



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0088AZ-2 for Maricopa Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided indicators that addressed their efforts to build on the **four core educational assurance areas**. As referenced, the district's School and Community Task Force annually assesses the strategic plan, which features **standards and assessments** that prepare students for college and career success. The emphasis on problem solving, creativity, and perseverance skills are exposed to students as early as kindergarten as provided by the example described within the proposal; "ask three, before you ask me."

The district referenced that an **extensive data systems** in place that measures student growth and success, while keeping teachers and principals informed.

In regards to **recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals**, the district referenced that such existing programs are already in place. In addition, the state's Proposition 301 funding source was identified in supporting the Classroom Site Fund, which provided base pay and performance-based pay increases, and also money for strategies to support struggling students (e.g., dropout prevention, class size reduction, and professional development).

Relevant to **turning around the lowest achieving schools** the district has utilized data analysis to provide baseline correlation across the district toward implementing data driven intervention programs to support student achievement. The applicant stated that before and after-school extended learning programs at the lowest achieving schools offer students with supplemental educational opportunities.

**WEAKNESS:**

The applicant didn't provide substantial and detailed information that indicated a comprehensive and coherent vision. The information provided was often non-specific and vague with no supportive documentation. As an example the Beyond the Textbooks program was referenced to effectively crating personalized learning environments that support student-centered differentiated learning; however, no mention of the subject area, grade level or data was provided on this topic.

Also, the reference was made where the district's middle school students are provided with extended opportunities to learn skills relating to a competitive global environment through access to a blended learning environment that combines classroom instruction with personalized learning however, again mention of the subject area, grade level or data was provided on this topic.

In regards to the district's reference to its extensive data systems, no specific examples (e.g., data, documentation, grade level and courses )were provided that demonstrated where this information actually contributed to improved instruction.

An articulated clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support that would be based on students' academic interests were not clearly evident in this area of the proposal. In addition, a description what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments was not addressed.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided a succinct narrative that indicated that the participants will include all enrolled students in the district's pre-K through 8th Grade levels. A chart was provide by the applicant that listed all of the schools, total number of students and all other demographic information (e.g., low-income families, high-needs students, and participating educators).

**WEAKNESS:**

The applicant didn't provide detailed information that described the selection process and their rationale for including the entire district's Pre-K-8 schools.

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

**10**

**4**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Overall, the applicant didn't include a high-quality plan that would translate into meaningful reforms with no reference toward impacting any schools beyond their own. Also, the applicant didn't describe or include a logic model or theory of change that indicated how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for participating students.

In specific reference to the applicant's plan, the information to address this topic that was provided was vague and lacked specific details. The following list of references that the applicant referenced are examples:

- Teacher training sessions; no reference to any particulars to what, when or where.
- Equipment distribution to all students; what equipment and dissemination considerations or plan was not addressed?
- Personalized learning environments will significantly improve; how and no research-based references to support this premise were included?
- The plan will provide for a wide range of automated academic and social-emotional resources; no specific resources were identified.

The applicant mentioned that supportive elements (e.g., processes, procedures, management, distribution, tracking and support systems) were in place to support the implementation of the plan and to quickly scale up the process; however, there were no specific descriptions or examples that related to any of those supportive elements in this area of the proposal.

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

**10**

**4**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

It was noted that the applicant has previously indicated that in regards to personalized learning environments that the achievement levels for technology enhanced primary grades has improved. A series of performance or assessment charts to indicate the proficiency status of math and reading, grade levels 3-8 were all included by subgroups (e.g., All students, African-American, Hispanic, White, and etc.).

In assessing the achievement gaps, the district utilized the Arizona AIMS Reading and Mathematics Assessments for the SY 2012-2013 baseline calculation. The applicant stated that their goal is to create personalized learning environments for every student and to have all students score at the proficient or above level by the end of the grant period.

In the area of high school graduation rates, the applicant listed this data in a chart format with information separated by various subgroups as noted.

As college enrollment reflects the calculations between the ratio of college-enrolled students and their graduation factor, this information was indicated in a chart with a baseline indicating 58%.

**WEAKNESS:**

The applicant provided a very limited narrative description that attempted to address this area. The information didn't include any supportive statements or data references that supported the goals of the proposal. A reference was made toward the creation of personalized learning environments outside of the classroom, but there were no specific details regarding this initiative.

The applicants references to performance on summative assessments (proficiency and growth) indicated an annual percentage growth goal from their original 2012-2013 Baseline. The projected increases, by each subgroup, that were indicated were unreasonable as they were exceptionally high and unrealistic to obtain. As indicated by the applicant's expectations to increase student achievement the average percentage increase of each subgroup through the grant's four year period would indicate an increase between 30-40% for most groups.

Student outcome goals though ambitious were also unrealistic toward achieving a 100% proficiency rate for each subgroup, along with exceptionally high improvement rates in the plan's first two years of implementation.

The high school graduation rate also reflected an ambitious but a highly unlikely achievable result; where the overall

baseline rate of 83.54% was projected to increase to a rate of 98% within the grant period. The college enrollment level was similar with a baseline indicator at 58% with a projected goal increase at nearly 85% for the grant period.

Though the applicant did address the optional postsecondary degree attainment item to a limited degree as referenced; this information wasn't supported by documentation; therefore, the information and indicators to result in improved learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious and achievable goals was unsubstantiated.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>

### (B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In addressing this area, the district referenced that the Arizona Department of Education A-F Letter Grade Accountability System has recently increased from a C to a B rating. As referenced by the applicant, this rating system consists of components that meet or exceed these following standards as noted within RTTT; however, the applicant didn't include any information or documentation that indicated which, if any, of these components were met:

- Students meeting or exceeding performance level percentage increases on the AIMS Assessment
- Student mobility adjustment
- Distribution of achievement at each school in the LEA
- Longitudinal indicators of student gains
- ELL test results
- High Schools improved dropout rates
- High Schools improved graduation rate

The applicant indicated accomplishments that supported significant gains within the past four years as follows:

- Governing Board approval of three year district-wide strategic plans; there wasn't any evidence that indicated how their strategic plan promoted areas of gains or accomplishments
- An elementary school earning an A status for its fourth consecutive year and being recognized by the Arizona Business Education Coalition and the Arizona Department of Education as a Higher Performing School and High Progress (2012); no evidence or documentation was provided
- Six of nine schools becoming charter schools sponsored by the district's Governing Board; no evidence or documentation how charter school status promotes gains or accomplishments

### WEAKNESS:

The applicant didn't describe or address their efforts toward making performance data available to all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, and teachers) in a manner to keep them informed to encourage improved participation, instruction, and services.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
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### (B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant acknowledged that it makes available and financial information relevant to processes, practices, and investments to the public for review through a system called BoardDocs. The applicant provided a chart that indicated the per-pupil spending and operational costs that displayed the state and national averages in comparison to the districts per-pupil amount.

