address some of the elements related to this implementation, but the large deliverables are summative as opposed to incremental, making it unclear how they plan to proceed from the beginning to arrive at, for example "by fall 2016, all 9-12 students will have access to PEDs and teachers will actively employ them in ways that enrich learning and meet student needs." Lack of evidence of the step-by-step toward these goals is a weakness.

The LEA responded very effectively to criteria (a) and (b), but provided generalities as opposed to specific plans for ensuring exportability of data and interoperability of systems, and thus score in the middle range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The LEA describes its plan for implementing a continuous review process by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing timely and regular feedback on progress toward goals, via an external evaluator. This person / people's first phase of work is proposed to begin with conducting assessment, designing systems for improved performance, identifying parameters for measuring results, developing processes for gathering and communicating feedback, and developing sustainability plan. The second phase of evaluation would then transition to a Strategic Innovation Manager (SIM) to follow through with this plan and regularly communicate results. • monitoring, measuring, and publicly sharing information on funded investments via communication structures between, involving, and moving outward from the external evaluator, the SIM, district and school leadership. Regular presentations to and engagement from the Board of Education and School Governance Councils are planned. • no particular mention is made of specifics regarding important subfoci of the proposed grant activities, such as evaluating effectiveness of Middle Years Advisory structures, or high school personal device use. Because much is left up to the first activities of the consulting external evaluator, much of the proposal in this section is high altitude and nonspecific. • though it is not set forth as a table, it is possible to infer goals, parties responsible, deliverables and timeline from this section of the proposal narrative. <p>The plan to evaluate and continuously improve the grant over its duration is clear and developmental, though high-altitude and nonconcrete. As a result, this criterion merits a score at the low end of the middle range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The LEA plans to engage key internal and external stakeholders mostly via reporting-out over the course of the proposed grant, through</p>		

- communication on the district's website and newsletters.
- intranet communications.
- reporting structures for governance councils, Superintendent's report, leadership teams;
- existing (2013) communications audit and plan identifying families and caregivers as audience for all communications, though community agencies are also mentioned.
- they provide little evidence of active engagement of these partners to improve plans, as opposed to solely reporting on progress.

The LEA has demonstrated willingness to communicate with stakeholders, though makes little mention of engagement of these stakeholders for continuous improvement. Nor do they mention elements of a high quality plan related to these efforts. Therefore, they merit a low score.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has identified and articulated goals for increases in performance measures to evaluate grant effectiveness. Their rationales indicate plans to indirectly involve all students in the district, with a direct emphasis on the middle and high schools. However, their tables to support their claims show no evidence of attempts to close achievement gaps.

- They have identified the number and percentage of participating students (as defined in this notice), by subgroup (as defined in this notice), whose teacher of record (as defined in this notice) and principal are a highly effective teacher (as defined in this notice) and a highly effective principal (as defined in this notice); and
- They have identified the number and percentage of participating students (as defined in this notice), by subgroup (as defined in this notice), whose teacher of record (as defined in this notice) and principal are an effective teacher (as defined in this notice) and an effective principal (as defined in this notice).
- Gains forecast for student access to highly effective teachers and principals are 20%, beginning at baselines of 5-10%.
- Gains forecast for student access to effective teachers and principals also increase by 20%, starting at baselines of 11-21%.
- Increases anticipated for college- and career-readiness begin at baselines of 7-10%, and increase by 40%.
- Increases in FAFSA completion begin at baselines of 23%-53% and increase by 25% across the board.
- Performance measure increases for attendance rate/ truancy begin at baselines of 7-10% and increase by 40%
- All above-mentioned forecast increases are identical across all groups, showing no evidence of closing achievement gaps between groups.

In sum, while the gains set forth are consistent and significant, there is little evidence of their connection to specific grant activities, nor evidence of attempts to reduce achievement gaps (despite mentioning a commitment to do so elsewhere in the proposal.) Neither do they adequately demonstrate how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action. Therefore, this section merits a low score.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has set forth some processes to evaluate effectiveness of proposed initiatives, and described a broad and overly general approach to learn from the grant activities.

