



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0048TX-1 for La Joya Independent School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District describes a reform vision that will restructure educational services provided at the middle and secondary school levels.

(1)(a) Although the applicant describes what they are prepared to do in the four core educational assurance areas, the applicant did not give examples of what is currently being done in the four core educational assurance areas: adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and turning around the lowest-achieving schools.

Standards (Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy):

- The applicant demonstrates its commitment to the core educational assurance areas and, as an LEA within a State that has adopted college- and career-ready standards, is committed to preparing all students for college or career. Although the applicant indicates that their District is within a State that has adopted college- and career-ready standards, the applicant did not provide examples of what is currently being done in this area in their District.

Data systems (Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction):

- The applicant indicates that their target schools will be equipped to establish student and teacher data systems that measure teacher effectiveness and student growth and success. Student data, disaggregated by student group, parent socioeconomic status, and grades, will provide teachers with student performance data to design and improve the quality and delivery of instruction. These data systems will be used to measure teacher effectiveness and teacher preparation and to support the needs of teachers. The applicant did not provide examples of what is currently being done in this area in their District.

Strong teachers (Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most):

- The applicant offers teachers the opportunity and will pay for 90 teachers to obtain a Master's Degree in either science or mathematics. All teachers will be certified in the area that they are teaching; and all teachers not meeting the District's teacher effectiveness evaluation criteria shall be provided immediate support. The applicant indicates that principals whose campuses excel in the percentage of students by subgroup (85% or more), who meet minimum expectations in state mandated tests for all student groups, shall receive recognition and a bonus for the school to purchase student books and materials. The applicant did not provide examples of what is currently being done in this area in their District.

School improvement (Turning around the lowest achieving schools):

- The applicant will provide opportunities to enhance academic rigor through programs including 21st Century Skills, curriculum development, professional development for teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and mentoring for all learners. The applicant will target STEM academic enhancement through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The applicant will partner with the nationally recognized organization, Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) to promote equitable schooling for diverse students. The applicant did not provide examples of what is currently being done in this area in their district.

(1)(b) The applicant does not clearly describe an approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and

increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. The applicant indicates that the Graduating Excellent Millennium Scholars in Math and Science (GEMS) project will foster highly-motivated educators including highly qualified teachers and administrators working collaboratively in high performing learning communities in order to enhance academic rigor and preparation of all students. While the applicant indicates that the GEMS project will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student in math and science; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which student graduate from high school prepared for college and careers, the applicant does not provide evidence or describe the strategies for approaching these goals.

(1)(c) The applicant indicates that the District will create learning environments that will be designed to improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career-ready graduation requirements. The District will provide students with a personalized sequence of instructional content, support, and skill development designed to enable each student to achieve his or her individual learning goals. The participating schools will use instructional approaches and environments, through high-quality content, including digital learning content that is aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. The applicant indicates that student data, disaggregated by student group, parent socioeconomic status, and grades, will provide teachers with student performance data to design and improve the quality and delivery of instruction. The applicant describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments in their description: Futurescape - What a college going culture will look like in the middle and high schools.

This criterion is scored in the middle of the medium range because the applicant did not give examples of what is currently being done in the four core educational assurance areas: adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction; recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and turning around the lowest achieving schools. The applicant describes what they are prepared to do in the four core educational assurance areas, but they did not explain how the proposed plan builds on the work being done. The applicant describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments in their description: Futurescape - What a college going culture will look like in the middle and high schools. The applicant indicates that student data, disaggregated by student group, parent socioeconomic status, and grades, will provide teachers with student performance data to design and improve the quality and delivery of instruction. The participating schools will use instructional approaches and environments, through high-quality content, including digital learning content that is aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.

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

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4

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(2)(a) The applicant did not describe an approach to implementation describing how their reform proposal, targeting the middle and high schools, will support high-quality LEA-level implementation of the proposal. The La Joya Independent School District indicates that all of the La Joya ISD middle and secondary campuses will participate in the grant activities. The applicant did not describe the process that was used to select the schools to participate or why the reform proposal is not a K-12 LEA-level or entire school-level implementation. The applicant did not clearly describe how many students will participate in the proposed RTT-D grant program each year because the applicant indicates that it will use a Phased Implementation Approach, which means that one school starts small while gradually preparing the entire campus environment to implement change.

La Joya ISD has three high schools with several feeder middle schools. Three years are proposed for each feeder pattern of schools to implement the activities. For each high school and feeder middle schools, the implementation includes three phases, each taking a year. The applicant describes these three phases: Stage I: Planning implementation of a personalized system of instruction, establishing structures, and preparing personnel (all personnel are trained and personalization of instruction tools are piloted and prepared for implementation during the second year); Stage II: Full implementation (implementation of the personalization of instruction model and on-going collection of data to indicate the aggregated effectiveness of the various tools); Stage III (institutionalization and sustainability (on-going collection of the data on the success of the reform effort and ensure the institutionalization of those efforts that work).

(2)(b) The applicant indicates in the narrative that there will be a total of 18 schools and 13,820 students impacted by this grant reform proposal, but the applicant indicates in the chart that 14,200 students will participate. The applicant indicates that the following schools will participate in the proposed project: Lorenzo de Zavala Middle; Cesar Chavez Middle; Memorial Middle School; Ann Richards Middle; Irene M. Garcia Middle; Juan D. Salinas Middle; Domingo Trevino Middle; La Joya High; Juarez-Lincoln High; HOPE Academy; College & Career Center; Palmview High School; Jimmy Carter Early College High School; Thelma Rosa Salinas STEM Early College High School; La Joya West Academy; La Joya East Academy; and La Joya Early College High School.

(2)(c) The applicant effectively demonstrates that the total number of participating students will be 13,820; the number of students from low-income families is 13,616, or 97.16%; the number of high-need students is 8,969 students, or 64%; and the number of participating educators is 1,354.

This criterion is scored in the lower end of the medium range because the applicant did not describe an approach to implementation describing how their reform proposal, targeting the middle and high schools, will support high-quality LEA-level implementation of the proposal. The applicant did not describe the process that was used to select the schools to participate or why the reform proposal is not a K-12 LEA-level or entire school-level implementation. The applicant names the schools (middle and high schools) that will participate in the grant activities. The applicant provides clear data that the percentage of participating students from low-income families is 97.16% and the percentage of high-need students is 64%. It is unclear, since the applicant indicates that La Joya ISD has three high schools, with a number of feeder middle schools, how there are ten (10) high schools that are listed in the school demographics of participating schools.

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

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4

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District describes a few of the qualities of a high-quality plan, (the overarching goals, the activities to be undertaken, the parties responsible for implementing the activities) on how the reform proposal will help the applicant reach its outcome goals for the participating middle and secondary schools. The applicant did not provide a timeline, the rationale for the activities, or the parties responsible for implementing the activities, or the overall credibility of the plan, which are required in a high-quality plan. Although the applicant describes a plan for meaningful reform to reach its outcome goals, the applicant did not describe LEA-wide reform and change to be able to reach its outcome goal of district-wide reform and change. The applicant did not describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

The applicant describes its plan for reform and change that includes a logic model that will transform teaching and learning in STEM, establish continuum to sustain impact, and provide innovation in STEM scholarship and careers. The applicant aligns inputs, outputs, outcomes (impact), overarching goals, assumptions, and external factors. The overarching goals include the following: district-wide reform and change; college-ready students; transformation of teaching and learning in STEM; a leadership continuum to sustain impact; innovation in STEM scholarship and careers; and equity, access, and excellence in education. Although the applicant indicates that one goal is district-wide reform and change, there is not a plan for reform and change beyond the participating middle and secondary schools in the district. The aligned outputs include the following: implementation of a comprehensive district-wide college going culture (it is unclear how this culture will be implemented beyond the participating middle and secondary schools in the District); strengthening of mathematics and science instruction with special focus on the middle and high school grades; institutionalization of personalized instruction for every student; strengthening of teacher quality in the content areas of math and science at the middle and high school levels; strengthening effective home-school partnerships to support graduation and college success; and integration of technology to improve personalization of instruction; and strengthening leadership of teachers and principals.

This criterion is scored in the lower part of the medium range because the applicant demonstrates a reform and change plan for all middle and secondary schools, that is included in the proposed project, but the applicant did not describe LEA-wide reform and change. The reform and change plan will support the following goals for the proposed project in the middle and secondary schools: college-ready students; transformation of teaching and learning in STEM; a leadership continuum to sustain impact; innovation in STEM scholarship and careers; and equity, access, and excellence in education. The applicant indicates that one goal is district-wide reform and change, but no meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools was included and is a weakness of the application. The applicant did not provide a timeline, the rationale for the activities, the deliverables, or the overall credibility of the plan, which are required in a high-quality plan.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(4)(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth): The applicant did not state annual goals for performance on summative assessments, so it is unclear if the applicant's vision will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by the performance on summative assessments. The applicant did not state annual goals, but provides growth targets (percentages), in the charts, for reading proficiency, mathematics proficiency, writing proficiency, science proficiency, and social studies proficiency overall and for all subgroups, by the spring of 2017. The District utilizes the Texas standardized assessment instrument, STAAR, and end-of-course tests as summative assessments to measure student growth. Beginning in spring 2014, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The STAAR program in grades 3-8 will assess the same subjects and grades that are currently assessed on TAKS. At the high school level, grade-specific assessments will be replaced with end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, Biology, English I, English II, and U.S. History. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is designed to assess the progress that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students make in learning the English language. The applicant indicates that students who fail to meet the STAAR minimum standards in reading and math in the eighth grade will not be promoted to high school. Students will be given three (3) opportunities to pass the STAAR in the eighth grade before being retained in middle school.

(4)(b) Decreasing achievement gaps: The applicant did not state annual goals for decreasing achievement gaps, so it is unclear if the applicant's vision will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by decreasing achievement gaps. The District indicates that the achievement gap will be measured by subtracting the percentage of students who are proficient (met Level II) in the comparison group (State-wide) and the identified subgroups, ELL and Special Education. The applicant did not state annual goals, but provides growth values (percentages), in the charts, for achievement gaps (subgroups and comparison groups) in reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies for all subgroups by the spring of 2017.

(4)(c) Graduation rates: The District describes its plan to provide individualized instruction for every student so the graduation rates will be 95%, which represents an increase of 38 percentage points from the baseline established at the beginning of the project for vulnerable student populations or subgroups. However, the applicant provides data in the chart indicating that the baseline (2012-2013) is 80% and the goal is 95% (2016-2017), which is a 15% increase in percentage points.

(4)(d) College enrollment: The District describes the college enrollment goal (by the end of five years, La Joya ISD will have a college enrollment rate which represents a 100% increase from the baseline established at the beginning of the project). This goal is unclear because the applicant provides baseline data for the overall college enrollment rate of 50% (2012-2013) and 80% (2016-17). The applicant did not provide annual growth values (percentages) in the charts for college enrollment subgroups.

This criterion is scored in the low medium range because the applicant did not state annual goals for performance on summative assessments, or for decreasing achievement gaps, so it is unclear if the applicant's vision 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. The District describes its plan to provide individualized instruction for every student so the graduation rates will be 95%, which represents an increase of 38 percentage points from the baseline established at the beginning of the project for vulnerable student populations or subgroups. However, the applicant provides data in the chart indicating that the baseline (2012-2013) is 80% and the goal is 95% (2016-2017), which is a 15% increase in percentage points. The District describes the college enrollment goal (by the end of five years, La Joya ISD will have a college enrollment rate which represents a 100% increase from the baseline established at the beginning of the project). This goal is unclear because the applicant provides baseline data for the overall college enrollment rate of 50% (2012-2013) and 80% (2016-17). The applicant did not provide annual growth targets (percentages) in the charts for college enrollment subgroups. The applicant did not indicate the rationale for the annual growth targets, overall and for subgroups. The applicant did not indicate the grade bands for the baseline percentages, overall and for the subgroups for each participating LEA in the performance on summative assessments, or for decreasing achievement gaps.

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	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District indicates that it began educational reform four years ago, through the Texas Funding for Education and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The applicant demonstrates the following evidence of advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching:

(1)(a) The La Joya Independent School District demonstrates examples of student learning outcomes. Although the applicant indicates that the math performance has increased from 75% (2008-2009) to 80% (2011-2012), the applicant did not provide information on the grade level or the test that was used for this performance. The applicant indicates that the reading performance stayed the same (81%) from 2008-2009 through 2010-2011.

The applicant does not provide data demonstrating a record of success in the past four years of closing achievement gaps. The District shows gains in the graduation rate from 76.3% to 84.3% during the past four years, as measured by Texas' Academic Excellence Indicator System. The applicant demonstrates that enrollment in 4-year colleges increased from 15% to 20% during the past four years. While enrollment in 4-year colleges increased, college enrollment in 2-year colleges decreased from 33% to 30% during the past four years.

(1)(b) The La Joya Independent School District demonstrates and provides data indicating that in its lowest performing schools, Palmview High School, De Zavala Middle School, and Garza Elementary, have demonstrated strong improvement in reading and mathematics. The applicant provides data indicating that Palmview High School showed gains in math performance from 2009-2012 (73% to 81%) and reading performance from 2009-2012 (86% to 91%). The applicant provides data indicating that De Zavala Middle School showed losses in math performance from 2009-2012 (76% to 70%) and gains in reading performance from 2009-2012 (77% to 79%). The applicant provides data indicating that Garza Elementary showed gains in math performance from 2009-2012 (56% to 87%) and reading performance from 2009-2012 (59% to 84%). Although the applicant indicates that Saenz Middle School has demonstrated improvement in reading and mathematics, the applicant did not provide data on the increased achievement. The applicant did not provide any achievement data for its persistently lowest-achieving schools during the 2012-13

school year; the applicant provides data for three years, but not the past year.