### WEAKNESS:

In providing support information within this category of the proposal, the applicant didn't provide supportive evidence or documentation that demonstrated an increase in transparency in regards to the actual personnel salaries for all school-level instructional and support staff, actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only, actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only, and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level.

The applicant didn't provide school level funding or documentation for the four categories, as indicated, from state and local sources.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has not demonstrated evidence of successful conditions for autonomy beyond their efforts and approval in seeking re-classification for most of their elementary and middle schools as district managed schools. The National Alliance for Public Schools has given the state the top rating possible for autonomy; though no documentation was included to verify this information. As referenced by the applicant, the two schools that will not be re-classified have already implemented personalized learning projects and exceed high levels of autonomy beyond the state requirements; however, the applicant didn't include in detailed information or evidence that supported this statement. In summary, the applicants intentions toward showing evidence that sufficient autonomy were not adequately provided in their plan.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The only documented indicators of support toward the project were four letters representing the following: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, school board president, city mayor, and the president of the teacher association.

**WEAKNESS:**

The applicant didn't provide any evidence that described specific engagement that related to obtaining input and feedback from students, families, teachers and principals that indicated efforts to support the proposal. There wasn't evidence of any supportive documentation (e.g., meeting dates/places/times, agendas, minutes, attendance verification, ad hoc committees established for this specific purpose, etc.) that was provided by the applicant to show such direct focus on the proposal.

In addition, the applicant didn't provide letters of support from key stakeholders such as parents, parent organizations, business community representatives, local civic and community groups and institutions of higher education.

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

	<b>Available</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

a) i. As indicated by the applicant, students K-8 are conveyed the importance as a foundation skill needed to accomplish their goal; students are conveyed the value of all their subjects. In their narrative response to this area, the applicant didn't provide any specific details or information that addressed how parents are involved in this process.

ii. The applicant in addressing this area referenced programs at the middle school level aimed to help students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and measure their progress. Teachers are responsible to provide students with skills to help them structure their learning through direct instruction and individual meeting. The applicant also mentioned that team-projects are also linked to college and career readiness standards. As this reference was non-specific and vague, the applicant didn't actually demonstrate and describe how students pursue learning and development goals linked to college-and career-ready standards or college-and career-ready graduation requirements, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. In referencing that team projects are also linked to college and career readiness as noted, the applicant didn't provide any specific examples or supportive evidence to this learning activity

iii. The applicant did reference the implementation of the Beyond Textbooks program and student access to a wide range of enrichment activities to create deep learning experiences and academic interest; however, there weren't any specific examples and details (e.g., grades, subjects, etc.) of such enrichment activities. It was noteworthy that the applicant stated that they have the option of creating schools that specialize in STEM, art/music, etc.;however, there weren't any schools that were identified that presently specialize in such enrichment programs. The applicant also referenced that personalized learning environments allow students to have deep learning experiences through the use of technology; however, there weren't any specific examples where this concept has been applied successfully by the applicant.

- iv. In the district, students have access to automated interactive educational learning activities that utilize corporate volunteers from a diverse range of cultures and perspectives; however, documentation regarding such relationships weren't included.
- v. In addressing this area, the applicant didn't provide specific in-depth, descriptive information that related to the students' mastery of these critical academic content, skills, and traits.
  - b) i. The applicant referenced that all PreK-8 students will have access to automated personalized learning systems that will enable parents and teachers to support each student; however, there weren't any indicators or description how such support would be implemented by these individuals.
  - ii. The applicant didn't indicate any examples of high-quality instructional approaches beyond the use of the Beyond Textbooks system.
  - iii. The applicant indicated that all content is aligned with common core standards. It was also referenced that Beyond Textbooks, the middle school blended learning program, and the personalized learning environments are aligned with college and career standards as stated.
  - iv. a. The applicant didn't provide specific information to describe how data provided and utilized by teachers, students, and parents help to determine mastery of college and career readiness standards.
  - b. Though the applicant referenced the utilization of enhancements in promoting personalized learning environments, there weren't any description, details, and examples that defined such *enhancements*.
  - v. In regards to providing accommodations and high-quality strategies, the applicant conveyed limited information that included no references to learning disabled students.
  - c. The applicant did identify a development plan and resources to assist teachers each summer; and all schools will have a specialized learning specialist. It was also mentioned that personalized learning parent liaisons will be available to assist students and parents on an ongoing basis at each school.

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

**20**

**6**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

- a) i. Though the applicant identified professional development to occur each summer for 30 hours each summer to focus upon supporting personalized learning environments, the implementation of this program and knowledge by teachers with students in their classrooms weren't addressed or indicated.
- ii. The applicant referenced that elementary school classrooms are implementing a variety of projects to engage students in common and individual activities, this information was non-specific and vague as examples or details describing such projects were limited.
- iii. The applicant referenced that data from the Beyond Textbooks program was made available to parents, teachers, students, and principals; however, it wasn't conveyed how such information was utilized and accessed by these stakeholders. In addition, there were no indications that identified how frequently measures of student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and the use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators occurred.
- iv. Though the applicant did reference the importance of data analysis to improve the progress of individual students, classrooms, schools, and LEAs, there were no indications that indicated how such data/information could impact effectiveness for both teachers and principals relevant to their supervisory evaluation process.
  - b) i. The applicant has made no reference that acknowledges access for all educators toward using the tools, data, and resources to accelerate progress of students in meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. The applicant only stated that they look at variables to help determine the best personalized learning environment to match students' interest; therefore, this item was not adequately addressed.
  - ii. The applicant didn't provide any evidence that high-quality learning resources were used beyond their reference to the Beyond Textbooks system. There weren't any description of how this system aligns with college and career ready standards beyond its reference to this content aligning with common core standards.
  - iii. It was stated that the personalized learning environment technology will provide the processes and tools to match the student needs, but such a program appears to be in a projected or developmental stage with no evidence or

documentation provided to warrant this alignment match.