- The proposed external evaluator will focus in the first phase of funding on design of evaluation, led by a local IHE faculty. The proposed external evaluator is experienced and appropriate for overseeing grant activities.
- They articulate questions related to NWEA-MAP assessments, RtI/SRBI intervention, Increased teacher capacity for personalized/ differentiated instruction, 1:1 technology access, advisory program, student success plans, internship, bridge to college, college awareness, teacher quality, and system alignment.
- The questions described are appropriate and combine quantitative (Are performance percentages increasing?) and qualitative (What feedback to teachers provide about pathways to leadership?)
- Because of their reliance on the external evaluator to determine the plan, no elements of a high quality plan are established (goals, deliverables, timeline, parties responsible.)

The response to this element is incomplete because of the way in which they have conceptualized the role of the external evaluator, and so it merits a low score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA has set forth a budget for the proposal that identifies all sources of funds to support the proposed activities. \$25M are requested for the grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget as identified is reasonable and sufficient to support proposed activities, focusing mostly on personnel costs, and with equipment costs phasing out by year four of the project. • Budget funds support activities in the central office and in 41 school sites. • The majority of students served are low-income and approximately 30% are high-needs. • Rationales for investments and priorities are provided and aligned with budget tables. • Other related funds are quantified and described (e.g. Gates Grant through year 2), though the LEA says those numbers may change from year to year. • Differentiation between one-time and recurring costs are identified (e.g. 1:1 devices, vs. hiring Interventionists and Behavior Technicians.) Specific roles and responsibilities of faculty and staff are clearly identified. • Consulting costs for external evaluation seem high, related to the tasks identified, with nearly \$400,000 per year allotted; in addition, \$130,000 additional allotted for implementation of advisory on consultant's findings. <p>The budget largely addresses required elements in this criterion though selected measures seem high, and thus merits a score at the low end of the high range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA has identified some grant initiatives that will require support after the period of the grant ends, and they plan to sustain efforts begun during the grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They describe outside grant resources (Nellie Mae, Gates), state funds, district funds, and federal Title I and II funds. • They state that the proposed activities will occur "at some level" regardless of RTTT-D funding, though winning the RTTT-D competition will accelerate the pace of change. • The Strategic Innovations Manager will be charged with establishing a plan for sustainability, reporting on an ongoing basis, but specific activities and incremental reporting timelines are not established. <p>The LEA has not set forth a clear high quality plan for the three years following the proposed grant period. It does (though broadly) describe how evaluation of investment effectiveness will inform post-grant decision-making under the Strategic Innovations Manager oversight. As such, it merits a score in the middle range.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA describes a commitment to build on existing efforts to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, especially those with high-needs. These focus on the Hartford Partnership for Student Success (HPSS) and the Internship and Employer Engagement Advisory Group (IEEAG) as two cases for expansion.</p> <p>They provide a clear description of these two key partnerships to support the proposed activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HPSS began in 2007 and is charged with the development of community schools. 		

- The IEEAG began in 2011 and is charged with the Capstone project, the SSPs, and high school internship experiences.
- Work groups for both initiatives meet regularly.
- The Family Engagement Taskforce regularly liaises to community organizations that support students.

They identify very general population-level desired educational results and social emotional outcomes for students in the LEA that align with and support the applicant’s broader Race to the Top – District proposal.

- Outcome measures are comprehensive and positive but not quantifiable (e.g. Students are prepared to learn, School is culturally competent).

They describe that the partnership would track process structures but no measurement strategies are identified. This makes the accountability of other measures (using data to target resources, scaling model beyond participating students, and improve over time) vague.

They effectively state how the partnership would, within participating schools, integrate education and other services for participating students:

- They describe initiatives at the Community Schools to provide physical and mental health services, parent and community opportunities and engagement, and are available for students and families.

They describe that the partnership and LEA or consortium would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to assess needs, inventory needs, create a decision-making process to evaluate supports for needs, engage parents and families in decision-making, and assess progress, but how they plan to generalize the work of these selected schools to the full spectrum of participating schools is not specified. Few new initiatives appear to be proposed that would not happen without grant support.

They identify performance measures for the proposed population-level around attendance rate, reduced suspensions, increased leadership (though no measure to establish or assess students' level of leadership is presented). Regarding academic performance, they aim for proficiency in either math or reading, which does not square with the ambitious gains set forth elsewhere in the proposal. Other measures related to college exposure and readiness are concrete and quantifiable (e.g. increasing numbers of 11th graders in internships from 215 to 750 over the grant period.)