(1)(c) The La Joya Independent School District demonstrates evidence of student performance data being made available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. The applicant shares all of the District's and specific campus student performance data on the District website. This site lists federal and state accountability data for the past five years. The applicant also provides all the data (teacher qualifications, attendance, graduation, content specific enrollment) that comprises Texas' Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) on the District website. The applicant also describes the following sources that are used to share student performance data: letters to parents/guardians in English and Spanish, two District newspapers, Channel 17 (District designated cable TV channel) information, school-based flyers and memos, parent conferences and meetings, and community events. Each school has a member represented on the District Education Improvement Committee (DEIC). Each department or grade level at each of the campuses has a representative on the School Based Decision (SBDM) Committee. The Superintendent has established the Student Round Table Committee, a group that meets with the Head of Schools and gives input into major academic decisions. Parents and community members also participate in similar groups with the Superintendent to share their perspectives.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant demonstrates evidence of a clear record of success in some areas, but not in other areas, in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. Although the applicant indicates that the math performance has increased from 75% (2008-2009) to 80% (2011-2012), the applicant did not provide information on the grade level for this data. The applicant indicates that the reading performance stayed the same (81%) from 2008-2009 through 2010-2011, but it is unclear as to the grade level for this data. The District shows gains in the graduation rate from 76.3% to 84.3% during the past four years, as measured by Texas' Academic Excellence Indicator System. The applicant provides evidence of making reforms in (3) three of its (4) four persistently lowest-achieving schools. The applicant demonstrates that enrollment in 4-year colleges increased from 15% to 20% during the past four years. While enrollment in 4-year colleges increased, college enrollment in 2-year colleges decreased from 33% to 30% during the past four years. The applicant clearly describes how the District makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District demonstrates a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. The applicant indicates that the district maintains a transparent stance regarding public school finance. The District provides all information related to financial transparency on its webpage. The applicant has received, for two years in a row, the State Comptroller Leadership Circle Gold Award, recognition for meeting a high standard for financial transparency.

(2)(a) The District provides the actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff to the U.S. Census Bureau. Salary information is also available through the Curriculum and Evaluation website, which is located on the District website.

(2)(b) The District publishes actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff. Salary information is available through the Curriculum and Evaluation website located under Academic Excellence Indicator Systems Reports on the District website.

(2)(c) The District publishes actual salaries at the school level for teachers. The actual salaries at the school level for teachers is provided to the U.S. Census Bureau and is also available through the Curriculum and Evaluation, which is located on the District website.

(2)(d) The applicant provides actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. The applicant includes, on the District website the Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR), which is designed to make the financial operations of the La Joya Independent School District easier to understand.

Overall, this indicates that the La Joya Independent School District's spending information is available to anyone to prove where the money is spent.

This criterion is scored at the top of the high range because the applicant demonstrates evidence of transparency in LEA processes, practices in making actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration available to the public.

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

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7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District indicates that because learner centered instruction in Texas is supported by legislation, school districts have been given license to design their own instructional and student assessment processes that reflect personalized instruction. The applicant indicates that personalized learning environments in Texas include active learning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning,

problem-based learning, peer-led learning, team-based learning, and peer instruction. The applicant indicates that the Texas Education Code does not restrict schools from personalizing instruction.

The applicant thoroughly describes the Texas Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), which includes 51 criteria within eight domains reflecting the Proficiencies for Learner-Centered Instruction adopted in 1997 by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The applicant indicates that the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) role in the Race to the Top - District grant is very limited. The District will comply with the Office of Management and Budget's A-87, and all of the federal requirements will be followed by the schools.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant indicates that each of the primary components of this project fits within the current state legislation. A weakness of the application is that the LEA has not described the actual State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments. The applicant did not clearly describe the legal impetus to fully implement each major component of the project.

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

15

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District describes the process that the District completed to determine if it should move forward with the proposed application.

(a)(ii) The applicant did not provide a description of how students and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal, or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. The teachers provided input into the key components of personalized instruction and provided support for the proposed project, but the La Joya Independent School District has not demonstrated clear evidence of stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. The teachers filled out a paper ballot indicating support for the proposed project. The teachers also met and provided input into the key components of personalized instruction as described on the Logic Model Task Sheet. The La Joya Independent School District does not engage in collective bargaining, and a survey was developed with the results indicating that at least 91% of the teachers from the participating schools support the proposal. The data indicates that out of the respondents, 91% or 921 of 1,014 teachers, specified that they support the Race to the Top - District initiative. Since 1,354 educators will be involved in the proposed project, approximately 70% of the total educators specified that they support the proposed project. The applicant indicates that the proposal was presented at 18 focus groups with parents who overwhelmingly support this proposal and have made a commitment to partner with the schools through a PTA Comunitario, an innovative program for outreaching and engaging parents as partners with the schools for student success. The applicant did not provide evidence of the questions that were asked during the 18 focus groups with parents to enlist their feedback and involvement.

(b) Although the applicant provides clear letters of support from key stakeholders, such as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, the business community, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education, the applicant did not describe evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. Letters of support were obtained from the following: the Intercultural Development Research Association; Congressman Cuellar; The University of Texas-Pan American; Harvard University; South Texas College; Texas A & M International University; AVID; Texas Graduate Center; Mission Psychological Center; the majors of four cities (La Joya, Palmview, Sullivan City, and Penitas); students, parents, teachers, principals, administrators; Communities in Schools; Teaching and Mentoring Communities; and other local community organizations.

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the teachers provided input into the key components of personalized instruction and provided support for the proposed project, and families were involved in focus groups, but the La Joya Independent School District has not demonstrated clear evidence of community member engagement throughout the development of the proposal or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback. The teachers filled out a paper ballot indicating support for the proposed project. The teachers also met and provided input into the key components of personalized instruction as described on the Logic Model Task Sheet. The applicant indicates that the proposal was presented at 18 focus groups with parents who overwhelmingly support this proposal and have made a commitment to partner with the schools through a PTA Comunitario, an innovative program for outreaching and engaging parents as partners with the schools for student success. The applicant did not provide evidence of the questions that were asked during the 18 focus groups with parents to enlist their feedback and involvement. It does not appear that students were directly involved and engaged in the initial development stage of the proposal, although several students provided their letters of support for the proposed project. The applicant includes letters of support that detail commitment by key community stakeholders.

However, the narrative and the letters of support do not detail the engagement of key community members in the development of the proposal or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District describes the activities to be undertaken, but not all of the components of a high-quality plan (the key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the deliverables, and the overall credibility of the plan) are evident for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

(a)(i) The applicant did not describe a clear plan for students to understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. The La Joya GEMS will assist students with learning that is the key to their academic success in meeting graduation requirements and in accomplishing their educational goals. Teachers will work with students to identify and pursue learning and developmental goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or requirements.

(a)(ii) The applicant describes activities for students to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college-ready curriculum, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals, but did not describe a clear plan for personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

(a)(iii) The applicant describes a plan for students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The schools will adopt seven benchmarks specifically designed to ensure success: Mission-Driven Leadership, T-STEM Culture, Student Outreach, Recruitment and Retention, Teacher Selection, Development and Retention, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Strategic Alliances and Academy Advancement and Sustainability. These benchmarks will allow for student engagement and exposure to models of real-world designs.

(a)(iv) The applicant provides a plan for students to have access and exposure to contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. Through project based learning opportunities, students will have access to diverse cultures, context, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. The applicant describes implementing the highly effective Math Smart! and Science Smart! Models and processes developed by IDRA to strengthen these key subjects at the middle and high school levels.

(a)(v) The applicant indicates that students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, but the applicant did not describe how this will occur. The Texas College and Career Readiness Standards will assist the students in producing deeper engagement of thinking as opposed to traditional high school standards that focus on basic understanding of knowledge and skills.

(b)(i) The applicant indicates that each student will have access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable each student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and to ensure that he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready, but did not describe a plan for how this will be achieved.

(b)(ii) The learning plan provides evidence that students will experience a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments. The applicant indicates that personalized and regular feedback will be provided to students and parents, and the instruction of students will be adjusted to ensure that they are successful and on the path to graduating college ready.

(b)(iii) The applicant describes a plan for students to be involved in content, including digital learning content aligned with college-and career-ready standards. The schools will use digital learning content as appropriate and aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements.

(b)(iv)(A) The applicant indicates that the proposed project will frequently update individual student data, that can be used for ongoing and regular feedback, to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready graduation requirements. All students will be administered the Learning Style Profile (LP), and the results of this instrument, in combination with students' performance in the state mandated tests, will be shared with teachers who will use these data to plan and differentiate instruction during class time.

(b)(iv)(B) The applicant describes the strategies for students to receive learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills. Each student and their families will receive training that will help them to access the e-portfolio to ensure that they have access to ongoing and regular feedback. Students will receive training to develop life skills, professional skills, and postsecondary education skills. Students will be required to take an interest inventory as well as a learning style an/or multiple intelligence survey.

(b)(v) The applicant describes how accommodations will be provided for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The teachers will use information about past student achievement, data from the LP, and developmental information to create a personalized plan for each of the low-performing students.

(c) The applicant describes mechanisms that are in place to ensure that teachers have the understanding to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage student learning. However, the applicant did not clearly describe how the students will be trained to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources in order to track and manage their learning. The applicant will purchase Computer on Wheels (COW) to be distributed to middle schools and high schools. Technology will be utilized in the implementation of the computerized, Internet-based Agile Mind curriculum. This technology will be used with the ongoing assessment tools that provide feedback with real time reporting. Each classroom will be equipped with a learning center with at least five computers, iPad for participation of groups in project-based instruction, and clickers to track student responses, as well as a Smart Board. Each student will be assigned an iPad to communicate with the teachers for homework help and to review progress with parents. These tools and resources will engage and empower learners, only if the training and support for students is built into the proposed program.

Overall, the applicant did not provide the qualities 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. This criterion is scored in the middle range because the applicant did not describe 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. The applicant describes an approach to implementing instructional strategies and activities for all participating students that enable students to accelerate students' learning based on their needs. The applicant did not clearly describe how the students will be trained to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

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

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11

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District describes some of the qualities of a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities) for improving leading and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant did not provide information on these qualities of a high-quality plan: the rationale for the activities to be undertaken or the overall credibility of the plan. All participating educators will engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to improve leading and teaching as evident in the following methods:

(a)(i) The applicant describes the approach for the training and professional development of educators that improves their capacity to support the implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic need to ensure that all students will graduate on time and college- and career-ready. All participating educators will participate in 100 hours of professional development focusing on the implementation of a system for personalizing instruction and the effective use of student data systems to effectively plan and deliver instruction. After the first 100 hours, 16 hours of professional development in personalizing instruction will be required each year.

(a)(ii) The applicant demonstrates that teacher preparation and training will incorporate elements from the School of One approach that requires that teachers become responsible for a defined set of skills on the learning progression, rather than all of them. Lessons can be delivered to groups of students that can range from as few as three and as many as twenty-four. The applicant indicates that students will progress at their own rate, with teachers delivering the same lesson more than one time in a school year to different groups of students. The applicant indicates that lead teachers will be designated to focus on small group instruction and also support other teachers as coaches and mentors in specific content areas until they are ready for more complex content. Teachers will provide individualized and personalized outreach and support for each student through the use of the state-of-the-art technology and quality interaction.

(a)(iii) The applicant describes professional development opportunities that will allow teachers to come together as teams and to review the learning expectations in order to select the most effective methods of assessment to measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. The applicant describes professional development activities that will provide for the identification and usage of actionable data systems to guide campus activities that will respond to students' academic needs and to help ensure that all students will graduate on time and college- and career-ready. The applicant will conduct a five-day Leadership Academy during the summers of 2014-2017 for all school administrators to focus on the role of administrators in promoting, supporting, and advocating for the personalization of instruction, and the need for differentiated instruction for diverse student groups.

(a)(iv) The La Joya Independent School District indicates that the District will consider both professional practices, as well as student performance data, when evaluating teachers. The applicant indicates that a needs assessment will be conducted annually to ensure that professional development is planned to address existing needs. The applicant indicates that the data is triangulated with teacher observations conducted by administrators, supervisors, and lead teachers. The utility-based evaluation will address the effectiveness of the training on teacher practice and student achievement.

(b)(i)(ii)(iii) Although the applicant indicates that all participating educators will have access to, and know how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate how to accelerate student progress, the applicant did not effectively explain the resources that will be used or the specific process and tools that will be used, as well as all of the staff who will be involved in providing continuously improving feedback

about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

(c)(i)(ii) It is unclear how the professional development process provides for training in the student mastery unit data system and allows for the transparent sharing of data. The applicant did not clearly describe information, from such sources as the District’s teacher evaluation system, that will assist school leaders and school leadership teams in assessing, and taking steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement. The applicant did not effectively describe the training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

(d) The applicant indicates that preference will be given to staffing the highest need schools with the most highly effective teachers and principals. The applicant indicates that attention will be given to critical high need areas, such as mathematics, science and special education by evaluating student scores, individual student value gained, student assessment, and feedback from teachers and parents. The applicant has advisory councils in place that help report on school progress on a continuous basis to the community and relevant stakeholders. Although the applicant indicates that preference will be given to staffing highest need schools with the highly effective teachers and principals, the applicant was inadequate in describing a high-quality plan on how to ensure more students receive instruction from highly effective teachers and principals.