c) i. Though a reference was made toward the present evaluation system for teachers there were no direct references and documentation that indicated the implementation of leaders and leadership teams that have been established to adequate access and take the necessary steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate the purpose of continuous school improvement. Also, there weren't references to their evaluation system of teachers that indicated any focus on college and career readiness standards.

ii. The applicant has acknowledge a need to implement training programs to increase student performance and efforts to close achievement gaps. The applicant intends to provide emphasis toward monitoring and analysis that will be addressed through their proposal's staff development initiative.

d) It is apparent that as an effort to use its present data analysis systems to indicate highly effective and effective teachers; however, there isn't evidence that their evaluation system will provide a high-quality plan. In addition, the applicant hasn't indicated any specific plan toward improving the quality of its teachers. Their reference toward the impact of environmental factors that influence the ranking factor of being highly-qualified was through research-based evidence or citations, but there were no research-based references or citations to support such information in the proposal.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

In regards to LEA policies and infrastructure, the applicant doesn't have in place a high-quality plan to implement to support the implementation of the project. The structure of the central office organizational structure wasn't included in the plan to ensure its implementation and intent.

A school leadership team will be developed at each school; however, the structure, roles, and responsibilities of this team relevant to ensure autonomy over all operational aspects of the project at each location weren't described or indicated.

The district has already been successful in creating continuous improvement plans as part of the Plan-Do-Check-Art (PDCA) model.

The district's personalized learning environments weren't described specifically how they will enhance the progress of student achievement. In regards to any that has provided students an opportunity to earn credit based on mastery; this process of earning credits weren't clearly defined or described with supportive data. The applicant stated that teachers adapt the ongoing evaluations to the level of students; however, the applicant didn't provide specific examples, information, and data to support such adaptive practices.

The applicant stated that the personalized learning systems are adaptable to almost any language; however, information and supportive documentation relevant to this matter weren't included in the plan

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

a) The applicant has made efforts to ensure that personalized technology will be provided for all students as students will have access to the content needed to complete homework assignments and tasks outside of the school setting. Though the applicant referenced parental support, it didn't provide a description or details of how such support will be available to parents.

b) The inclusion of a network specialist and technology specialist will be available to support teachers and students; however, the requirements, roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of those positions weren't included. Though a parent liaison person will be available to support parents, the applicant didn't provide details or examples of how such services will be delivered to support parents for the term of the project..

c) Though the applicant has acknowledged parental access to data in a wide range of formats and styles; however, the type of data wasn't defined or indicated. The delivery of support and training to parents to understand and interpret this information/data wasn't addressed in the proposal.

d) The district has acknowledged that the data for the interoperable systems will be XML. This data system will use non-proprietary formats. In summary, the applicant's technology support needed to export and convert data to any format required by external agencies was referenced in a vague manner.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Though the applicant has referenced that a continuous improvement process that utilizes high quality data in determining a data analysis system to ensure the project's effectiveness, the framework to implement such a system that should include the responsible personnel involved, measurable benchmarks, timelines, and a schedule of such deliverables weren't indicated in the proposal; therefore, a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process to monitor the project throughout the grant time wasn't evident. In addition, the applicant referenced that the results of continuous improvement processes will become available to the public, the only means to share this information will be through the Arizona Department of Education and the ALEAT tracking system; therefore, public access will be limited as noted.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>It was evident that a high-quality plan to provide ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholders wasn't evident. The applicant referenced that the project manager will serve as a central contact person for the project; however, there weren't indications of how ongoing assessments of the project would require possible adjustments and revisions, as needed to ensure a high-quality approach to continuously improve its plans. The information that was provided by the applicant to address this area was limited as noted.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>a. In a narrative format, the applicant indicated rationale for selecting each of their performance measures as indicated. In addition to the required areas the additional performance topics included the following: Student attendance, reading activity, student behavior, student goal setting, parent involvement, learning time outside of school, achievement gap, and student leadership.</p> <p>b. In regards to 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 applicant didn't provide specific information to address these components.</p> <p>c. Relevant to how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress, the applicant provided limited, non-specific and vague processes regarding how it will occur.</p> <p><b>WEAKNESS:</b></p> <p>In addition as indicated in its charts, the applicant in projecting targeted improvements in its performance measures often set ambitious, but unrealistic or achievable goals in reading and math proficiency scores as indicated for subgroups with comparisons between benchmarks and annual goals throughout the grant period being excessively high in most regards.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provided a succinct response to this area that referenced their plan to calculate the ROI (Return on Investment) for all staff activities and technology in determining both the net present value for the improvements in the academic performance index, social-emotional benefits, and other indexes.</p>		

A high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and all funded activities such as staff development and technology related initiatives weren't evident in their response to this item. In the area of supporting staff development and technology, the applicant didn't provide specific details, skills, and goals that would be targeted over the grant period.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>a) In the budget narrative, the applicant referenced that a large part of the project will be funded through volunteer time from community and corporate sources; however, there doesn't appear to be supportive documentation (e.g., letters, agreements, etc.) from community members or corporate sources that indicate a commitment to support this project.</p> <p>The Ak-Chin partnership is scheduled to provide substantial funding to the project; \$2.6M for additional educational and social-emotional programs for the district.</p> <p>In addition, the district referenced success in obtaining technology and equipment donations, though no evidence or documentation of such support was included. The estimated amount to be donated over the grant period is \$1.8M.</p> <p>b) The budget amounts and items to implement and sustain the project appear reasonable as noted.</p> <p>c) i.-ii. The funds of the grant will be used for the one-time investments in equipment, implementation, and support costs within the first four years. The projected costs to maintain the project will be significantly less during the post-grant phase. The applicant didn't identify access to any potential sources of funds beyond the grant period.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>In addressing this area, the applicant stated that after the personalized learning environments have been successfully implemented, the major of the functions will be mostly automated. The applicant didn't specify or provide detailed information that identified these major functions and what would actually be automated. The future support and funding appeared to be projected through volunteerism and donations, yet no specific documentation was provided to verify such post-grant assistance through individuals or corporate assistance or commitment, as noted.</p> <p>In summary, the applicant didn't have a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the grant period.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district has developed a partnership with Ak-Chin that is scheduled to provide \$2.6M for additional educational resources; however, the disbursement of this fund and specifically how the money will be utilized weren't fully described. A</p>		

current MOA has been approved by the governing board of the district and their Tribal Council; however, the applicant didn't provide documentation regarding this partnership agreement.