In sum, they present a variable case for meeting the competitive preference priority, and merit a middle score.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the proposal, the LEA has established two major thrusts for preparing students to be increasingly ready for college and career. Targeted supports for middle school students through advisory structures both educate and support students. Multiple interventions planned for high school infuse learning experiences with technology while requiring students to engage in multiple real-world and applied learning opportunities, all framed around college- and career-readiness. They have addressed how they will build on the core assurance areas to improve teaching and learning through personalization strategies. Moreover, they show a disposition to engage in this reform whether or not they receive funding, for which they are to be commended. They have met Absolute Priority 1 for this grant.

Total	210	158
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Race to the Top - District



Technical Review Form

Application #0119CT-3 for Hartford Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant offers strong evidence of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that (a) Builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas; (b) articulates a clear and credible approach to accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support; and (c) describes what the personalized learning environment classroom experience will be like for students and teachers.</p> <p>Hartford's demonstrated success throughout its tenure within the Portfolio school reform model shows that it recognizes the urgent importance of implementing personalized learning environments that build on Common Core standards, or, as the applicant states, implementation of the Core will "simply result in declining test scores." The work already done by the district to support flexible operational models for their turnaround schools mirrors the concept of personalized learning environments and suggests that the applicant has the conceptual and logistical framework to support their robust vision of personalized learning, which recognizes individual needs and assets in developing career- and college-ready curriculum.</p> <p>The district has utilized private grant money to develop key components for success, including leveraging data systems to evaluate teachers and students and incorporate that data into improved instruction.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient detail regarding what the personalized learning environment classroom experience will be like for students and teachers.</p> <p>Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant offers strong evidence of an implementation approach incorporating schools, grade bands, or subject areas that will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation. The applicant's decision to focus their project on grades 6-12 because other initiatives are significantly focused on the early grades, and because the rate of academic improvement declines in the transition to middle school, appears to be a sound strategy for targeting resources.</p> <p>Further, the choice to begin the technology component within high schools, due to the more technological nature of high school work is sound, although eventually offering technology to middle grades will build essential digital skills as early as possible. Allocating resources by the school's level of performance, so that weaker-performing schools get additional funding, also ensures that, while all schools will receive support, those needing the strongest interventions will receive that aid. The forty one schools to be aided are listed, representing 10,240 students, with 83% from low-income families and 30.1% are high-needs students.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides moderate evidence of a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will: (a) be scaled up to support district-wide change; (b) will help the applicant reach its outcome goals; and (c) will improve student learning outcomes for all students served.</p> <p>The applicant will offer this intervention to all 41 schools serving grade 6-12 students, building on the successful results of the district's Third-Grade Promise program to maintain student achievement through middle and high school. The applicant envisions this project offering district-wide results in terms of developing personalized learning environments and utilizing technology within the classroom more effectively, through offering best practices to lower grades and connecting the achievements of older students back to their younger peers to showcase what is possible.</p>		

The applicant offers a logic model of its vision, but does not include the components of a high-quality plan -- responsibilities, timelines, and activities -- for scaling up and translating the reforms to elementary schools throughout the district. Therefore, it's not clear how easily meaningful reform can be spread throughout the district; the model depends on devices being available for high school students initially but it's not clear how use of those devices will cascade down to lower grades. Further, it's not clear how meaningful reform will be achieved if the model's dissemination depends heavily on middle school teachers disseminating information to elementary school colleagues without appropriate incentives.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the medium range.

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

The applicant provides moderate evidence of the likelihood that the proposed project will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the LEA(s), overall and by student subgroup, for each participating LEA in the areas of (a) Performance on summative assessments ; (b) Decreasing achievement gaps; (c) Graduation rates; and (d) College enrollment .

The applicant proposes to build on and maintain many of the academic gains resulting from numerous interventions at the PreK-5 level. The proposed personalized learning environments for all 6-12 students and use of technology for high school students, along with associated district plans to engage and advance children with special needs and English Language Learners, suggest that the proposed goals are generally ambitious yet achievable.