This criterion was scored in the medium range because the applicant indicates that high-quality professional practices will be developed, but the applicant did not provide the details on the strategies and the implementation of the strategies that will be used to improve instruction and to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards. The applicant did not provide information on these qualities of a high-quality plan: the rationale for the activities to be undertaken or the overall credibility of the plan. The applicant did not clearly describe information, from such sources as the District’s teacher evaluation system, that will assist school leaders and school leadership teams in assessing, and taking steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement. The applicant did not effectively describe the training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. Although the applicant indicates that all participating educators will have access to, and know how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate how to accelerate student progress, the applicant did not effectively explain the resources that will be used or the specific process and tools that will be used, as well as all of the staff who will be involved in providing continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs. Although the applicant indicates that preference will be given to staffing highest need schools with the highly effective teachers and principals, the applicant did not describe a specific plan on how to ensure more students receive instruction from highly effective teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	7

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District describes practices, but not the policies and rules, that facilitate personalized learning to support project implementation. The applicant did not describe the components of a high-quality plan (goals, the timeline, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the proposed plan) to support implementation through comprehensive policies that provide every student, educator, and participating classroom with the support and resources that they need.

(a) The applicant did not describe the policies or rules that facilitate personalized learning by organizing the LEA central office, or the governance structure, to provide support and services to all participating schools. The applicant indicates that each principal, as a student advocate, promotes an interdisciplinary approach across grade levels, with an expectation for teachers to collaborate as a team to address students' needs at the different grade levels and content areas. The applicant indicates that with the institutionalization of personalized learning, academic growth will be accelerated and the achievement gap that presently exists will begin to close. The applicant effectively indicates that campus support teams will be established with representatives from all departments to ensure that each school uses the District’s resources and support services to implement the required initiatives. These campus support teams will meet once a month at the central office level to provide summaries from all schools. These teams will also visit the schools to receive immediate feedback on needs and support for the proposed project. The applicant did not provide information on the individuals who will participate in the campus support teams. The applicant effectively indicates that specialists in the following areas of curriculum and instruction will provide resources and support services to all participating schools: Advanced Academic Services, Athletic, Bilingual/ESL, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Content Area (Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies) Departments, Curriculum and Evaluation, Early Childhood, Elementary Education, Federal and State Programs, Fine Arts, Migrant Education, Physical Education/Health, Secondary Education, Section 504 / GEH and Dyslexia, Special Education, and Staff Development. The applicant effectively indicates that specialists in the following areas of administration and finance will provide resources and support services: Accounting, Accounts Payable, Asset Management, Budget & Finance, Child Nutrition Services, Custodial, Employee Assistance Benefits, Facilities, Payroll, Physical Plant

Operations, Purchasing and Warehouse Operations, Risk Management, School Support Services, and Transportation.

(b) The applicant did not describe the policies or rules that facilitate personalized learning by providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors, such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets. The applicant indicates an understanding of the need for providing school leadership teams in the participating schools. The District has contracted the Organizational Health Diagnostic and Development Corporation to establish and maintain effective schools and assist individual campuses in their efforts to enhance decision-making, develop cohesiveness, ensure quality, and improve autonomy. The applicant effectively indicates that key staff members, along with the principal, will attend meetings throughout the year conducted by the Organizational Health Institute (OHI) where they will receive the following training: establishing parameters and focus for quality; making decisions closest to the point to implementation; developing empowered, interdependent individuals and teams; developing cohesive teams and building a community; and granting autonomy with interdependence. The training will allow the campus leadership to use qualitative and quantitative data to improve the organizational health of the campus. The applicant did not provide information identifying the key staff members, who will attend meetings along with the principal throughout the year, conducted by the Organizational Health Institute (OHI).

(c) The applicant did not describe the policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning by giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The applicant does describe practices that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The applicant indicates that to be able to provide students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the time spent on a topic, La Joya ISD implements Compass Learning for qualifying students. The program provides credit opportunities for high school students. The program provides specialized learning paths to accelerate instruction for struggling students. This program is being used at high school campuses through a laboratory setting with two instructors at each campus and includes course work for the following areas of study: English I, English II, English III, English IV, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Math Models, Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Physical Science, Integrated Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Systems, U.S. History I, U.S. History II, U.S. Government, Civics, World Geography, and Economics. The La Joya ISD has established small enrollment entities where students receive individualized attention based on needs. The La Joya East and West Academies provide students with small group and personalized instruction in a nontraditional educational setting.

(d) The applicant did not describe the policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning by giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. The applicant does describe practices indicating that students will be given the opportunity to focus on academic requirements at their own pace of learning at the College and Career Center (CCC) and the La Joya ISD's two high schools that have established the Texas Education Agency-endorsed Early College High Schools. At the College and Career Center (CCC), students are able to be enrolled up to the age of 26. In this school, students are also given small group/personalized instruction, while completing high school requirements. In addition to Compass Learning, the students at the CCC may also focus solely on state assessment preparation classes, GED preparation, and/or a prescribed, individualized plan for high school completion. For students who are first generation college candidates, the District has established the Texas Education Agency-endorsed Early College High Schools in which students have the opportunity to complete high school while obtaining a college degree (associate).

(e) The applicant did not describe the policies and rules that facilitate personalized learning by providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The applicant does describe practices indicating that learning resources and instructional practices are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The applicant indicates that eligible students with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education, which may include instruction in the regular classroom, special education classroom, home, hospital, or instruction through approved contracts. Instructional arrangements or settings are based on the individual needs and individual educational plans (IEPs) of eligible students receiving special education services. The applicant describes mainstream (inclusion) - providing services in a regular classroom with special education support; resource classroom - providing services to students in a self-contained classroom for 50 percent or more of the regular school day on a regular school campus; off home campus - providing services in an inter-district program, by District personnel at a non-district facility, or at a District campus that provides only special education and related services; homebound - providing services at home or hospital bedside; nonpublic day school - providing services through a contractual agreement with a nonpublic school for special education; vocational adjustment class - providing services to a student who is placed at a job site with regularly scheduled direct involvement by special education personnel in the implementation of the student's IEP; residential care and treatment facility (non-District resident) - providing services to students who reside in a care and treatment facility and whose parents do not reside within the boundaries of the District. The applicant also clearly describes the learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to English Language Learners. The Bilingual/ESL programs outline guidelines of principles that characterize an effective school setting in which English Language Learners are able to realize their fullest potential. The District offers the following programs to better serve the ELL population: One-Way Dual Language Enrichment Program; Early-Exit Transitional Bilingual Program; and Bilingual Classrooms for Recent Immigrants (BCRI Program). At the secondary schools, programs offered include: Content-Based ESL program; Newcomer Classroom For Recent Immigrants (NCRI); English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); and Foundations of Intensive Language Acquisition and Support (FILAS).

This criterion is scored in the medium range because the applicant does describe practices that facilitate personalized learning in organizing the LEA

governance structure; providing school leadership teams; giving students the opportunities to progress and earn credit on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic; giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. However, the applicant did not describe any of the policies or rules that facilitate personalized learning by in organizing the LEA governance structure; providing school leadership teams; giving students the opportunities to progress and earn credit on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic; giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. A major weakness of this criterion is that the applicant did not describe a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies that provide every student, educator, and participating classroom with the support and resources that they may need.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The La Joya Independent District and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary learning resources both in and out of school to support GEMS. This will be accomplished through the District's website; stakeholders' quarterly bilingual meetings and newsletters; and campus parental meetings, in both English and the home language. The applicant describes the implementation of iPads that have been used extensively with English Language Learners (ELL) as a method for individuals to learn English. The iPads provide dictation features, so that teachers can provide opportunities for ELL learners to hear different accents common to the English language in the U.S. The applicant did not describe a plan for all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders to have access to the necessary tools, both in and out of school to support the implementation of the proposal.

(b) The La Joya Independent School District did not describe the LEA school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by providing evidence of the plan for ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, that could include peer support online support, or local support. The applicant did not describe how GEMS will ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have the appropriate technical support through iPads; or local support through television programming, newsletters, and other bilingual media.

(c) The La Joya Independent School District will allow parents and students to export information through the District's online open data information technology information system, and to use the data in other electronic learning systems to support personalized learning. The applicant indicates that the District will contract with Brightstorm and Khan Academy to provide instructional videos that are aligned to textbooks in the participating middle and high schools. The applicant indicates that all individual student records will be securely stored in existing data software (data collection and retrieval systems) accessible to relevant stakeholders.

(d) The La Joya Independent School District indicates that the targeted schools use interoperable data systems (system that uses a common, established structure so that data can easily flow from one system to another and in which data are in a non-proprietary, open format). The applicant indicates that the use of these systems will allow each campus to implement a data-driven personalized instructional system that is continuously being monitored for impact o the quality of instruction and academic performance. These systems will allow teachers to arrange different data sets (performance, self-efficacy, attendance, and education history) for each student and to prescribe instruction accordingly.

This criterion is scored in the medium range of points because the District ensures that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, will have access to necessary learning resources both in and out of school to support GEMS. The La Joya Independent School District will ensure that the targeted schools use interoperable data systems (system that uses a common, established structure so that data can easily flow from one system to another and in which data are in a non-proprietary, open format) to support personalized learning. The La Joya Independent School District will allow parents and students to export information through the District's online open data information technology information system, and to use the data in other electronic learning systems to support personalized learning. The applicant did not include all of the components of a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) or describe the comprehensive policies for the LEA and school infrastructure to support personalized learning. The applicant did not describe the LEA school infrastructure that supports personalized learning by providing evidence of the plan for ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, that could include peer support online support, or local support. The applicant did not describe the comprehensive policies that provide every student, educator, and classroom with the support and resources that they need, when and where they are needed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant, La Joya Independent School District, describes its evaluation methods, but the applicant did not provide a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. The applicant provides information that GEMS will conduct an evaluation that will focus on the progress of the project in achieving its objectives, the effectiveness of the project in meeting its objectives, the effects or impact of the project on the institution and the individuals involved in the proposed project, but the applicant did not describe how the evaluation will provide timely and regular feedback on the progress toward project goals or opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. The applicant will use quantitative and qualitative techniques in assessing program implementation, outcomes, and the impact of these major components of the evaluation design: assessment of program implementation (process or formative evaluation); assessment of program outcomes (outcome or summative evaluation); and assessment of program impact (impact evaluation). The evaluative data will include reviews of each participant's academic records; participants; records of attendance, placement and retention; observations; questionnaires, surveys, and interviews; case study and research approaches; video conference tapes and transcripts; and website data. The applicant lists the following methods of evaluation: archival review (of student, principal, and teacher evaluations); teacher participant profile sheets (to provide additional information about professional training); participant surveys (annual surveys of students, teachers, parents, principals); archival review of program documents (training and professional development calendar, course descriptions, support services, attendance records, placement and retention records, an quarterly reports); on-site observations and interviews (all participating teachers will be visited at least once per year); case study and research approaches (case study, involving classroom teachers, students, and parents will be selected and visited twice a year); video conference tapes and transcripts; and website data. Although the applicant describes evaluation methods, the applicant provides no information on how the results of the evaluation methods will be used to make adjustments and revisions to continuously improve its plans. The applicant did not address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top - District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.</p> <p>This criterion on the continuous improvement process is scored in the lower medium range of points because the applicant did not describe a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) that provides timely and regular feedback on the progress toward project goals or strategies on measuring the quality of its Race to the Top - District investments, such as professional development, technology, and staff. The applicant indicates that it will use a multi-tiered approach, which is not clearly described, to measure student performance; language development and STEM achievement in mathematics and science; professional development of all teaching personnel; integration and the use of technology; and staff performance in the areas of leadership and content areas. Although the applicant indicates that interim benchmarks will be developed in order to monitor progress in an ongoing manner, these benchmarks needed to be described in this plan for continuous improvement. Although the applicant states that it will provide methods of evaluations, the applicant did not describe the plan for making ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The applicant did not address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top - District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.</p>		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
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<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The La Joya Independent School District describes annual sharing of data and reports, but the applicant did not provide a clear plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement of the proposed project. The applicant describes the following ongoing communication and engagement for continuous improvement with internal and external stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant indicates that an external evaluator, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), will be contracted to assist in the evaluation and will provide annual information to stakeholders. The applicant indicates that IDRA is committed to sharing the results with all relevant stakeholders that will strengthen the local capacity to use meaningful data for positive action and results that will improve the teaching and learning environment. Although the applicant states this commitment, it did not describe a clear plan for the ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. • The applicant indicates that annual reports will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education and shared with all relevant stakeholders, including teachers, principals, parents, and the state education agency. The applicant did not provide a clear approach for ongoing communication and engagement. • The applicant indicates that all project evaluation will be grounded in the Government Performance and Results ACT (GPRA) performance indicators, which support the U.S. Department of Education's plan for ensuring success for each student. The applicant did not describe the GPRA performance indicators or how revisions will be made to improve the performance on GPRA indicators. 		
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This criterion is scored in the lower medium range because the applicant describes annual reports, but the applicant did not describe a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement of the proposed project. The applicant did not describe an approach to continuously improve its plans.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide all of the ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup (as defined in this notice), with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant described the rationale for selecting each applicant-proposed measure, but did not address how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant’s implementation success or areas of concern. The District did not provide information, for each applicant-proposed measure, on how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

The La Joya Independent School District provides the following twelve written performance measures that will be used in the proposed project:

For all students in all grades:

- a. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, whose teacher of record and principal are a highly effective teacher and a highly effective principal, as defined in this notice; and
- b. The number and percentage of participating students whose teacher of record and principal are an effective teacher and an effective principal, as defined in this notice.