The participating students in this partnership agreement are identified as Ak-Chin Indian Community students. Students within this population regardless of their level or special needs will be supported by the intent of this partnership agreement with the district and benefit from all available and extended resources made available through this partnership.

The school community (e.g., teachers and principals) will be able to receive support and assistance in all matters of this partnership to ensure assistance to these students; however, the applicant didn't provide specific information or a description as to the type of support will be rendered. A major component of this partnership renders transitioning support for students at each level (e.g., PreK-K, K-1, elementary to middle school, and HS to middle school).

In summary, Resource Alignment, and Integrated Services aren't demonstrated in this competitive priority area. The applicant hasn't demonstrated the extent to which it intends to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools with these high-need students

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant didn't coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create 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; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; 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 students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>85</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0088AZ-3 for Maricopa Unified School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant's plan for introducing a wide range of new hardware and software to create more personalized learning environments builds on many (but not all) of the RTT/D's four educational assurance areas. For instance the MUSD has adopted the CCSS and has been actively working to align all curricula and instructional practices to align with those standards along with their annually up-</p>		

dated strategic plan. The district works on preparing students to succeed in college and the competitive global economy by stressing both necessary academic, collaborative, and social-emotional skills starting as early as Kindergarten. Middle school students have access to a blended learning environment and work on team projects. However, there is only a vague description provided regarding data systems that measure student growth/ success for improving instruction; it is described as 'extensive' with no specifics noted.

Also, the district has 'extensive' but unspecified systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all teachers and principals, with Proposition 301 funds for rewarding and retaining effective teachers. The district reports that it is working to turn around its lowest achieving schools. However there is only a reference to offering before and after school extended learning programs to supplement school-day learning; there is no mention in this section about what other school day interventions have been provided for students in such schools or what their schools' record of success has been. The applicant does mention that the state increased the district's rating from a C to a B; however, there is no information about when this happened or the specific reasons for the C or B rating.

There is a distinct lack of information provided concerning how the applicant's vision addresses (A)(1)(b) and (c). For instance, the response lacks a clear and credible approach for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support, and there is no description for what the classroom experience will be like for participating students and teachers. For example, It is not clear what interventions and supports are provided to students who are far below grade level in reading in First and Second grade; if they continue to lag behind at the end of Third grade the state law requires they repeat that grade. Without specific, targeted interventions and support, those repeaters may still struggle and not meet grade level competency in reading even after the second year in Third grade.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(A)(2)(a) The applicant's district includes a high school, but for the purpose of RTT/D, only the Pre-K through 8th grade students will be participating. There is no reason given for the exclusion of the high school from the RTT/D project; that is, there is no information provided as to why the applicant decided to focus on the PreK - 8th grade students in the eight participating schools. Thus the response to this sub-section is insufficient.

(A)(2)(b) and (c) The applicant has provided a list of the schools that will participate in RTT/D grant funded activities. The requirements of (c) are met, with the information provided in the designated categories. All of the students in the district's elementary and middle school schools will participate in the RTT/D project, with all students in each of the eight (8) schools identified as participants; 2,944 (68%) of the total of 4,310 students are considered high needs students, and 3,454 (80%) come from low income families.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant expresses unsubstantiated optimism that providing a wide range of automated academic and social-emotional resources will 'automatically' create personalized learning environments needed to help students achieve and 'significantly improve the student outcomes.' The context for these investments includes large class sizes, including Kindergarten classes with 35 students with one Teacher and no Instructional Assistant (it is not clear if this was in the past or is a situation that still exists).

This section does not include the applicant's theory of change other than its belief that creating personalized learning environments through investing in additional technology will lead to improved student outcomes, a rather shaky stand-alone that does not include other key factors in improving schools. There is a lack of information about what successful reforms at the PreK - 8th grade levels might be scaled up into meaningful reform at the high school, or how such reforms would spread to more consistent improvements for teaching/learning district-wide.

There is a lack of a well-defined high quality plan, as defined by RTT/D. That is, in this section there is no information regarding key goals, specific activities to be undertaken and a rationale for the activities, a time-line or deliverables. For instance, the applicant notes that the proposed RTT-D project extends educational resources to students' homes, but provides no details as to how this will occur.

There is a reference to a Wifi network support staff member and several personalized learning support staff members; however, there is a lack of information regarding the roles and responsibilities of these technical support staff positions or how they will be trained, deployed, and utilized in the district's schools.

Overall, there is a lack of compelling credibility for why and how the applicant intends to move forward to reach its outcome goals.

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

**10**

**5**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

It is encouraging to learn that the academic performance of the district's primary grade students using personalized learning technologies was almost one standard deviation above the control group. However, there is no information about the size of the experimental and control groups (e.g, how many students and classrooms were involved and at how many of the eight schools), what grade level or grade levels were included, what kinds of hardware and software were involved, how long a period this research took place, &/or what assessments were used to determine these results.

The applicant anticipates that by providing the necessary resource so that students achieve proficiency and above by 3rd grade, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates will improve. Since the district is located in a state that requires students to meet specific proficiency standards "by 3rd grade" (perhaps this actually means by the end of Third grade), students who do not meet such standards must repeat Third grade. There is no information provided regarding the rate of retention of such students in this district, or what the applicant's goals might be regarding all students and sub-groups of students completing 3rd grade and moving on to 4th with and without retention.

The (A)(4)(a) chart on Performance on Summative Assessments portrays ambitious goals; it shows that the applicant expects **100%** of all the district's 3rd through 8th grade students in all subgroups to achieve proficiency or above in Reading and Math by 2017-18. However, the starting point in 2012-2013 for each group at each grade level vary tremendously, thus calling in question the achievability of such goals. For instance, in 2012-13, 72% of White 4th grade students were proficient or above in Math, while only 39% of African Americans and 18% of Limited English students achieved at that level. In that same year, 75% of White 5th grade students were proficient or above in Math, compared to only 43% of African Americans and 25% of Students with Disabilities.