The application would benefit from more detailed data regarding projected scores for individual grades 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12, as the 3-8 baselines may be slightly inflated due to strong elementary school performance (that slows in middle school.) Further, while admirable, some of the proposed gains for Grade 10 Students with Disabilities, for example, may be slightly out of reach based on the proposed reforms. Similarly, for that reason, some of the proposed decreases in achievement gaps may not be feasible; for example, closing nearly all of the 25.4 point gap between overall Grade 10 performance and that of Students with Disabilities.

The proposed increases in graduation rates suggest that all student subgroups will graduate at roughly the same rate as the overall population, which is an admirable but perhaps unrealistic goal, short of specific interventions to increase graduation rates for those groups. Lastly, the college enrollment rate increases for the group overall seem reasonable; it is understood that subgroup data was not available through the National Clearing House to make estimates.

Therefore, this application has scored in the medium range.

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:

The applicant provides strong evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity through (a) improving student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps including by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates; (b) achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving or low-performing schools ; and (c) making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.

The appendix contains numerous charts detailing the success of the district over the last 2-6 years through various metrics. Overall gains for the districts 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th graders are impressive, with especially impressive gains of 26.6% in students at/above reading goals and 15.5% at/above math goals for 7th graders.

The district clearly has pockets of challenge. Although only two years of data are available, it appears that rising 7th

graders lose some of their gains within 8th grade, as measured by both the overall reading index and overall achievement index. Tenth graders scoring at or above proficiency levels in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and MAS Reading fell from 2011 and 2012.

The growth in high school graduation rates from 2007 to 2010 (and the reported 2011 preliminary rate of 59.9%) are impressive; the change in college enrollment rates is somewhat flat or inconsistent.

It is clear that the applicant has taken significant steps to support its lowest-performing skills, through the development of smaller, more personalized skills, including themed schools. The applicant provides evidence that 8 low-performing schools, including two intervention schools, increased their Overall School Index scores in 2012. The Portfolio strategy adopted by the district shows a strong commitment to doing whatever it takes -- including reconfiguring or closing poorly-performing schools -- to provide all of its students with a quality education.

The wide availability of student data and its utilization appears likely to improve participation rates, teacher instruction, and other student services. Student performance data is available in a variety of formats and is reviewed at the school and district level annually to strengthen student performance. The data is available to students, educators, and parents through written communications, meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

The applicant provides strong evidence of the high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration, including (a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, (b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and (d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level .

This applicant states that the data is made available annually at the Hartford Public Schools website, at the City of Hartford website, and in printed copies. Quarterly financial budgets provide this information at the district level.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

The applicant provides strong evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

The state funds and provides autonomy to LEAs to turnaround low-performing schools, and Connecticut state law allows for all students to receive funded digital learning. The digital learning law shows a degree of flexibility essential to the success of personalized learning environments: content must be aligned with state or common core standards, but virtual schools, online courses, and blended schools are exempt from class size restrictions and/or teacher-student ratios. Connecticut's support for digital learning has been recognized nationally, and offers promise for successful implementation of these reforms.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	14
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides strong evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal, including how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating school were engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback, including evidence of teacher engagement and support and letters of support from key stakeholders.

Since 2006, the district's turnaround model has incorporated significant feedback from parent, teacher, and community stakeholders through task forces and working groups centered around key aspects of academic success. In 2012, the district solicited the feedback of parents, students, teachers, and community stakeholders through focus groups. What is

impressive about the focus groups process is that the applicant clearly incorporated suggestions from stakeholders back into the planning for the grant: from parents' desire to be trained in the PowerSchool student information system, to teachers' suggestions regarding changes in Board policy to accommodate personal electronic devices, to students requesting more college preparation assistance.

Data regarding the number of participants in the Race to the Top Focus Groups would further enhance the application.

The Hartford Teachers Union has also been apprised of the plan and has provided a letter of endorsement. Additionally, numerous letters of support from a variety of educational and community leaders suggest that the community is strongly vested in the success of this proposal.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides strong evidence of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready, including an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students aligned to college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. The plan includes goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

The research-based approach provides a response to all of the elements of a high-quality plan, with a combination of data-based Student Success Plans and caring-adult supports that foster connections between student aspirations and their current work. The Student Success Plans will play a pivotal role in many aspects of the plan: they will be augmented by the recently-developed framework for College and Career Success, including internships, Capstone projects, and college awareness activities.