For students in grades 6, 7, and 8:

- a. The number and percentage of participating students who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant’s on-track indicator, as defined in this notice. (The applicant did not provide the subgroups in the chart);
- b. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who have met minimum expectations in reading, math, and science as measured by the STAAR State standardized and mandated test administered annually. (The applicant provided this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with required annual targets); and
- c. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy in math and science as measured by a project developed self-efficacy instrument. (Rationale: Research suggests that a high level of self-efficacy supports high achievement in STEM areas. Relation to proposed plan: The proposed plan addresses math and science as critical disciplines because of the low enrollment and interest in the STEM areas. This measure will be reviewed on an annual basis for reliability and adjustments made as necessary). (The applicant has proposed this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with annual targets).

For students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12:

- a. The number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form;
- b. The number and percentage of participating students by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant’s on-track indicator;
- c. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who express an interest in enrolling and graduating from college in self-selected career of choice. (The applicant has proposed this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with required annual targets);
- d. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who graduate from high school with a Recommended High School diploma. (The applicant has proposed this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with required annual targets);
- e. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy in math and science as measured by a project-developed self-efficacy instrument. (Rationale: Research suggests that a high level of self-efficacy supports high achievement in STEM areas. Relation to proposed plan: The proposed plan addresses math and science as critical disciplines because of the low enrollment and interest in the STEM areas. This measure will be reviewed on an annual basis for reliability and adjustments made as necessary). (The applicant has proposed this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with annual targets);
- f. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who graduate with a minimum of 12 semester hours of college credit; and (Rationale: The number of participating students in dual credit courses is low compared to other districts in the area. The proposed plan seeks to increase the number of students, particularly English learners and low income who enroll in college. The district will review data each year to

increase its effectiveness in preparing these groups for college). (The applicant has proposed this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with annual targets):

g. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who enroll and graduate with a degree in a STEM related career. (Rationale: The number of graduates from La Joya high schools who enroll in a STEM related program at the university is low when compared to the state and regional statistics. The proposed plan seeks to increase the number of students in STEM related fields). (The applicant has proposed this performance measure written in the narrative, but not in a chart, with annual targets).

The applicant indicates that these measures are state mandated instruments that have been validated and tested for reliability with the different student groups by the Texas Education Agency. The applicant indicates that other measures used also meet the statistical requirements associated with validity and reliability.

This criterion is scored in the low range because the applicant did not describe all of the required 12 yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant describes six (6) of the required performance measures, as ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant described the rationale for selecting each applicant-proposed measure, but did not address how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. The District did not provide information, for each applicant-proposed measure, on how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes its investments in the evaluation of the five (5) objectives (implement a comprehensive district-wide college-going culture with particular emphasis at the middle schools and the high schools, personalize instruction for every students, implement a math and science academy at each of the high schools, integration of technology to improve personalization of instruction, and strengthen teacher quality and capacity). The applicant aligns each objective to performance indicators, methodology, instruments, and person responsible. The applicant did provide evidence of a high-quality plan to evaluate objectives that are tied to the investments (key goals, the activities to be undertaken, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities) to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the Race to the Top - District funded activities. Although the applicant provides the objectives for evaluating the effectiveness of the investments, the applicant did not provide information on the credibility of the plan (as judged by the information submitted as supporting evidence). Therefore, it is not clear how these five (5) project objectives will provide information on the effectiveness of investments to continuously improve its plans.

This criterion is scored in the lower medium range because the applicant did provide evidence of a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities) to evaluate objectives that are tied to the investments to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the Race to the Top - District funded activities. Although the applicant provides the objectives for evaluating the effectiveness of the investments, the applicant did not provide information on the credibility of the plan (as judged by the information submitted as supporting evidence). Therefore, it is not clear how these five (5) project objectives will provide information on the effectiveness of investments to continuously improve its plans.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The funds requested for the application include \$25,000,000 from RTT-D for funds to support the project and \$1,789,648 (Skyward - local funds for PEIMS data connection; DMAC - State Compensatory funds for online tools; OHI - Title I funds to cover training for individuals and teams; and ERO - local funds to cover Electronic Registrar Online that will keep track of staff professional development trainings) coordinate, implement, and manage the RTT-D funds and projects.

(b) The proposed budget describes the breakdown for personnel (\$2,712,500), fringe benefits (\$863,064), equipment, supplies (\$851,552), contractual (\$1,000,000), training stipends (1,645,000), and indirect costs (\$317,706). The salaries associated with the additional hiring of employees and personnel to implement the grant are justified and appropriate. The general supplies, instructional materials, professional development are minimal and reasonable for successful implementation. The costs associated with travel do not seem reasonable (\$4,407,600) for the four years of the proposed project. The costs for the equipment (\$8,794.478 Year one only) do not seem reasonable for purchasing Smart boards, desk top computers,

Mobis I Pads of teachers and students, Computers on Wheels, science STEM equipment for a science lab, and math equipment for campuses. The applicant did not provide a breakdown for the cost of each of the equipment (technology) items.

(c)(i) The applicant provides a description of all of the funds, but not a thoughtful rationale for the investments and priorities, that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources.

(c)(ii) The applicant identifies costs for one-time investments (curriculum materials, iPads and other technology, professional development), but did not identify those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period. The District did not describe plans to absorb or to ensure long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.

The applicant provides a description of all of the funds, but not a thoughtful rationale for the investments and priorities, that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources. The applicant identifies costs for one-time investments (curriculum materials, iPads and other technology, professional development), but did not identify those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period. The costs associated with travel do not seem reasonable (\$4,407,600) for the four years of the proposed project. The costs for the equipment (\$8,794.478 Year one only) do not seem reasonable for purchasing Smart boards, desk top computers, Mobis I Pads of teachers and students, iPads, Computers on Wheels, science STEM equipment for a science lab, and math equipment for campuses. The applicant did not provide a breakdown for the cost of each of the equipment (technology) items. The District did not describe plans to absorb or to ensure long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. This places the District in the lower medium range of points for this criterion.

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

The applicant did not describe a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for sustainability of the project's goals after the grant funding expires. The applicant will allocate District support for professional development funding to teachers so that they can continue to gain knowledge to maximize their learning to impact student achievement. The applicant indicates that 21st Century Skills components will remain and the District will continue to fund through state and federal resources, but did not identify the State and local government sources. The applicant indicates that flexible scheduling and the use of common planning periods for horizontal alignment and thematic links will continue. The District will continue with initiatives focused on monitoring ELLs and students in special education so that students who have traditionally struggled can remain on track for graduation. Also, sustainability will continue with flexible scheduling to provide students the opportunity to obtain high school credit courses, both for credit advancement and meeting graduation requirements. The applicant did not provide a description of how they will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

Overall, the applicant did not describe a high-quality plan (key goals, the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, the parties responsible for implementing the activities, and the overall credibility of the plan) for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant did indicate that the District will allocate professional development funding to teachers so that they can continue to maximize their learning to impact student achievement. The applicant did not identify the support from State and local government leaders, financial support, or a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. The applicant did not address how they will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget, and include an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds.

Therefore, this criterion is scored in the lower end of the medium range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District demonstrates an explanation of the partnerships and how they will help to expand opportunities for participating students.

(1) The applicant provides a description of the partnership that it has formed with organizations to build an extensive school to career component of this project and for the after school program. The applicant will partner with UT Pan American, the Intercultural Development Research Association, and numerous community-based organizations to deliver the services outline for the GEMS project. These organizations include social

services agencies in the county that will provide partners that meet virtually on a quarterly basis to review progress and take the necessary action to ensure that project goals are on target. Other organizations include Communities in Schools, CBOs in the community, Teaching Mentoring Communities and the Regional Service Center 1. The applicant indicates that these partnerships will be guided by an MOA that explains how the partnerships will function with partnership goals and activities that will be evaluated for impact on the goals of the IDRA project.

(2) The applicant identifies population-level desired results for students in the targeted schools that align with and support the applicant's Race to the Top-District proposal. The applicant aligns each of the population groups (students; English Language Learners; students with a math and science interest; community-based organizations; parents; teachers; principals; counselors), with the type of result, and desired results. These results include both educational results and other educational outcomes, but not specific family and community supports. The applicant provides a measurement in three (3) of the population-level desired results. Several of the desired results do not contain measurable outcomes or targets so it is unclear how the results will be measured. For example, the following desired results do not contain a measurable outcome: parents partner with school personnel to ensure that student progresses and graduates college ready (family); more engaged students in the teaching learning process (greater student-teacher relationships); and principals and administrators value the contributions and create a partnership with parents (community engagement).

(3) La Joya ISD will provide, through its website, data on aggregate student achievement, school holding power data, graduation rates, college readiness, college enrollment, by grade, school, and school district. The applicant indicates that data will be posted each year upon receipt of data from the Texas Education Agency. The applicant did not describe how the partnership will track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for students in the participating schools. The applicant did indicate that the district will share progress quarterly toward reaching goals with partners. Data will be disaggregated by student population such as students with disabilities, English learners, low income, and other characteristics in which data are being collected. The applicant did not describe how the partnership will use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty (including highly mobile students), family instability, or other child welfare issues. The applicant indicates that the district will develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students. The applicant indicates that within eight years, the entire district will be implementing a personalizing instruction model at the elementary level. The applicant did not describe how the partnership will develop the strategy for personalizing instruction at the elementary level. The applicant did not describe how the partnership will assist in improving results over time.

(4) The applicant describes how the partnership will integrate education and other services for participating students. La Joya ISD has included community-based organizations that provide health and other psycho-social services in the planning and will integrate their services into the school community. This will be done by coordinating these social services through the school. The district is working closely with a community-based organization to collaborate in helping recent immigrants and refugees integrate into the culture and language of the community.

(5)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)The District describes how the partnership will build the capacity of staff in participating schools, by providing them with tools and supports. The District clearly describes how the district will assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership. The applicant will coordinate with social service agencies in the county to holistically assess each participating child and provide the necessary resources to address his/her needs.

When needed, the applicant will coordinate with the social service agencies to address any family dysfunction that interferes with the education of students. On an annual basis, the applicant will collect information on community and family needs and share this information with social service agencies and will collaborate with them to provide the necessary services to ensure that children live the most functional environment that will support their development to adults. The district will create a family and parent center that provides parents with advice and resources to address their needs. The applicant indicates that a parent liaison at each of the schools will conduct these needs assessments annually. The applicant indicates that parents will have opportunities to participate in the site-based decision-making bodies at each of the campuses. Each principal has an open door policy where parents can access at any time. At any time, parents are invited to visit and discuss project progress or any other question related to the implementation of the project. Any problems or challenges to the implementation of the project will be resolved using the district's grievance procedures which are displayed and available to parents and community members in the school's website. The applicant did not indicate how the District will identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with the goals for improving the education and family and community supports. The district has clearly defined how it will be engaging every parent and family in the monitoring and planning of educational and career opportunities of every students. This will include the development of teacher training, providing electronic access and the opportunities around the e-portfolio and student data systems that will effectively engage families in the support of the academic and career development of every student. The applicant describes how it will use the student data system and the e-portfolio to identify students as meeting mastery in every course.

(6) The applicant provides a plan to identify annual performance measures for the proposed population-level and describes the desired results for students. The applicant aligns the student population to the assessment and/or targeted result.

The La Joya Independent School District has described a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public organizations. The District provides a clear description of the partnership that it has formed with organizations to build an extensive school to career component of this project and for the after school program. The applicant will partner with UT Pan American, the Intercultural Development Research Association, and numerous community-based organizations to deliver the services outline for the GEMS project. These organizations

include social services agencies in the county that will provide partners that meet virtually on a quarterly basis to review progress and take the necessary action to ensure that project goals are on target. Other organizations include Communities in Schools, CBOs in the community, Teaching Mentoring Communities and the Regional Service Center 1. The applicant indicates that these partnerships will be guided by an MOA that explains how the partnerships will function with partnership goals and activities that will be evaluated for impact on the goals of the IDRA project. La Joya ISD will provide, through its website, data on aggregate student achievement, school holding power data, graduation. The applicant did not describe how the partnership will use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty (including highly mobile students), family instability, or other child welfare issues. La Joya ISD has included community-based organizations that provide health and other psycho-social services in the planning. These results include both educational results and other educational outcomes, but no specific outcomes for family and community supports. The applicant aligns the student population to the assessment and/or targeted result. Several of the desired results do not contain measurable outcomes so it is unclear how the results will be measured. For example, the following desired results do not contain a measurable target: parents partner with school personnel to ensure that student progresses and graduates college ready (family); more engaged students in the teaching learning process (greater student-teacher relationships); and principals and administrators value the contributions and create a partnership with parents (community engagement).

Therefore, this Competitive Preference Priority is scored at the middle of the medium range of points.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The La Joya Independent School District comprehensively addresses how it will build on the four core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching.