Similarly, in 2012-13, the differential between and among middle school sub-groups continues, even though **100%** of students are still expected to achieve at the proficient level or above by 2017-18. For instance, in 2012-13, 85% of White 7th graders were proficient or above in Reading, compared to 54% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students and 43% of Students with Disabilities. White students' achievement in Math declines by 8th grade; in 2012-2013 only 53% were proficient or above; the proficiency of sub-groups continued to lag far behind the White sub-group with only 26% of African American students, 21% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students, 37% of Hispanic

students, and 36% of Economically Disadvantaged students reaching the proficiency benchmark. Some of the gaps increase by 8th grade, with 73% of White students in 2012-2013 achieving at the proficiency level or above in Reading, while only 16% of Students with Disabilities demonstrating proficiency or above.

Similarly, the chart for (A)(4)(b) shows the Achievement gaps between and among subgroups decreasing to zero by 2016-17, while the starting point in 2012-13 points to wide variance. In contrast, the high school graduation rate in 2012-2013 shows a less significant gap between sub-groups and a relatively high graduation rate for most students (80% or higher for 5 out of the 7 subgroups). The outlier: only 50% of students with Limited English Proficiency graduated in 2012-2013, yet, like the other subgroups, it is expected that 100% of such students will graduate in 2017-18.

It is encouraging and perhaps more realistic to see that 87% of the district's high school students are expected to graduate in 2017-18 (while only 58% did so in 2012-13); there is no information provided by sub-group. 55% of the high school graduates are expected to attain post-secondary degrees by 2017-18 (compared to 33.35% in 2012-13), though again this is not broken down by the expectations for each sub-group.

In summary, the goals for students outlined in (A)(4) are indeed ambitious while the issue remains concerning the credibility of their 2017-18 projections and the questionable likelihood of such goals actually becoming a reality for many of the student sub-groups.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	15	2
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant points to the improvement of its state "grade" from a C to a B rating, based on multiple factors, including the percentage of students having met or exceeded performance levels on the AIMS assessment, the distribution of achievement at each school and LEA, longitudinal indicators of student gain, and high school drop out and graduation rates. However, there is no information provided relating to the applicant's data regarding such factors when it was a C and then a B rated district (and no dates are provided for when the C or B ratings were conferred).</p> <p>Although Pima Butte Elementary is noted as maintaining the state's A rating four years in a row, and four of the remaining eight schools increased their letter grade by one grade, it's not clear when and why this happened, or what the 'before and after' grades actually were. It's also not evident what the state's ratings of the other four schools might be in the recent past and in the present. It is also not clear how and why six of the nine participating schools became charter schools beginning with the 2013-14 school year -- and what changes have occurred as a result of this recent transition.</p> <p>Finally, criteria (B)(1)(c) is not addressed by the applicant; that is, there is no information included in this section regarding in what ways the applicant intends to make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. Other sections do note that the Beyond Textbook (BT) program will do so, but the applicant does <u>not</u> explain, in this section or elsewhere, how that BT capacity for making student performance data available to these stakeholders will actually <i>inform and improve participation, instruction and services</i>. [italics &amp; bold added] It is of little or no use to make such data available if it does not contribute to more informed and effective instruction, services, and targeted support that would advance student learning/achievement.</p> <p>There is inadequate, insufficient &amp;/or no information provided in response to the criteria in (B)(1)(a) through (c), thus earning this section a score of 2.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	5	1

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant publishes notes that "all expenses, even items costing one dollar, are listed and available to the public" on-line. However, the portrayed budget summaries included in this section only give dollar amounts by general categories, such as the total of projected expenditures for each school's certified teachers, rather than demonstrated evidence of actual personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures as required by (B)(2). [Also one chart included in this section, "Percentage of students who met state standards," appears to be irrelevant to the requirements of (B)(2), and does not include a key for the meaning (year?) of each colored bar on the graph].

The applicant's response lacks the information required by (B)(2) and does not demonstrate the required high level of transparency in processes, practices, and investments.

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

**10**

**5**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

In this section the applicant claims that there are successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under state requirements to implement personalized learning environments in participating schools. The applicant notes that the state has approved the applicant's request to re-classify most of its elementary and middle schools as district managed charter schools, thus allowing a higher level of autonomy. However, there is no information concerning what the implications of charter school status might be for the district's role as charter holder, and the charter schools' governance, budgeting, accountability, hiring, and so forth.

Also, it is not clear how to compare Pima Butte Elementary School, a non-Charter Maricopa district school with an "Excellent" A rating by the state, to the level of state-granted autonomy of the six Maricopa schools that since September 2013 have been district managed as state approved Charter schools. It is interesting to note that in the School Demographic chart in (A)(2), Pima Butte Elementary is shown as having the smallest percentage of participating students in the district from low income families (38%), perhaps contributing to its higher level of student performance (and state recognition) when compared to other schools in the district that have a far greater percentage of students from low income families, including 69% at Maricopa Wells Middle School and 74% at Maricopa Elementary.

Without any history provided regarding why and how the applicant and/or the state decided to designate six of the nine district's schools as Charters, it is difficult to know the extent to which this decision may have been made because of certain schools' lower past performance/ratings. There is also a lack of specific information about how the Charter designation impacts the legal and statutory responsibilities of such schools. Also, without any information about which schools are now designated as Charter schools, it is difficult to compare their demographics and achievement levels (by sub-group) with Pima Butte Elementary's -- or the differences, if there are any, between the non-Charter Pima Butte Elementary and the newly designated Charter schools regarding the extent to which there are successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments.

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

**15**

**2**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

In this section the applicant describes the processes already in place for generating stakeholder support for any and all district-wide grant applications. For instance, the district's Superintendent holds Parent/Community coffee meetings 6 - 8 times a year; parents, staff, and community members participate in district-wide committees and school-based Site Councils; and there are opportunities for the public and a student to speak at School Board meetings.

However, there is no evidence that the district's students, families, teachers, and principals were

engaged in this RTT/D proposal or how the proposal was then revised based on their engagement and feedback. There is no information about how many parents, staff members, and community members participate in the Superintendent's coffee meetings (or if the meetings' agendas included any mention of the RTT/D proposal), or if the Site Council members were in any way involved in the development/revision of this proposal. Thirty stakeholders participated in the district's Strategic Plan, but there is no mention of when this was developed or how it relates to the goals and strategies of the RTT/D proposal.

The Letters of Support in the Appendix are inadequate and extremely limited, with a total of four letters included. The text of two of the letters, one signed by the President of the school district's Governing Board and the other signed by the President of the district's Teacher Association, are identical and contain only one brief paragraph. A third letter signed by the Mayor of the applicant's city also includes similar though not entirely identical text. The fourth letter is more extensive and is signed by the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction. There are no support letters from parents, parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations or institutions of higher education.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(C)(1)(a)(i) The applicant focuses on how students understand that reading in particular is a foundational skill needed to accomplish their goals, although this contention is not backed up by evidence.