The district has multiple methods for providing deep learning experiences to students, including the Capstone project and the personal electronic devices. The strong student interest in the personal electronic devices ensures a level of engagement on which to build deep learning.

The applicant will build on its diverse city and cultures through Skyping and global education projects, and teachers will undergo cultural competence training, to strengthen students' understanding of diverse cultures and points of view. More detail regarding the global projects and other planned curricula would enhance the application.

Students will receive feedback regarding their academic performance and develop goal-setting and other 21st century skills through multiple paths: the Northwest Evaluation Association assessment tool and the feedback of personalized educational devices. They will learn to engage with content of their own choosing through the offerings of the Khan Academy or other systems.

The applicant provides evidence of multiple approaches to personalized learning, including digital instruction and project-based learning; the applicant aims to have the Common Core fully implemented by 2016-17, and is investigating various digital content. More progress toward the establishment of a Core-based digital curriculum would strengthen the application. Further, more information regarding how the plan will help students to develop goal-setting and critical thinking skills beyond utilizing the devices would assist in evaluating the efficacy of the proposed approach.

The applicant's plan to provide ongoing feedback through the Student Success Plans and other state assessment tools appears sound for the comprehensiveness of the data to be collected and the multiple forums for its review, such as school counseling sessions or parent meetings. The training activities associated with the proposed Student Advisory Program and other programs will prepare students to use their Student Success Plans and personalized education devices. As students surveyed expressed interest in the devices and in the program, this appears to be a promising mechanism.

The applicant's plan to utilize personalized education devices to meet the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners is promising, but the application would benefit from information regarding additional supports for these populations.

The applicant provides a thoughtful approach to its learning strategy that would benefit from more detail regarding the development of key skills and the development of learners with special needs. Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides strong evidence of a high -quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready, including an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or graduation requirements. The plan, similar to that offered in response to C1, presents goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.</p> <p>The applicant's plan includes a robust series of professional development opportunities, including building on existing professional learning communities; efforts to develop personalized learning, differentiated instruction, and social/emotional and academic strengths -- key components to the success of this initiative. Coaches, specialists, and central Office support will supplement the instruction. Further, these teams' variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise appear well-poised to provide teachers the tools needed to evaluate student strengths and needs and modify instructional approaches as necessary.</p> <p>The project-based learning component of the plan, including the Capstone Project requirement, will help shift learning dynamics, but the applicant is not as far along in its adoption of the Core as would be helpful to students. Without that completed core, information regarding supplementary curriculum that is college- and career-ready and/or digitally-based would strengthen the application.</p> <p>The district has moved toward a data-based culture in evaluating its programs' effect on student achievement, starting with the central office and cascading to individual schools. The various components -- including observations, online video-based training, and professional learning communities -- appear to compliment each other and offer a 360 degree view of the implementation efforts. The applicant has strong initiatives underway to assess students three times annually and to move to standards-based report cards; in doing so, the district will offer multi-year training for teachers. Further, the rubric-based, research-validated teacher, administrator, and staff evaluation processes appear robust enough to provide actionable information to teachers to design the most effective personalized learning environments.</p> <p>Similarly, the applicant has several tools in place to continuously improve progress toward increasing student performance for all students: the variety of approaches, including leadership coaches, principal residency programs, and a program to support administrators in servicing ELL and special education students, takes into account the differentiated learning styles of students and administrators.</p> <p>The applicant does not include sufficient detail regarding its high-quality learning sources for students.</p> <p>The breadth of the applicant's plan to provide students with effective and highly effective teachers and administrators is noteworthy for its efforts to strengthen existing teachers while reaching out to graduate schools and recruiting nationally for teachers in hard-to-fill subject areas. The plan also recognizes the reality that the new evaluation system may induce or force some less-effective teachers to leave, but does not provide detail on how this process might take place.</p> <p>The applicant has a strong grasp of the critical inputs to high-quality professional development in a personalized learning environment. Therefore, this applicant scored in the high range.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	14