1. The applicant provides information on how the district will adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. The applicant demonstrates its commitment to the core educational assurance areas and, as an LEA within a State that has adopted college- and career-ready standards, is committed to preparing all students for college or career. The applicant describes the creation of learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.
2. The applicant describes how the district will build data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction. The applicant indicates that their target schools will be equipped to establish student and teacher data systems that measure teacher effectiveness and student growth and success. Student data, disaggregated by student group, parent socioeconomic status, and grades, will provide teachers with student performance data to design and improve the quality and delivery of instruction. These data systems will be used to measure teacher effectiveness and teacher preparation and to support the needs of teachers to enable them to develop personalized learning environments that will accelerate student achievement and deepened student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student.
3. The applicant demonstrates how the district will recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. The applicant offers teachers the opportunity and will pay for 90 teachers to obtain a Master's Degree in either science or mathematics. All teachers will be certified in the area that they are teaching; and all teachers not meeting the District's teacher effectiveness evaluation criteria shall be provided immediate support. The applicant indicates that principals whose campuses excel in the percentage of students by subgroup (85% or more), who meet minimum expectations in state mandated tests for all student groups, shall receive recognition and a bonus for the school to purchase student books and materials. The applicant describes how the effectiveness of educators will be increased and indicates that the District will expand student access to the most effective educators.
4. The applicant demonstrates how it will turn around the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant will provide opportunities to enhance academic rigor through programs including 21st Century Skills, curriculum development, professional development for teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and mentoring for all learners. The applicant will target STEM academic enhancement through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The applicant will partner with the nationally recognized organization, Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) to promote equitable schooling for diverse students. The applicant describes learning environments that will be designed to personalize strategies, tools, and supports in order to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The applicant indicates that for each high school and feeder middle school, the implementation of personalized learning environments will include

the following three phases, each taking at least a year: Stage I: Planning Implementation of a Personalized System of Instruction, Establishing Structures, and Preparing Personnel (all personnel are trained and personalization of instruction tools are piloted and prepared for implementation during the second year); Stage II: Full Implementation (implement the personalization of instruction model and collect data to show aggregated effectiveness of the various tools); Stage III: Institutionalization and Sustainability (both stages I and II will have been implemented successfully, and during the third stage the District will collect data on the success of the reform effort and ensure the institutionalization of those efforts that work).

The La Joya Independent School District indicates that because learner centered instruction in Texas is supported by legislation, school districts have been given license to design their own instructional and student assessment processes that reflect personalized instruction. The applicant indicates that personalized learning environments in Texas include active learning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, peer-led learning, team-based learning, and peer instruction.

The applicant demonstrates a plan to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student. The applicant clearly indicates that through the creation of Graduating Excellence Millennium Scholars in Math and Science (GEMS), the District has been able to create a plan that will promote an individual learning environment where students can understand their long-term goals and aspirations through the development of the e-portfolio and adjoining support systems.

Therefore, the La Joya Independent School District has met Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments.

Total	210	100
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0048TX-2 for La Joya Independent School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal's vision generally communicates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.</p> <p>The proposal provides evidence that the program of work provides a credible approach to deepening and accelerating student learning. This will be addressed through the development of a data system to both measure instruction and monitor student achievement. These data will enable both teachers and school leaders to support and create the learning experiences that students will engage in. In addition, the vision presents an approach to increase equity through the targeting of the achievement gaps and low performing schools within the LEA.</p> <p>However, it is not clear from the proposal's vision what the classroom experience will be like for students or teachers. Moreover, the proposal does not make clear how the personalized learning experiences will be anchored in common and individual tasks and based on the academic interests that the students may show.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is not apparent the extent to which the work is building on work that has already taken place within the core assurance areas rather than simply proposing work within the core assurance areas.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The proposal notes that 18 of the district's middle and secondary schools will be involved and will be targeting more than 13,000 students identified as being from low-income families. This suggests that the program is focused on specific grade bands and shows data in the proposal suggesting that these grade bands are in need of remediation.

The proposal describes the approach to implementing the program by breaking the implementation up into phases throughout the four year plan. The proposal specifically lists the schools in a table that will participate in the program as well as the number of students that will be served from each school. In addition, this table communicates the percentage of each school's students that are identified as low income.

However, the proposal does not make clear who the participating teachers are in the project or how they will be selected to participate in the program. In addition, it is not clear when and why schools will join the different implementation phases in order to assess, for example, how many students will be served in year one.

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

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides many of characteristics of a high quality plan for how this program will translate into meaningful reform. In the proposal, an action plan is provided to describe what is planned to occur during the different phases of the project. Phases are intended for implementation to ensure capacity and collective will have been put in place. In addition, the activities and responsible parties are included in this plan as well as a timeline for when the activities will occur. Moreover, within the proposal, a logic model is included that describes some of the external factors that may influence the implementation and the governing assumptions that pervade the plan. This also makes explicit the key goals of the program. This suggests that the plan has been thought through and is credible.

However, key elements of a high quality plan are not evident in the proposal. For example, the deliverables for the plan are not apparent nor the time frame in which those deliverables will be expected. In addition, it is not clear if the proposed program's meaningful reforms will travel beyond the schools in the district.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides clear attainable goals for improved student performance on summative tests, the achievement gap, graduation rates, and college enrollment. For example, the proposal plans for the ultimate goal of 90% of the students taking the state assessment as performing at or above proficiency as defined by the state cut scores. Despite the fact that the baseline data show that the baseline data reveal a disparity in performance across population subgroups, the ultimate goal is for all subgroups to perform at the target. The focus on the achievement gaps that exist within the district suggest that the proposed work intends to increase equity.

The proposal communicates this first by describing and defining what constitute the measures of these student outcomes, stating what their baseline scores are and what the project their improvement to be. These data and projections are broken down by subgroup in tables within the proposal except for the category of college enrollment rates.

It is worth mentioning that the proposal does not make clear what the assessments are that are used for these goals and how the performance metrics are determined, i.e. how is proficiency determined and how is the percentage chosen for the target.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal demonstrates that the school district has a track record of success. First, the proposal notes that the school district has implemented programs recently to facilitate alternative educational opportunities and use student data. These have been funded both by federal money as well as philanthropic contributions from foundations.

Second, the proposal shows that there has been improved math performance and flat reading performance as shown through the percentage of student achievement scores at proficiency on assessments. For example, math performance grew from 75% to 81%. Also, the proposal shows that there has been a gradual increase in the district graduation rates

and small increase in overall enrollment in post-secondary educational programs.

Finally, the proposal highlights the district's efforts to make student data available to various, relevant stakeholders. This is facilitated through the district's web site as well as other modes such as committees, letters to parents, district newspapers and a cable channel. In addition, the state data system provides access to all student data for parents, students and educators.

It is not clear what the reading and math performance data are that are used within this section of the proposal. It is not clear what the grade-level being assessed is, what the percentage means or what the instrument is that is used for the assessment.

It is also not clear if the previous performance has had any impact on the achievement gaps that exist in the school district.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The proposal communicates a level of transparency related to staff salaries by schools within the school district. This is shown by the proposal providing the different gradations of seniority for teachers and the associated salaries for each level of seniority. In addition, this is shown by the low, middle and high range of staff salaries—both administrative and non-instructional. These salaries for instructional and non instructional positions is listed in the proposal itself as well as on a school district web site that is provided in the proposal.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The proposal provides evidence that the school district is operating under policy conditions that allow for sufficient autonomy to implement personalized instruction. For instance, the proposal states that under Texas legislation, school districts have been given license to design their own instructional and assessment systems to support personalized learning. In addition, the state has created a policy definition of learner centered instruction with eight definitional criteria that provide guidance, but not prescription for how to implement personalized learning approaches. While the Texas Education Agency provided no comment to the proposal when the district shared the Race to the Top proposal --per the state's apparent policy for all Race to the Top proposals--, it is worth noting that the proposal states that it has been written to comply with requirements set by the state education agency.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The proposal demonstrates that there is extensive support from teachers for the program as evidenced by a survey response. The support was well over the 70% threshold, which is important based on the fact that there is not a collective bargaining agreement. The specific question that the teachers responded to was, "I feel that I would support my campus and district involvement in the funding opportunity Race to the Top - District federal grant competition." In addition, the proposal provides letters of support from the local government as well as key and appropriate partners such as International Development Research Association (IDRA) and the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA). Furthermore, the proposal states that there were focus groups with parents that preceded the submission of the Race to the Top proposal.

 However, the proposal does not make clear how they engaged parents, teachers or students in the development of this proposal. Moreover, the proposal does not make evident how the partners were involved in the development of the proposal.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The proposal provides some of the characteristics of a high quality plan intended to improve and deepen learning. For

example, the proposal describes activities that they see as necessary for creating a college going culture—a key component to their effort of improving and deepening the schools’ learning environments. One example of this is to incorporate college-related talk into the school.

Similar descriptions are described for the other objectives on the subsequent pages for: personalized learning, implementing a math and science academy, integration of technology. These descriptions include high quality instructional strategies, local partnerships, research-based approaches to their instructional approaches as well as feedback from student performance to guide instructional choices. Another example consists of the incorporation of personalized learning that is patterned after the School of One model and that accesses technology, new roles for teachers and new spatial designs of the classrooms in order to ensure that students receive individualized support for their learning trajectory.

It is not clear from the proposal the ways in which parents will be encouraged and empowered to support student mastery of content and curricular goals. Moreover, despite the fact that student data collection and analysis as being pivotal to this project, it is not clear how student data will be regularly updated to provide actionable information for instruction.

However, for these activities, it is not clear who will be responsible for each of the multi-faceted activities, the timelines associated with those activities or the deliverables that will come from these activities. In addition, the nature of the training is underspecified as it relates to teachers assuming new roles, taking on new instructional approaches, incorporating new instructional materials and utilizing new technologies for teaching and learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	12
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal seeks to build teacher capacity related to personalized learning. This is shown in the proposal through the gathering of observational evidence of instruction to support and shape professional development. In addition, the proposal notes the importance for teachers to develop an understanding of student learning trajectories in order to support and personalize the students’ learning. Moreover, the proposal logically and pragmatically is partnering with UTPA to provide teachers with opportunities for learning through the School of Education as well as opportunities in teachers’ content areas in order to teach dual credit courses.

With the help of the district and IDRA, the proposal notes that parents will be engaged in the development of personalized learning plans for their child or children to ensure that they will be on track to enter college, if they choose. This learning plan will be supported by the students’ iPads and the technology will facilitate the review of the learning plans by the student and his or her parents. This program is part of a larger strategy of parental engagement that has been developed by IDRA and will be facilitated by the district, called PTA Communitario: an awareness and capacity building program with parents to ensure that parents are knowledgeable actors within the school system.

Finally, the proposal describes how the program will build leadership capacity in the district at the school level. Through professional learning opportunities such as a leadership academy, school site visits at other schools and learning opportunities at UTPA, school leaders will be equipped to support teachers’ professional learning communities, parental and stakeholder engagement, the collection and use of data and focus on improvement.

However, for all of these objectives listed above, the proposal does not make clear all of the elements of a high quality plan. For example, the proposal does not make clear who is responsible for the listed activities associated with each objective, what the expected timeline should look like for each of the activities and what deliverables they anticipate that will be associated with the learning activities.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides examples for how the school district is providing practices, policies and rules to support personalized learning. For example, the proposal states that the school district is creating cross-departmental campus support teams to ensure that the reform program is being implemented effectively and that the school has all it needs to continue to implement the program effectively. Moreover, the proposal mentions that the school district will provide school leadership teams with autonomy related to school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets. In order to develop leadership capacity related to this new form of autonomy, the school district is contracting and implementing a program from the Organizational

Health Institute. This suggests that the leadership teams will possess or develop the capacity to carry out the program at their school with some degree of effectiveness.

The proposal highlights how the school district has established opportunities through the Compass Learning platform to demonstrate mastery and earn credit on a variety of courses. This allows students to move through content as their own pace, if needed. In addition, the proposal cites that the school district possesses an infrastructure to support mastery learning beyond the tradition age of secondary school students through their College and Career Center.

The proposal additionally describes the ways in which students with disabilities and English language learning needs will be taken into account. The proposal notes the importance of the IEP in providing guidance for meeting the students' needs with disabilities and those needs may be met in a variety of described settings. Moreover, the proposal makes mention of the established ELL programs that exist in the district and that are designed for different age groups and different levels of experience with the English Language.

However, it is worth mentioning that the proposal does not make clear what constitute comparable opportunities or ways for students to demonstrate their mastery of standards whether those comparable opportunities exist within the Compass Learning system or outside of that system.

It is also not clear that the proposal displays all of the elements of a high quality plan to support project implementation; namely, the personnel, timeline and deliverables that constitute the overall plan.

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

The proposal notes some ways in which the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning. First, all students will participate in the program since 97% of the school population is identified as low income. In addition, the school will communicate with students, parents and other stakeholders through several modes of communication including the school district web site and newsletters to ensure that the work of the program is being communicated to those involved. Moreover, the district program rests on the use of iPads to facilitate personalized learning experiences for students; thus providing all students with the necessary resources of the program. Also, the proposal describes that the data generated from student work through technology will be collected, stored, accessible for relevant stakeholders and interoperable with other student data sets to allow for the integration of different sets of data.

Nevertheless, the proposal does not make clear how technological support will be provided to students and their parents as they engage in learning experiences with their iPads at home.