(C)(1)(a)(ii) In this brief paragraph, the applicant notes that the district has a number of programs at the middle school to help students understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and their progress toward those goals. It cites blended learning as one of these programs, although usually this would be considered an instructional approach (that integrates technology) rather than a distinct 'program.' In the same sense, the citing of team projects as linked to college and career readiness is so lacking in substance or specificity as to be meaningless in this context.

(C)(1)(a)(iii) In this brief response, the applicant notes that the district's schools have implemented the Beyond Textbooks program but not explain this program nor links it to providing students with deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The district states that it now has the option of creating schools that specialize in STEM, Art/Music, etc., but expresses no interest or commitment in doing so.

(C)(1)(a)(iv) The applicant's approach to providing students with access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives is based on providing telephone-based educational learning activities and the possibility of connecting students with educational and corporate volunteer mentors in various occupations. It is not clear how many volunteers will be involved, how they will be recruited and trained, and how students will actually be exposed to diverse cultures, etc., when the potential connections will be through telephones (a somewhat out-of-date technology that ignores the potential of more compelling connections that could be made through Skype, etc. There is also no mention of possible live person-to-person connections with people of diverse backgrounds/cultures/perspectives at school or in the community.

(C)(1)(a)(v) The applicant states that they already have programs in place to ensure students are mastering critical academic content and developing a wide range of skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem solving.

However, there is no mention of what these programs are or how students access and benefit from them (and in what ways they contribute to academics and social-emotional growth).

(C)(1)(b)(i) The applicant notes that every PK - 8 student will have automated personalized learning systems to help achieve their goals and ensure college-career readiness. It is not clear what these systems will include, how they will be integrated into their classrooms' teaching/learning. It is also not clear how the systems will provide a personalized sequence of instructional content and/or skill development. The response is insufficient.

(C)(1)(b)(ii) The applicant is relying on the Beyond Textbooks system and the charter school options to provide a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments. There is no information provided to substantiate this claim.

(C)(1)(b)(iii) The applicant notes that it has (unspecified) high quality content that is aligned with college/career ready standards and graduation requirements. Again, there is no information provided to explain, justify or substantiate this claim.

(C)(1)(b)(iv)(A)&(B) Again, the applicant states that its Beyond Textbook (BT) program addresses the requirements of sub-sections A & B, noting that the BT program monitors students' skills and knowledge, provides personalized learning recommendations, and shares the data with teachers, students, and teachers. It is not evident how this program works or the effectiveness of its use in this district; there is no information provided regarding its available content, or how teachers would improve and personalize their instructional approaches and supports based on the data provided by the BT program.

(C)(1)(b)(v) There is a lack of evidence in this response regarding how the district's personalized learning technology will accommodate high needs students and/or provide high quality strategies to such students to help ensure they are on track toward meeting college/career standards and graduation requirements. Instead of addressing the criteria in this sub-section, the applicant notes that the personalized learning technology will be provided to all students free of charge and that it has (unspecified) plans for providing accommodations for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. It makes no mention of other high need sub-groups, such as those from low income families, nor does it refer to any specific strategies that it will use to ensure any and/or all sub-groups of students are on track to become college and career ready. Thus this response is insufficient and inadequate.

(C)(1)(c) The applicant contends that the (technological) tools and resources are easy and can be utilized by students with minimal training; it is not clear how very young students with no prior experience using such technology would necessarily find it 'easy'. It does appear helpful that all teachers will receive 30 hours of training every summer on current and emerging technology for personalized learning environments. Additionally, every school will have a personalized learning specialist and a personalized learning parent liaison; it is not clear how such personnel will be recruited, selected, trained, or supported.

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

**20**

**4**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(C)(2)(a)(i) The applicant states that all teachers will receive 30 hours of training each summer to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies; however, there is no information about the specific topics of the trainings, who will conduct the training, where it will occur, and how the training will be differentiated for those already familiar with the content and those who are brand new to it. It is encouraging that each school will have personalized learning specialists on-site (although there are no details about the qualifications, roles and responsibilities of such personnel) and schools will also have one early release day per week to allow teachers to collaborate as a professional team. There is no information as to the teachers' experiences in working

as collaborative teams, or how this early release time will be facilitated, or what the accountability will be for this collaborative work as it relates to the goals of this RTT/D project. In addition, the applicant also notes that most schools (it is not clear how many of those participating in the RTT/D project) have scheduled a number of days for 'training and other professional activities' throughout the school year. However, there is a lack of documentation that any of these days (the exact number is not specified) would be used for training related to the RTT/D project for meeting each student's academic needs and helping to ensure all students can graduate on time and college/career ready.

(C)(2)(a)(ii) The applicant notes that it already has multiple programs to address these requirements; for instance middle schools have a blended learning program that combines group projects, teacher centered classroom instruction, student centered individual activities, and automated technology-based learning. However no specifics or examples of these are provided for middle school students. This section does note that lower primary grade students have access to group educational games and activities, although there is no indication as to how many teachers and students actually use these or how they actually respond to students' academic needs and interests. It is not compelling to know that electronic teddy bears, Mickey Mouse automated telephones, and audio lessons are available to youngsters without knowing exactly what their content might be, how their use provides adapted content and instruction, or the extent to which these are actually used. The applicant contends that the results have been 'excellent,' without giving any details or justification for this conclusion.

(C)(2)(a)(iii) The applicant relies on the Beyond Textbooks program to measure student progress. The data generated can be accessed by teachers, parents, and students, as appropriate; it is then used to accelerate or re-teach lessons for individual students. It is not clear how this program actually improves the individual and collective practice of educators, nor is it clear whether it is the Beyond Textbooks program or classroom teachers that either accelerate or re-teach lessons to individual students.

(C)(2)(a)(iv) The applicant notes that its "data analysis system provides information on the progress of individual students, classrooms, schools and the LEA." This system is described as comparing control groups with students, classrooms, or schools whose results differ from the control group. However, this is an insufficient response as there is no further information provided that would explain what kinds of differences are being examined, and how the control and 'experimental' groups are defined (since the Beyond Textbook program is presently in place in all classrooms in all participating schools).