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant shows strong evidence of a high-quality plan that demonstrates that the applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning. Through its Portfolio Model transformation, the LEA central office has been realigned to provide varying levels of autonomy to schools based on student achievement, with incentives for improved student performance.</p> <p>The current system may offer less flexibility than may be needed with the lowest-performing schools, although it appears that as students' achievement improves, schools receive greater autonomy in decisionmaking. Schools will be incentivized to gain additional autonomy, which ultimately aligns teacher, principal, and district goals. The district has changed its graduation policies to support student progression based on demonstration of mastery rather than attendance or seat time and is flexible in allowing students extended year, extended day, or additional time at a given grade level. District policies</p>		

also allow mastery to be demonstrated through multiple opportunities, including Service Learning Projects and Capstone Experiences, and mastery is defined against Common Core State Standards. Task forces are also looking into the handling of homework and credit for on-line work.

Professional development training, new educational software, and other supports provide evidence of the significant commitment and resources being devoted to students with disabilities.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

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

The applicant shows strong evidence of a high-quality plan in which the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning .

The applicant's proposed plan to equip all high school students with a laptop is wisely supplemented with proven training support from community partnerships; the Parent Engagement Framework provides multiple, culturally-competent ways in which to engage families in their child's education through academic and technical support.

The applicant's proposed Technology Town Hall to bring together principals, teachers, students, and parents, is an excellent way to promote community engagement with the new technological changes to student reporting. Offering students the opportunity to teach parents how to utilize the Parent Portal is another strong approach to ensuring student and parent buy-in.

A major district initiative will combine multiple existing data systems into an interoperable Power School data base, which will offer parents and students the opportunity to review different data streams in one format; it is unclear whether the data will be downloadable in open format.

Further, the district's intranet will provide considerable resources for school system employees to share information, tools, and insights, another forward-looking use of technology that will benefit instructors and students.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant shows moderate evidence of a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The proposal indicates that a consultant will develop a two-stage evaluation and Continuous Improvement Plan. While the applicant indicates that the proposed plan will likely cover most elements of a high-quality plan, a detailed Continuous Improvement Plan would help evaluate the objectives, activities, accountability, and interdependencies of the CIP.

The focus on measures at the beginning, middle, and at full implementation suggests opportunities for formative assessments that can be utilized by the Strategic Innovation Manager for program updates. The applicant's communication plans, detailed more fully in E2, present a variety of modalities for sharing the results of the implementation process.

Therefore, the applicant has scored in the medium range.

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

The applicant offers moderate evidence of a high-quality plan for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. The various elements -- the various reports, website offerings, newsletters, and intranet communications -- are impressive in their scope, coverage, and variety; stakeholders will have multiple ways to learn about the initiative's progress. The variety of platforms ensures that interested stakeholders will have easy access to implementation

information.

The proposal would be strengthened by a formal plan that includes timelines, responsibilities, goals, and activities to carry out communications.

Therefore, the applicant has scored in the middle range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup , with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures for its 6-12 population.

The rationale of utilizing the District Performance Index (DPI) and School Performance Index (SPI) appears sound, as the measures cover math, reading, writing, and science and are sensitive to subgroup performance tracking. The specific performance level chosen -- GOAL -- has been linked to college and career readiness by research studies. The proposed academic and health/social measures for the middle school and high school populations of attendance and discipline, as well as the internship measure for college and career-readiness, appear to capture important contributors to student achievement, although the internship measure goals need to be identified for subgroups.

The proposed goals for rates of highly-effective teachers and principals seem too ambitious and perhaps not achievable, as some measures (such as those for all Hispanic students) are expected to rise 10-fold by the post-grant period. Further, the Hispanic, English Language Learners, and Students with Disabilities measures are projected to rise 30-40% from 2016-17 to 2017-18 alone.

The goals for effective teachers/principals seem more reasonable, although some seem very ambitious, such as tripling rates for ELL students by the post-grant period. The plan's focus on English Language Learners, however, may make this ambitious goal a reality.

Therefore, this applicant has scored in the high range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology.