Also, the proposal does not make clear many of the elements that constitute a high quality plan. Although the above comments are referencing the activities that will support an infrastructure for personalized learning, the plan does not list the personnel that are responsible for the activities, the timeline in which those activities will take place and the deliverables that will come from those activities.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents some elements of a high quality plan for continuous improvement. Acknowledging that this proposal's activities may need to be modified as the program is carried out, the proposal identifies a list of data that may be helpful for monitoring the work of the program and potentially informing improvement strategies. These data included: archival review of evaluations, surveys, program documents, interviews, to name a few listed in the proposal.

These and the program's focus on measuring student achievement, professional development, use of technology and leadership performance, serve as evidence to suggest that the program views the flow of work as generating potentially useful data for monitoring and improving implementation. These suggest that the plan will lead to continuous improvement since the data are generated from and intended to inform the elements of work that are important to the plan's goals.

However, the continuous improvement plan does not make clear who will be responsible for the different aspects of the data collection, analysis and action from the continuous improvement process. Moreover, the proposal does not make evident what the timeline would be for the different elements of the continuous improvement plan or what deliverables that are anticipated as coming from the plan.

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

The proposal provides some evidence of a high quality communication and engagement plan. For example, the proposal identifies IDRA as taking on the role of evaluation and will generate an annual report. Moreover, the proposal notes that the annual report will be shared with internal and external stakeholders. The proposal also states that IDRA is experienced in carrying out evaluations.

However, the proposal does not make clear how the evaluation data will be shared with stakeholders nor does the proposal show clearly how the district will ensure that the findings of the annual report are accessible to all stakeholders. Also, the proposal does not make evident who will be responsible for communicating and engaging the community around the ongoing work of this program.

Finally, the proposal does not make apparent the important elements of the plan to ensure that the work will be carried out in a high quality manner. While many of the activities are listed as part of the plan, it is not clear who would be responsible for carrying out the work, when that work would be carried out and what deliverables would be generated from these activities.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal partially provides evidence of the necessary elements of performance measures in their continuous improvement plan. For example, the proposal includes approximately 12 performance measures to aid in their ongoing assessment of the program and the extent to which it is effective. The proposal notes that these measures rely on instruments that are mandated by the Texas Education Agency and these instruments have been validated through previous studies.

One example of the performance measures is a measure that the project has identified for administrative support of personalized learning. The performance target seek to move 50% to 90% of the administrators being proficient as measured by the leadership style inventory. This example represents the fact that the performance measures ultimately are ambitious and also represent that the measures consist of all elements of implementation that are important to success: learning, teaching and leadership.

However, there are some important elements that are not explicitly evident. For example, with the exception of the number of participating students that enroll and graduate from a STEM related program, a rationale is not provided for why the performance measures were selected and / or how they will be useful for carrying out the program effectively. In addition, it is not obvious these measures will provide leading, actionable information to the implementers of the program. Finally, it is not clear how the implementers of the project will modify the measures if they prove to be an insufficient gauge of the performance that they care about.

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

The proposal provides a high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the program's investments. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of investments, the proposal lists performance indicators by year for each of the program's objectives. In addition, the sources of evidence for each performance indicator is provided as well as the person responsible for collecting the data. These performance indicators include activities that emply technology and professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders.

As an example, to develop a college going culture, the proposal states that at the end of each school year, the evaluation should show gradual growth of students' interest in going to college going ultimately to 90%. Moreover, the data that will be used to investigate this question is listed. It will qualitative and quantitative such as observations and surveys. The instruments used to measure the student interest are listed such as the UC Berkeley Checklist and the person responsible for investigating and evaluating each indicator is listed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score

(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal's budget appears to be sufficient based on the needs and goals of the project. The project notes the items that will be purchased by additional funds, such as those items listed on page 147 that will be purchased by local funds, state compensatory funds and Title 1 funds. In addition, the proposal makes note of instances where there are one time investment, such as the purchase of iPads and when expenditures will subside, such as in the case of teacher training for use of the iPads.</p> <p>The rationale for investments in personnel is not comprehensively described nor does the narrative as a whole make clear the ways in which the expenditures all support the implementation of the project. This makes it difficult to assess the reasonability of the expenditures.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal states that the district is committed to the work of this program beyond the funding. The proposal states that the district will take on some of the necessary funding or allocate state and federal dollars to support the continuation of this program. Moreover, through flexible scheduling and utilizing previously trained teachers, the professional development program will continue as well.</p> <p>However, the proposal does not make clear what funds will be used to continue this program and if that will be at another program's expense. Moreover, the proposal does not make evident how data from the proposed implementation would be used to inform the future work nor does the proposal suggest support from state or government leaders for the sustainability of this work.</p> <p>Also, the proposal does not include important elements of a high quality plan, including the activities that would be involved for ensuring the sustainability of this work, the personnel responsible for carrying out the activities, the timeline in which the activities supporting sustainability would take place and the deliverables that would come from those activities.</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 proposal provides some evidence to support integrated services for whole student development as framed by this Absolute Priority. For example, the proposal names partners in this program such as IDRA, UTPA, and the Regional Education Service Center. Moreover, the proposal lists the roles that these three organizations will play in supporting student learning and development.</p> <p>The proposal also suggests that additional CBOs will be involved, for instance, to implement the PTA Comunitario program with parents.</p> <p>Moreover, the proposal notes that a web site will be built to aggregate various categories of data related to student and school improvement and will share share progress with all of the stakeholders. Finally, some measurable indicators are provided in the proposal, such as 90 percent of students will reach proficiency in their academic disciplines. These represent ambitious yet achievable performance goals for project.</p> <p>However, there are several aspects of the proposal's integrated service plan that are not clear. For instance, it is not clear how the partnership will build capacity of school and how certain functions will be coordinated across organization, such as decision-making processes.</p> <p>Moreover, it is not clear how parents will be engaged in this partnership process.</p> <p>Plus, many of the indicators that are listed in the proposal that are not clearly measurable or defined, such as in the case of "More engaged students in the teaching learning process."</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant met this absolute priority by addressing the program's focus on personalized learning environments throughout the whole proposal.</p> <p>For instance, the proposal states that students' learning experiences and the roles of teachers will be arranged to support the personalization of student learning similar to the School of One model. As evidenced by programmatic strategies and performance indicators, the project aims to create a college going culture within the schools and build students' skills appropriate for success in post-secondary learning environments.</p> <p>As shown through the performance goals of the proposal, this project seeks to ambitiously eliminate the achievement gap that exists within the school district. And through the description of professional development and a focus on evaluating instruction, the program intends to increase instructional effectiveness and make effective instruction the norm.</p>		
Total	210	129



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0048TX-3 for La Joya Independent School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>La Joya Independent School District's vision for this grant includes improving its college-going culture and fostering motivated educators working in higher performing learning communities in order to enhance academic rigor and preparation for all students. The applicant goes on to describe goals related to student achievement on assessments.</p> <p>(a) In its response, the applicant has not adequately explained how it is building on its work in the four core educational assurance areas. The applicant says that it has a strong history in these areas and that it will build on this but provides no evidence of its existing work and little information on how it will build in this area.</p> <p>(b) As explained in greater detail below, the applicant has not clearly articulated its approach to goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, or increasing equity through personalized student support. The vision is not clear in this introductory selection criterion and is not adequately explained in the remainder of the application. In this selection criterion, the applicant says that it will work to strengthen its college going culture, target STEM academic enhancement, and discusses its partnership with the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) but in this explanation, does little to describe how this approach will be personalized to meet student needs.</p> <p>(c) The applicant mentions that it will focus on student achievement and will provide opportunities for teachers but does not describe in this section what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers. Additional information is provided in section (C)(1) and (C)(2) on what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers. The district describes an environment in which a college going culture is encouraged, the individual needs of students are taken into consideration, and a focus is placed on math and science, especially at the high school level. However, as discussed throughout the reviewer's comments, this plan is not fully responsive to the grant requirements of personalization.</p>		

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a. As requested in the RFP, the applicant provided a description of the process that it used to select schools to participate. The district will implement its plan in all middle and high schools but does not adequately address how serving these schools will lead to high-quality LEA level reform. The narrative indicates that 50% of the community members in Hidalgo County are illiterate and states that “this perpetuates the reasoning behind our selection for all middle and secondary schools for participation in the grant.” The reasoning behind this comment is unclear. The applicant stresses the importance of supporting feeder patterns but does not explain how the elementary schools in these feeder patterns will be supported or how the elementary schools will support this middle and high schools. While it is not a requirement to serve elementary schools, the question is raised because the applicant stresses the importance of feeder patterns.

b. and c: The applicant provided a list of participating schools as well as the total number of participating low-income and high-needs students and the number of participating educators. At the beginning of the application, in the budget requirement table, the applicant indicates that 13,820 students will be served but table (A)(2) indicates that 14,271 students will be served leading to confusion over the number of students being served. The narrative states that 97% of these students are from low income families and 64% of the students are high needs. This represents a significant number of students in need.

There seems to be confusion between the narrative for this selection criterion and chart (A)(2).The narrative indicates that there are three high schools in the district but the chart lists nine 9-12 schools. Additionally, the narrative states that implementation will be phased in and will start with schools with the greatest need in the first year and expand to other schools in subsequent years.The narrative then states that chart (A)(2) provides the number of high schools and middle schools participating in each year of implementation but this is not the case as this information is not provided in the chart. The information is provided later in a chart in (C)(2). Based on this information, it is unclear that the applicant will have a sufficient number of students participating in year 1 to qualify for the funding range of \$20m-\$25m.

Chart (A)(2) lists N/A for some schools for the number of participating high-need students and number of participating low-income students but does not provide an explanation as to why.It also seems that the applicant did not complete the total number of low-income students in LEA column correctly.The applicant lists a different number of low-income students in the LEA for 6-8 schools than 9-12 schools. This figure should be the same.

The applicant has not provided a strong explanation for its approach to implementation and has created confusion between the narrative and related charts. As a result, this selection criterion is scored at the low end of the medium range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant’s response in this section is not responsive to selection criterion (A)(3).This selection criterion asks the applicant to describe its high quality plan for how its reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district wide change beyond the participating schools and how the reform plan will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.The applicant explains that it will begin with its highest need middle and high schools and expand to other middle and high schools but all of the middle and high schools are participating schools so this does not represent an expansion of the work.No information is included to explain how the district’s reform proposals will be scaled up to include other schools (e.g., the elementary schools that are not included in the grant).

The narrative does not include some elements of a high quality plan, notably a timeline for incorporating other schools. Some elements such as activities and responsible parties are included in a very broad way such that the plan is difficult to follow.The activities described are so broad, it is difficult to follow how this plan will be implemented.The district lists inputs from stakeholders which lead to outputs, outcomes, and goals, but it is not clear what work will be accomplished by these stakeholders to lead to these goals.The district’s model says that the inputs and outputs will lead to outcomes such as “all students meeting graduation requirements and college ready students” but does not explain the correlation.

Additional information related to the applicant's implementation plan over the course of the grant is included in sections (C)(1) and (C)(2), but again, this does not explain how the district will scale up its work to impact LEA-wide reform and change.

Because the applicant was not fully responsive and its logic model is unclear, this selection criterion is scored in the

low range.

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

10

3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a): The applicant has set student achievement results based on the state’s summative assessment or STAAR test. Though the applicant has set targets, it has not described why it chose its selected targets or adequately explained the chart.

For example, the applicant is showing fairly significant gains in reading proficiency from SY 11-12 to 12-13 (14% overall, 19% special Ed, 11% gifted and talented) but fails to explain how it achieved these increase. The targets for 13-14 are lower than the increase between the previous two years (only 4% overall, 16% ELL, 1% GT) with a steady increase of 10% for most subgroups in following years. The applicant has provided little explanation as to how it decided on these targets and whether they are achievable.

The applicant saw a decrease in math achievement between Sy 11-12 and 12-13 for all groups except special education but has not provided an explanation for this decline or its rationale for expecting an average 9% increase from SY 12-13 to 13-14.

In both reading and math, the applicant is expecting larger increases for ELL and migrant students than for other subgroups but has not described how it will provide supports to achieve this dramatic increase.

Similar challenges exist in understanding the applicant’s goals for writing, science, and social studies as the applicant has not provided an adequate explanation as to its methodology in setting these goals and how it expects to make these gains to achieve 90% proficiency by SY 2016-2017. The applicant also fails to address why it is not expecting an increase between SY 16-17 and 17-18.

Finally, the RFP, as clarified in FAQ E-4, asks the applicant to “establish goals, overall and by student subgroup, for each grade in the LEA(s) for which the State administers assessments in reading or language arts and in mathematics under the requirements of ESEA.” Based on the narrative, it appears that grades 3-5 (additional tested grades) were not included in this goal setting.

(b)

The applicant again fails to include goals for grades 3-5. It appears that the applicant has lumped grades 6-12 together in setting its achievement gap reduction targets. The district has described how it will calculate its achievement gaps but no information on how it hopes to achieve these target. The average decrease is 5% a year. In reading, State white and ECD will remain the same between SY 12-13 and SY 13-14 and the gap between white and migrant is expected to increase between SY 15-16 and SY 17-18 but no explanation is provided for this. In math, the applicant expects a decrease of 12% between State white and ELL but provides no explanation as to how it will achieve such a significant increase.

(c)

The graduation rate decreased between SY 11-12 and SY 12-13 but the applicant has not explained why this occurred. The applicant expects a 95% graduation rate for all subgroups by SY 16-17 but expects no increase after a subgroup reached 95%. Based on the information provided in the application, it is unlikely that the applicant's Race to the Top plan will propel graduation rates to this level.