In addition, there are no details provided about what this system actually provides for information, and what benchmarks and subsequent interventions and supports may be provided, as needed &/or appropriate -- or how the district develops its "frequent recommendations based on the data to improve the effectiveness of the teachers and the school." That is, this statement is not explained, nor is there any connection made between the data generated and the criteria used for evaluating teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness -- or how specifically the data generated leads to useful recommendations, supports, and interventions necessary for improving educators' effectiveness. In summary, the response to this sub-section is inadequate, insufficient, and for the most part irrelevant.

(C)(2)(b)(i) The applicant fails to describe its data analysis tools and how these generate actionable information that identifies optimal learning approaches for responding to individual student academic needs and interests. Its very brief response only notes that its data analysis tools "look at a range of variables" including instructional methods, content, and activities. However, there is no explanation about what varied instructional methods/strategies are in use or how the data analysis tools will provide actionable information for improving teachers' ability to accelerate students' progress towards college and career readiness.

(C)(2)(b)(ii) The applicant relies on the enhanced Beyond Textbook (BT) system to provide instructional resources, including digital resources, that are cataloged, indexed, and shared. These

digital resources are aligned with the CCSS and college/career ready standards. Although this is the applicant's claim, there are no details provided as to the quality and grade level relevance of the BT content, the extent to which these BT resources are and will be accessed by teachers, and to what extent this tool will be used to create and share new resources.

(C)(2)(b)(iii) The applicant's response is somewhat confusing as it describes the effectiveness rating of personalized learning environment technology resources, first by the rating results across the sample set of all students, then secondly by a 'specialized subgroup effectiveness' rating. It is not clear how this rating system information will provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in actually meeting student needs, nor is there any information about the criteria used to 'rate' the resources or how the ratings will improve teachers' instructional approaches &/or strategies.

(C)(2)(c)(i) The applicant depends on its teacher evaluation system to determine individual and collective educator effectiveness. Although the district uses state Proposition 301 funds to reward the most effective teachers and schools, there is no information provided as to how it assesses and takes steps to improve educator effectiveness, nor does it address how it will assess and take steps to improve each school's culture and climate.

(C)(2)(c)(ii) The applicant notes that it has 'extensive' training programs to increase student performance and close the achievement gap, including the previously mentioned 30 hours of training each summer along with weekly release time and scheduled training days throughout the school year. However, there is no mention of the specific content, trainers, follow-up, or accountability for such training -- or how it relates to the district's RTT/D project &/or the improvement of student performance and school progress. There is also a lack of information concerning the systems and practices utilized to increase student performance and close achievement gaps.

(C)(2)(d) The applicant's goal is to have an effective or highly effective teacher in every PK-8 classroom. Its hope is that the summer and school year trainings will improve teachers' effectiveness, although it appears that at least the summer training will focus on the use of the Beyond Textbooks resources rather than the many other components of effective/highly effective teaching. This response is also lacking in the deliverables and parties responsible for implementing its plan. In addition, it fails to include a convincing comprehensive plan for ensuring that an increasing number of students will receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals (the latter are not mentioned at all), nor does it address how it will increasing the percentage of effective/highly effective educators in any schools that may be hard to staff.

In summary, the responses to (C)(2) are inadequate and insufficient, relying heavily on the Beyond Textbook program and training to prepare students for college and careers. The responses fail to explain how using this tool will actually improve the rigor and standards-aligned instruction and teachers' capacity to implement personalized teaching and learning for all students, in particular high needs students. Although the district also plans to hire school-based personalized learning specialists and parent liaisons to help support the project's implementation, their qualifications, roles and responsibilities remain vague and undefined, thus making it difficult to understand how they will actually help enable the full implementation of personalized teaching and learning for all students.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(D)(1)(a) The applicant refers to the overall management, business services staff, network support

staff, external audit staff and clerical support that it intends to utilize in providing support and services to its RTT-D participating schools. The Project Manager will provide the necessary overall technology leadership and grant implementation leadership, including the maintenance of a master project schedule and monitoring of the project budget. It is not clear who will supervise and support the key position of Project Manager, although it is noted that this person will work with the federal and state departments of education and the district's superintendent and directors. There is a lack of information about the practices, policies and rules of the applicant's central office that will help provide the overall structure for the RTT/D-funded staff positions.

(D)(1)(b) The applicant contends that its participating schools have sufficient flexibility and autonomy to decide on their individual staffing, schedules and calendars, and school-level budgets. This is due to present practices and the recent state approval for most of its PK-8 schools to become district-managed charter schools; however there is a lack of information about how the change to charter status will change the role of their school leadership teams or their flexibility and autonomy (since they will still be managed by the same district).

(D)(1)(c) The applicant notes that the already adopted Beyond Textbooks program provides students with the opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating mastery, but there is a lack of information as to how the district's policies support such competency-based earning of credits.

(D)(1)(d) While the applicant states that students already have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways, these are not described or explained -- thus leaving the response as insufficient.

(D)(1)(e) The applicant's response for this sub-section is more complete, noting that the technology for this project includes extensive accessibility functions for students with disabilities, including examples for low vision students and those with limited motor skills. The personalized learning systems are also adaptable to 'most of the common languages' for English learners. However, this response does not address how the teachers' actual *instructional practices* are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including those with disabilities and English language learners.

Overall, the responses to (D)(1)(a) through (e) lack compelling detail and explanations of comprehensive practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning and omit the components of a high quality plan such as the specific activities to be undertaken, time-lines, and deliverables.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(D)(2)(a) Participating students will have access to Beyond Textbooks (BT) content at school and outside of school hours through pre-loading of individualized content before the student leaves school. All of the technology involved will be provided to students free of charge. There is no information provided as to how parents, educators, and any other appropriate and relevant stakeholders will have access to the RTT/D funded technology -- or the extent to which students, particularly high needs students, presently access the BT learning resources. It is also confusing to understand why this RTT/D project focuses on the *future* implementation of the Beyond Textbooks program's resources while the applicant also indicates that BT is *presently* in place in all participating schools. For instance, note the last sentence in this sub-section, "MUSD [the applicant district] educators, students, and parents have access to Beyond Textbooks instructional content inside and outside of school."