Although the proposal would be strengthened by the elements of a high-quality plan -- timelines, responsible parties, activities, goals -- the narrative provides suggests an excellent and proven evaluator will be in charge of developing the implementation evaluation. Further, the proposed elements of the evaluation plan within the narrative show a 360 degree view of the implementation process, from teacher understanding of the new assessment tools to stakeholder comfort with technological devices to the efficacy of the Advisory Program and the alignment of the various systems. The program is ambitious and detailed in its scope.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides strong evidence of the applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and Tables, that (a) Identifies all funds that will support the project (e.g., Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds); (b) Is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal; and (c) Clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities.

The applicant identifies a variety of public and private resources that will supplement the RttT-D funding, including \$25 million in past corporate and philanthropic support, and plans to implement the various elements of this initiative with its own funds if not funded. Outside support is substantial, with an estimated \$38 million in outside funding in total. The funding levels for the Personalized Instruction, Technology, and Student Development Plan Budgets seem reasonable, with

the budget to support student's College and Career development especially comprehensive. With a budget very dependent on new personnel, sustainability will be an important indicator of the success of this project.

Various one-time investments are highlighted.

Therefore, the applicant has scored in the high range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant, including support from State and local government leaders, financial support, and a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

The current budget shows significant public and private financial support, a sign of the commitment of the initiative's various stakeholders to its success.

The Strategic Innovations Manager will be tasked with developing sustainability strategies, and the applicant appears to have a history of federal, state, and private support to sustain the program on some level. More evidence of a sustainability strategy would be helpful to the application. The key strategy appears to be continual communication with various stakeholders, especially financial supporters, through meetings and other publications. While this is helpful, it does not offer the evidence of sustainable funding being readily available.

A high-quality plan, with responsibilities, timelines, and activities, would strengthen the proposal and provide additional insights to the applicant's plan for sustainability.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the middle range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant shows moderate evidence of the integration of public and private resources to augment schools' resources by providing a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership to support the plan described in Absolute Priority 1. The Hartford Partnership for Student Success (HPSS) has six years of experience in bringing together sustainable partnerships with a variety of community organizations; the partnership appears to be dynamic in the use of community advisory groups and community assessments conducted by a university partner to continue to improve its offerings.

The applicant offers a variety of compelling and creative ideas for measuring student educational and social-emotional growth; however, the application would benefit from both more concrete, measurable definitions (eg., "School is welcoming and respectful of parents") and more specific targets around those measures.

More detail about how specific measures would be tracked (when measured, by what evaluative tool) would strengthen the proposal, as well as more detail about the process to utilize the data to target resources for students, including high-needs students.

The applicant provides good detail regarding the integration of education and other services through school-based Health and Mental Health services, Youth Development services, and Parent Engagement offerings.

Surveys and resource analyses will attempt to identify the needs and assets of students, schools, and the community at large. The description of the decisionmaking process and infrastructure would benefit from more detail as to which group(s) have the decisionmaking authority and responsibility for selecting, implementing, and evaluating supports. Similarly, more detail about the assessment of implementation progress would be helpful in evaluating the overall vision for the proposed program of community supports.

The Parent engagement strategy, including offering 50% representation of the School Governance Team to parents, seems to be sound for gaining parent buy-in to the success of this multi-agency initiative. Finally, the proposed performance measures seem ambitious yet achievable and the Capstone Project in particular looks poised to have a significant impact on college and career readiness goals.

Therefore, the applicant scored in the middle range.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core assurance areas to create personalized learning environments to deepen student learning with the goal of achieving college- and career readiness.</p> <p>Hartford's demonstrated success throughout its tenure within the Portfolio school reform model shows that it has the state and LEA support, infrastructure, and community commitment to support flexible operational models implementing personalized learning environments. The plan offers a significant investment in technological and counseling supports, along with significant project based learning, such as Capstone Projects and Internships, to prepare students for college and career.</p> <p>The proposed plan also offers significant investments in training for students, parents, and teachers to utilize new Core-aligned assessment tools and learning. The proposal would benefit from more specifics around digital curriculum choices and more detailed high-quality plans, but clearly a lot of thought and creativity has gone into the development of this proposal.</p> <p>The district has enjoyed significant public and private financial support, and plans to implement many of these reforms with or without funding from this grant. This reflects the district's commitment to personalized learning environments and making Hartford Public Schools successful for all of its students.</p> <p>Therefore, the applicant has met Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	173
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