(d)

The applicant has set an ambitious target of 80% college enrollment by SY 15-16 but does not describe in sufficient detail how this will be achieved. Additionally, once this goal is reached in SY 15-16, no additional increases in college enrollment are expected.

In some cases, the applicant has set ambitious goals but has not provided sufficient evidence to support how it will achieve these goals. In other areas, the applicant has failed to submit ambitious goals as the targets plateau once a certain point is reached.

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	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B)(1)(a): The applicant has not provided sufficient information to demonstrate that it has a clear record of success in improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. The applicant included a chart demonstrating math and reading performance. The chart indicates that math performance has improved from 75% to 80% from SY 2008-09 to SY 2011-2012 but the applicant does not provide any information to explain this data. It is unclear if this data is demonstrating percent basic, proficient, or advanced. Additionally, regardless of the rating level, the district has not demonstrated improvement in reading (81% in SY 2008-09 and 81% in SY 2011-12).</p> <p>The district has demonstrated improvement in graduation rates from 76.3 % in SY 09-10 to 84.3% in SY 11-12. However, the district only provides 3 years of data rather than the requested 4. Additionally, little information is provided to explain this improvement and how it will work to continue the improvement. Between SY 2009-10 and SY 11-12, 2 year college enrollment rates decreased by 3% (33% to 30%) but college enrollment in 4 year colleges has increased from 15% to 20%. Again, only 3 years of data were provided and no explanation was provided to explain the change.</p> <p>No subgroup data is provided.</p> <p>(B)(1)(b) In this section, the district discusses the four schools identified by federal and/or other state accountability systems as being low-performing. As evidence of improvement, the applicant provides information on math and reading performance of these districts. However, the information is incomplete and therefore, it is difficult to determine the progress the district has made in achieving ambitious and significant reforms in these schools.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Information is provided on math and reading performance percentages as measured by federal accountability but it does not explain what is meant by these percentages. It is unclear if these percentages are below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced. It is therefore difficult to determine improvement. 2) Only three years of data are provided rather than the requested four. 3) SY 2011-2012 data includes a note "based on AYP bridge study" but the applicant does not explain what is meant by this note or if this data is comparable to data in previous years. 4) No data is provided for Saenz Middle School even though this school is identified as a low-performing school in the narrative. 5) No subgroup data is provided. <p>(B)(1)(c) The district explains that student's performance data is made available to stakeholders through a variety of methods including its website, letters to parents, newspapers, new stations, parent conferences, and community meetings. The applicant also describes various committees that involve stakeholders. However, this narrative does little to describe how this data is used to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.</p> <p>The applicant has provided little evidence to support a clear record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. While some data is provided, it is not explained and it is unclear what improvements the district has made over the past four years. As a result, the applicant is low end of the medium range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that it makes information on school-level expenditures of State and local funds available via its website and provides some of this information in the body of the application. The applicant also indicates that it received the State Comptroller Leadership Circle Gold Award which recognizes local governments that are striving to meet a high standard for financial transparency. However, the applicant has not provided evidence that it provides information beyond the minimum required by the application. The applicant scores in the high range for this selection criterion.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided little evidence to demonstrate successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in its proposal. The narrative describes some of the roles of the Texas Education Agency and says that all components of the district's application comply with TEA requirements but does not provide any evidence. Because the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence to support its assertions, this selection criterion can only be scored in the midrange.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) There is confusion regarding the level of support from educators in this district. The application cover page includes a signature from the local teacher union or association president. However, the narrative states that LaJoya ISD does not engage in collective bargaining. No explanation is provided as to the role of the individual who signed as the president of the local union or association president. The applicant indicates that a survey was developed and states that the survey results indicated that at least 91% of the teachers from participating schools support the proposal. However, there are several concerns with this survey:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It is unclear how information regarding the proposal was presented to the educators and therefore if the educators knew what they were or were not supporting. 2) It appears that the poll only asked one question "I feel that I would support my campus and district involvement in the funding opportunity Race to the Top-District federal grant competition." This question is not sufficient to demonstrate that the educators would support and be willing to implement the details included in the grant proposal. 3) The poll results indicate that 921 educators support the grant proposal and 93 educators do not. The applicant indicates that this means that 91% of educators support the proposal. However, table (A)(2) indicates that there are 1,365 participating educators. This would mean that only 67.5% (921/1365) of educators have demonstrated their support. <p>(b) The applicant included several letters of support from community organizations, a least one parent group, principals, and students. Letters of support from mayors representing cities in the district were also included. However, the mayoral letters are form letters so it is unclear how much these mayors really know about the contents of the application and how it will impact reform in the district.</p> <p>Even with the letters of support, it is unclear how the district engaged the stakeholders in the development of the proposal and if an opportunity was provided for these stakeholders to provide feedback on the application. The narrative indicates that the proposal was presented at 18 parent focus groups but no evidence is provided to demonstrate the level of engagement and involvement.</p> <p>Support from some stakeholders is evident through the letters of support. However, there is question about the level of support from educators and the lack of information regarding how stakeholders were engaged in the development of this proposal. As a result, this selection criterion is scored in the low end of the medium range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has outlined 4 objectives focused on its plan for preparing students for college and careers.</p> <p>Objective 1: Implement a comprehensive district-wide college going culture with particular emphasis at the middle and high schools.</p> <p>The activities outlined in the narrative are focused on creating this college going culture, but it is unclear how it is</p>		

related to this selection criterion which is focused on personalized learning. Presumably in creating a college going culture, students will begin to understand that what they are learning is key to the goal of attending college and will be pursuing learning and development goals linked to college and career ready standards.

The applicant does address the goal for students to develop skills and traits beyond academic content, so called "21st Century skills." It proposes partnering with an outside organization to engage students in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

However, beyond this, there is little tie to the selection criterion specifically how students will be engaged and empowered in a personalized learning environment.

Objective 3: Implement a Math and Science Academy at each of the high schools

Again, the applicant does not fully describe how this objective is responsive to the selection criterion. Presumably students attending these academies will be interested in math and science and have access to real world experiences. The applicant also describes state of the art equipment learning the reviewer to believe that the student will have access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments inside the classroom but does not describe what support will be provided when students are not in class. Little information is provided on how students will understand that what they are learning is key to their success, how the instruction will be personalized to their needs, how they will receive ongoing and regular feedback and what accommodations will be made for high-need students.

Implementing a math and science academy is not an small undertaking but little is provided in the way of implementation activities and timeline other than to say that this will be in implementation phase 2.

Objective 2: Personalize Instruction

The applicant says that each students will develop a personalized educational plan but does explain how this will be done. The application then states that each students will be administered the Learning Style Profile (LSP) and the results from this instrument in addition to state assessments will be used by teachers to differentiate instruction during classroom. The description further states that teachers will work in learning communities and have specified times for reflection on student progress. However, the narrative does not address how students will be involved in this process. Additionally, it does not address how if this will be used to support student instruction outside of class time. It appears that this is a teacher-driven process rather than a process by which students are understanding what and why they are learning or are identifying and pursuing their own goals.

The narrative does not address how students will be involved in deep learning experiences in their areas of academic interest.

The applicant does state that it will use a learning algorithm to create a unique schedule for every student, every day based on up-to-date information about a student so that the pace and sequence is personalized to the student. This approach has proven to be successful in other schools but it is unclear how student voice and ownership will be brought into this process. Furthermore, it is unclear how the district will fund this algorithm. This is a complicated and costly endeavor and the district has not asked for any grant funds for the development of this algorithm nor has it indicated that district funds will be used for this purpose.

The narrative indicates that it will provide different learning environments for students such as group instruction, peer tutoring, and independent study. All are good approaches for providing personalized learning. The applicant further describes that it will generate a data bank of lessons to be used as a resource for students. In addition, it plans to develop assessments in each skill and knowledge area. Again, this is a quality approach to personalizing the learning but no plan is included for how this will be done. This is a costly endeavor the applicant has not indicated how this work will be funded or a timeline for development and rollout.

The applicant indicates that it plans to partner with Data Management for Assessment and Curriculum (DMAC) for the development and adaptation of a digital system for collecting data on student and teacher progress, interventions, and identification of student needs but it is unclear if this vendor will do any work related to the aforementioned algorithm

or the development of assessment and resources.

The applicant does not adequately address how its system will be used to determine progress toward mastery of standards and the description only briefly describes how the system will provide personalized learning recommendations based on student's current knowledge and skills.

It is unclear how the response addresses accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students.

Finally, the applicant does not adequately address what mechanisms will be put in place to provide training and supports to students to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them to track and manage their learning. The narrative states that teachers, students, and parents will need to receive training on establishing an interactive learning environment but does not describe how this will be done or how it meets this section of the selection criterion.

Objective 4: Integration of Technology to Improve Personalization of Instruction

The narrative states that the district will equip science labs with cutting edge tools and resources but does not provide a description of these tools and resources. It also states that technology will be used in aligning the math and science curriculum with UT-Pan American's courses of student. Again, nothing is said about the type of technology.

The applicant later states that each classroom will be equipped with at least five computers, iPads for group participation, clickers to track student responses, and a Smart Board. It is unclear if this is the technology that will be included in the science labs.

Again, the applicant does not describe how this objective is responsive to the selection criterion. It is not clear how this technology will be used to personalize the learning for students. The unattractive states that it will support ongoing assessment tools that provide rapid feedback and that this feedback will be use to adjust instruction to meet the needs of students. However, no other information is provided. Nothing is said about how the technology integration will help students understand that what they are learning is key to their success, how it will engage them in deep learning experiences in areas of interest, or how they will have access to personalized instructional content.

Throughout the (C)(1) narrative and into (C)(2), the applicant includes elements of a high quality plan but they are not fully articulated and again, the plan is not fully responsive to the grant requirements of personalization. Broad timelines and activities are included but they are too broad to give a full understanding of the district's plan. The applicant does include responsible parties. The applicant does include key goals such as creating a college going culture and math and science academies but again, fails to describe how these goals will be personalized.

In this response, the applicant has begun to outline some elements of a system that will personalize learning for students but it falls short of being fully responsive to this selection criterion. As such, the applicant scores in the medium range.

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

20

6

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(2)(a)

The applicant fails to address how participating educators are engaging in training and or professional teams or communities that support their individual and collective capacity to engage in the instructional strategies outline in (C)(2)(a)(i-iv). The applicant says that some of these strategies are in use and that teachers are receiving training but provides little or no evidence to support this.

The applicant says a needs assessment will be conducted annually to ensure that professional development is planned to address existing need. However, the basis of the needs assessment is not detailed. The narrative states that teachers are equipped to provide individualized instruction to a diverse population but provides little evidence to support this statement. The applicant states that "teachers are active members of a community of learners that is supported with frequent joint planning and preparation time, shared lesson plans, team teaching, and project based instruction" but does not provide any additional detail about the community of learners that supports the selection criterion.

The district plans to support the improvement of teacher quality in the content areas of math and science by promoting a math undergraduate course and master degree level training for teachers at the high school level. However, the applicant does not describe the professional development it will offer to teachers in other subject areas. The narrative briefly mentions that 100 hours of professional development focused on personalized learning as well as related mentoring will be provided to teachers but no other details are provided. It is unclear what this professional development will look like and if it will adequately address the needs of teachers in order to implement a personalized learning environment.

(C)(2)(b): All participating educators have access to, and know how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Those resources must include:

(i) actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual academic needs and interests

As discussed in (C)(1), students will be administered the LSP and the results of this instrument coupled with state assessment results will be used to inform instructional needs for students. The district also plans to develop a learning algorithm but as discussed above, there is no detail regarding a timeline or funding for development.

(ii) high-quality learning resources that are aligned with college and career ready standards and the tools to create new and share new resources.

The district has stated that it will generate a data bank of lessons available to students as well as “just-in-time-assessments.” However, it does not provide a timeline, development plan, or funding strategy for the development of these items.

(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

The applicant has not provided information on how it will receive feedback about the effectiveness of the resources it plans to develop.

(C)(2)(c)

(i) The applicant does little to address this section of the selection criterion. The narrative states that evaluation systems are in place but does not address how they are used to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate.

(ii) Again, the applicant does not adequately address this section of the selection criterion. The narrative says that “training systems and practices are in place to improve school progress but no additional explanation is given.

(C)(2)(d) The applicant does little to address its plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty area. The narrative states that “special attention is given to critical high needs areas such as mathematics, science, and special education” and that “preference is given to staffing the highest need schools with the most highly effective teachers and principals.” However, no additional information is given so the reviewer is unable to make a judgment about the quality of this work. The applicant indicates that it plans to offer additional bachelor and master’s courses in the areas of math and science. While this may improve educator knowledge, it does not ensure an increase in educator effectiveness nor does it address how other subject areas will be supported.

As discussed in (C)(1), the applicant addresses elements of a high quality plan but they are not well defined. Timelines are proposed but not for all elements of the plan so the implementation picture is unclear. Key goals are clear but are not fully personalized. Responsible parties are mentioned.

Based on the response to the selection criterion, the applicant is awarded a score at the low end of the medium range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant does not explain how it has organized the LEA central office to provide support and services to all participating schools in a way that facilitates personalized learning. The applicant includes a list of district offices along with information on campus support teams but does not describe how this structure supports personalized learning in a manner that is fully responsive to this section of the selection criterion. The applicant says that it will establish campus support teams that will have representatives from each department and that these teams will periodically visit the schools and receive feedback on immediate needs and supports. However, the applicant does not provide a high quality plan to support this plan. Specifically, activities and timelines are not included.

(b) The applicant describes its partnership with Organizational Health Diagnostic and Development Corporation (OHDDC) but the description sounds more like leadership training than a description of how the district will provide schools with flexibility and autonomy. The narrative says that by working with OHDDC, that the district has empowered school leadership teams with the capacity to carry out flexibility and autonomy in the areas described in this selection criterion but does not explain if and how this autonomy and flexibility has been granted. Having the capacity to manage and lead in a flexible and autonomous environment is different than having the practices, policies, and rules in place that allow for a flexibility and autonomy. The applicant does not have a high quality plan for this work. It is missing timelines, deliverables, and the activities are not clearly articulated.

(c) Flexibility is provided to “qualifying students” but the narrative does not explain what, if any, flexibility is provided to other students in earning credit based on demonstrated mastery rather than the amount of time spent on a topic. The applicant has not provided a high quality plan. The applicant mentions a partnership with Compass Learning but does not explain this partnership in a manner that is responsive to the selection criterion.

(d) In an effort to explain that students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple times and in multiple ways, the applicant describes small enrollment entities where students receive individualized attention based on needs. It states that the La Joya East and West academies provide students small group and personalized instruction in a nontraditional setting. It also discussed the College and Career Center where students are able to continue their schooling beyond the “typical age.” However, the applicant does not explain how students who do not attend these schools are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple times and multiple ways and does not provide a high quality plan to provide this opportunity to students. The applicant has not provided a plan to build on existing practices.

(e)The applicant provides information on learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and accessible to students, including students with disabilities and English learners but does not explain how these resources and instructional practices facilitate personalized learning. the applicant does not have a high quality plan for this section of the selection criterion.

The applicant’s response has earned a score in the medium range.

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

10

2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2)

(a) The applicant has not provided a sufficient response to this section of the selection criterion. The applicant is asked to provide a high quality plan that ensures that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate), regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in *and* out of school. The applicant says that it will ensure that this is accomplished through the district’s website, stakeholders’ quarterly bilingual meetings and newsletters and campus parent meetings. It is unclear how this will support students and parents in having access to content, tools, and other learning resources in and out of school. No information is included about the information included on the website or shared through meetings. The applicant does mention that iPads have been used to support English Language Learners. The applicant states that its IT department has a plan for infusing technology in a cost effective and efficient way but does not provide sufficient detail for the reviewer to understand how this plan is responsive to the selection criterion. Finally, none of the information provided describes how the district’s plan will be used to support the applicant’s proposal to support personalized learning.

(b)The applicant’s response is not sufficiently responsive to this section of the selection criterion. The applicant is asked to provide a plan to ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate) have technical support. The applicant says that this will be provided by providing an iPad for each student, local support through television programming, newsletters, and other bilingual media. This is the extent of the applicant’s response. It does not describe how any of these methods will provide the relevant parties with technical support. No elements of a high quality plan are included.

(c) The applicant has failed to provide a sufficiently responsive answer to this section of the selection criterion. The

applicant's response simply repeats the stem of the selection criterion and says that it will do this without providing any explanation as to how this will be done. No elements of a high quality plan are included. The applicant then mentions that it will contract with two vendors to provide instructional videos aligned to middle and high school textbooks but it is not clear how this is related to using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format.

(d) The applicant has not provided a sufficiently responsive answer to this section of the selection criterion. The applicant says that it will "operationalize its data systems on an interoperable basis as defined in the notice" but provides no information on how this will be accomplished. The applicant provides no elements of a high quality plan.

The applicant has failed to provide a sufficiently responsive answer to this selection criterion and scores in the low range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has described how it will gather information to inform its continuous improvement including establishing interim benchmarks to monitor progress, pre-and post surveys, observations, and case studies. In addition, an evaluation will be established. However, the applicant's response does not describe how this information will be used to correct and adjust or how this information will be publicly shared. The applicant mentions in (E)(2) that evaluative information will be shared with relevant stakeholders but does not provide an explanation as to how this will be done in a way that helps continuously improve its plan. The applicant is also missing elements of a high quality plan including key goals and a timeline.</p> <p>The applicant has established the start of this continuous improvement process but has failed to round out the plan. As a result, the applicant scores at the low end of the medium range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's response is not responsive to this selection criterion. The applicant is asked to provide a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. At the beginning of the response, the applicant states that annual reports will be shared with stakeholders but this is the extent of the answer that is responsive to this selection criterion. The rest of the response describes the qualifications of the district's external evaluator. The applicant includes no elements of a high quality plan. The applicant earns no points for this response</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Proposed Measures:</p> <p>All</p> <p>a. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, whose teacher of record and principal are highly effective:</p> <p>The applicant's baseline in SY 2012-2013 is 10% for all subgroups except that 15% of the ELL population and gifted and talented population have highly effective teachers. The applicant proposes to increase these percentages by 5% every year. These targets are ambitious but likely achievable if the applicant has a plan in place for improvement. However, the applicant does not provide sufficient information as to how it hopes to accomplish this improvement. Professional development opportunities are mentioned throughout the application but no tie is made to how this will improve performance ratings.</p> <p>The applicant provides no information as to how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to measure implementation progress.</p> <p>No targets are provided for SY 2017-2018</p>		

Finally, there is confusion regarding the number of participating students. In the introduction to the application, one table indicated that 13,820 students are participating. Table (A)(2) indicates 14,271 participating students. This table indicates that 13,600 students are participating.

b. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, whose teacher of record and principal are effective.

The applicant's baseline in Sy 2012-2013 varies by subgroup but ranges between 15% to 35% of teachers and principals rated as effective.

The applicant proposes to increase these percentages by 10% every year. These targets are ambitious but likely achievable if the applicant has a plan in place for improvement. However, the applicant does not provide sufficient information as to how it hopes to accomplish this improvement. Professional development opportunities are mentioned throughout the application but no tie is made to how this will improve performance ratings.

The applicant provides no information as to how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to measure implementation progress.

No targets are provided for SY 2017-2018

Finally, there is confusion regarding the number of participating students. In the introduction to the application, one table indicated that 13,820 students are participating. Table (A)(2) indicates 14,271 participating students. This table indicates that 13,600 students are participating.

Grades 4-8

a. The number of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who are on track to college-and-career readiness based on the district's on-track indicator.

The applicant provides baseline data but no targets for future years. It is unclear how the district identified its 6-8 participating students. Table (A)(2) indicates that 3,435 students in grades 6-8 are participating. This chart indicates only 3,028.

No information on subgroups is provided.

b. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who have met minimum expectations in reading, math and science as measured by the STARR (state standardized and mandated test):

The applicant provides no baseline data or targets for this performance measure. The applicant does not explain its rationale for selecting this measure, how the measure will provide information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action, or how it will review and improve the measure over time.

c. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy in math and science as measured by a project developed self-efficacy instrument.

The applicant provides no baseline data or targets for this performance measure.

Grades 9-12

a. The number and percentage of participating students who complete and submit the FAFSA form

The applicant provides baseline data but no targets for future years.

b. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who are on track to college and career readiness based on the district's on track indicator

The applicant does not describe what it is using as its on track indicator. The district is expecting a 10-15% increase in college readiness for its subgroups. This seems quite ambitious and it is not clear how the district's plan will lead to this significant increase.

c. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who express an interest in enrolling and graduating from college in self-selected career of choice

The applicant does not describe the performance measure in this chart but it is assumed that chart c is aligned with target c described in the narrative.

It is unclear how the district will measure this. The expected increase for Special Education students is only 4 % from 2% to 6%. None of the subgroups have an expected increase between 2015-16 and 2016-17. There are no targets for 2017-2018.

d. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who graduate from high school with a recommended high school diploma

No baseline data or targets for future years are provided for this performance measure. The applicant has provided no rationale for choosing this measure.

e. The number and participating students, by subgroups, who demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy in math and science as measured by a project-developed self-efficacy instrument:

No baseline data or targets for future years are provided for this performance measure.

f. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who graduate with a minimum of 12 semester hours of college credit

No baseline data or targets for future years are provided for this performance measure.

g. The number and percentage of participating students, by subgroups, who enroll and graduate with a degree in a STEM related career.

No baseline data or targets for future years are provided for this performance measure.

The applicant has failed to provide baseline data or targets for the majority of its performance measures. Even the performance measures with data have concerns as expressed above. The information provided fails to demonstrate how these measures are ambitious and achievable.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This selection criterion asks the applicant to provide a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the grant funded activities. The applicant states that in addition to the student outcomes discussed above, it has identified specific evaluation questions and will continuously assess its assessments for improvement and sustainability. It has developed a Quality Indicators Checklist that will be used bi-annually to assess level of implementation of the proposed plan. After reviewing the checklist, it is unclear how this checklist will measure personalized learning. The checklist indicates that give essentially elements of a personalized learning system include :

Flexible anytime/everywhere learning

redefinition of the teacher role

Project-Based/Authentic Learning Opportunities

Student Driven Learning Path

Mastery/Competency-Based Progression/Pace

However, it is unclear how the checklist will measure any of these indicators. For example, nothing is mentioned in the curriculum and instruction portion of the checklist about mastery/competency-based progression/pace or project-based learning opportunities.

Additional measures in this section include those to measure progress on the project objectives discussed above in (C)(1) and (C)(2). The applicant does describe the methodology and instruments to be used to evaluate these measures as well as responsible parties.

The applicant is awarded points at the high end of the medium range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant mentions the project coordinators who will assist principals in the implementation of the grant but little is said about their role anywhere else in the application.</p> <p>The applicant plans to hire 1 secretary and 4 clerks. Both positions will “organize and manage the RTT-D grant activities and provide services to the project director and project coordinators. It is unclear why so many positions are needed to provide this support. Additionally, 6 technicians will be hired to assist in organizing and managing the RTT-D grant activities and provided technical support to the secondary campuses. It is unclear how these individuals will support schools. Throughout the narrative there are frequent mistakes in indicating the number of positions. For example, in the narrative discussion of the technicians, one line indicates that 6 technicians will be hired while another line indicates only 3.</p> <p>The applicant has provided a total for fringe benefits each year but no additional detail to support this cost. It has not been adequately justified.</p> <p>The applicant describes travel to conferences, institutes, and campus for students and parents but provides no cost basis. Additionally, little is mentioned about these conferences and camps in the application and how attendance will support the district’s plan.</p> <p>The applicant has provided absolutely no justification for the equipment it proposes to purchase. It lists items such as smartboards, Mobis Pads, Texans Instruments CBL 2, etc but does not provide any information on the number of items being purchased or the cost for each item.</p> <p>Under supplies, the applicant indicates that “educational materials” will be purchased for its schools but does not provide an explanation as to what these materials will be or a cost justification. The proposed budget varies for each year with no explanation as to why.</p> <p>The cost justification for training stipends is unclear. No information is provided on the estimated cost of master’s degrees or why two degrees will come from Harvard. The applicant has not provided a yearly breakdown for this cost.</p> <p>The budget provided by the applicant is not reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of its proposal. Little explanation is provided to justify costs. Approximately 1/3 of the budget is devoted to travel with little explanation as to the purpose of this travel. An additional 1/3 is devoted to equipment but the applicant has not justified the cost, provided information on the number of items being purchased, or provided an adequate explanation as to how this equipment will support the applicant’s proposed plan.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant’s response to this selection criterion is inadequate. The narrative states that “La Joya ISD will sustain critical aspects of the grant once the grant funding expires through in-kind matching funds.” But no other information is provided to indicate what type of funds will be used (e.g., local, state, federal) and how sustaining this will impact other programs (for example if funds would be shifted from other programs or additional funds would be sought). No information is included to describe how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. The applicant has not provided an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant. The applicant has included no elements of a high quality plan (key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, or responsible parties) related to funding sustainability. The applicant does address a few key goals that will continue to be supported but provides little information other than that it will continue to focus on these goals.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The narrative is not responsive to the requirements of the competitive preference priority. The applicant lists organizations with which it is or will partner but with the exception of IDRA, does not provide an explanation as to the services these partners will provide. The services provided by IDRA do not appear to support the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. The narrative says that these services will be integrated but provided no explanation as to how this will be done.

The competitive preference priority requires that the applicant set outcomes that include both a) educational results other than education outcomes and b) family and community supports. The first three proposed measures do not meet these requirements as they are education outcomes as they are related to achievement gaps and performance on state assessments and college enrollment. The applicant fails to provide sufficient detail on how these measures will be tracked other than to say that the information will be collected in conjunction with the service agencies.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses most of the elements of the absolute priority and thus the reviewer determines that the absolute priority has been met. However, there are omissions and in areas that are addressed, the responses are unclear or do not provide enough detail. The applicant begins to touch on personalization but most of its plan fails to provide a significant level of personalization for children. Its goal of creating a college going culture and math and science academies is admirable but it is unclear how this will be personalized for students. The reviewer also fails to see how this plan will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning. The applicant does not provide a detailed plan for providing access to effective educators. Finally, the budget is not fully aligned with the activities that applicant hopes to accomplish, for example the development of a personalized learning algorithm and personalized learning resources.

The applicant has begun to address some of the critical elements needed to develop a personalized learning environment for students but much work is left to be done.

Total	210	66
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