(D)(2)(b) The applicant notes that it presently has technical support in the form of automated network monitors and a network specialist for planning, installation, and maintenance of technology for personalized learning environments. Parent Liaison and Technology Specialists will assist parent, teachers, and student; however, there is no indication of how such Liaisons will be trained, supported,

or supervised. With no information about the qualifications and specific roles/responsibilities of these Parent Liaisons and Technology Specialists, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which students, parents, educators and other appropriate stake holders will have appropriate levels of peer, on-line and local support available.

(D)(2)(c) The applicant notes that the enhanced personal learning environment will allow students access to data in open data formats; this is presently available to parents but not to students. There is no explanation provided about the kinds of student data that is available, although other sections of the application refer to students' academic progress on the Beyond Textbooks program/ That is, there is no mention of other kinds of data such as attendance, grades, behavioral incidents, homework completion, etc. The applicant also notes that presently the district already has the capability to 'exchange almost any format' as well as having the capacity to import and export data between learning management systems. However, there is a lack of information as to whether this capability is actually utilized. In addition there is no information concerning how personal records are securely stored.

(D)(2)(d) The applicant LEA and its participating school will utilize interoperable data systems, with most of the data using XML while some JSON is used between the automated monitoring and control systems and the personalized learning technology. It is not clear whether these systems include human resource data and budget data; it appears they mainly focus on student information data and perhaps instructional improvement system data.

**E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(E)(1) The applicant describes its monitoring of the personalized learning systems, although how this is done is not explained. Monitoring will determine the most effective resources; delivery methods; technology performance; student goal tracking, academic index improvements, and behavioral improvement; the satisfaction of students, parents, teachers, and staff; financial and schedule performance; and all of the standard project management tracking measures. However, monitoring and tracking is only the first step in determining any needed adjustments/revisions and then implementing needed changes -- and there is a lack of information about these latter necessary steps. The district also notes that it will follow Deming's Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle and calculate the ROI for its RTT/D project.</p> <p>This section lacks most of the components of a high quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. That is, there is an absence of information about the activities for continuously improving its RTT/D plan, time-lines, deliverables, and the parties responsible for providing feedback on progress toward project goals. There is also a lack of information on how the applicant will publicly share information to local stakeholders, such as information about the quality of its RTT/D investments in professional development, technology, and personnel.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(E)(2) The district-based Project Manager and the School-based Personalized Learning Specialists</p>		

and Parent Liaisons will facilitate communications with internal and external stakeholders. This will include on-line communication. However, there is an absence of a comprehensive high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement as there is no information concerning key goals, specific on and off line activities to be undertaken and a rationale for such activities, and a timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementing communication and engagement activities. "Multiple communication and engagement resources" are not defined, and there is no indication that any communication will be actually engaging internal and external stakeholders in a two way dialogue whereby the applicant could receive feed-back and suggestions from parents, students, teachers, families, and local community members that could contribute to adjustments, revisions, and improvements of the plan during the implementation process.

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

**5**

**2**

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's rationale for focusing on increasing the percentage of effective and highly effective teachers is basically that is an RTT/D requirement, an insufficient rationale. There is also mention of more substantive reasons, including more effective teachers/teaching will increase student achievement levels in math and reading and help close achievement gaps between subgroups; however, this correlation is not explained or linked to the district's own history. The rationales for other selected performance measures, such as student attendance [also, the applicant notes, school funding is based on Average Daily Attendance] and proficiency in reading have somewhat stronger justifications.

It is a concern that the applicant will monitor behavior incident counts and suspensions in each school, and if there is not a decrease in behavior problems, the goal setting process will be improved; there is **no** indication that the district will take more pro-active preventative steps to support positive student behavior and provide more intensive interventions and supports for students who are demonstrating non-compliant or inappropriate behavior. This points to a lack of understanding of evidence-based, well-researched approaches and programs that actually improve behavior and engagement of all students -- rather than just monitoring the number of negative incidents and suspensions. The applicant does briefly mention that it will measure (in ways that are not specified) "good behavior" and "leadership qualities" and "reward" (again, in ways that are not specified) those students displaying such behavior.

The 2017-18 goals for the various selected benchmarks are laudable and ambitious. For instance, in that year 95% of all students, and students by subgroup, are expected to have effective teachers and principals, and 100% of all 3rd through 8th grade students will be proficient or above in both reading and math. However, there is a significant issue in that the 'starting point' of subgroups in 2012-13 varies widely, thus making the jump to 100% in five years difficult to assume. For instance, in 2012-13, 72% of 4th grade White students were proficient or above in Math, but only 39% of African-American students, 38% of students with disabilities, and 18% of Limited English Proficiency students were at the proficient or above level. Similarly, in 2012-13 63% of White 7th graders were proficient or above in Math while only 34% of Hispanic students, 25% of American Indian/Alaskan Native students, and 15% of students with disabilities were at that level.

Although the discrepancy in achievement among subgroups is somewhat less dramatic in Reading, there are still quite different 'starting points.' For example, in 2012-13, 73% of White 8th grade students were proficient or above in Reading, while only 52% of African-Americans, 46% of American Indian/Alaskan Natives, and 16% of Students with Disabilities were at that same level. Thus it does not seem reasonable to predict that by 2017-18 it will be achievable for 100% of students in all such sub-groups would be at the proficient level or above, especially given the applicant's reliance on the Beyond Textbook program for accomplishing such academic growth in the next five years.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
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**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's brief response to (E)(4) provides insufficient information regarding its plan for a high quality plan for rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of RTT/D-funded activities and investments, such as professional development and technology-related programs. That is, the response refers to its (unspecified) plan to calculate the Return On Investment (ROI) for all staff activities and technology to determine the value for the improvements in the academic performance index, social-emotional benefits, and other indexes. The applicant states that such calculations and analysis will help determine the activities that are producing exceptional results and share 'best practices' with both internal and external stakeholders.

However, the response lacks the elements of a clear high quality plan such as the activities to be undertaken to determine best practices or its ROI, the timeline and deliverables, and/or the parties responsible for implementing the activities that would be involved. Without such specifics, there is a lack of overall credibility for the evaluation of the effectiveness of RTT/D investments. Further, there is no information about how any calculations or analysis (both of which are unspecified) would contribute to any needed or appropriate adjustments and revisions during the RTT/D project's implementation.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's overall budget reflects the same level of expenses in each budget category in each of the project's four years for personnel and fringe benefits, travel, supplies, contracts, and 'other.' There is an initial Year one investment of \$3,135,125.00 in Equipment, with zero dollars budgeted in that category for years Two through Four (thus assuming, with no justification, that technology hardware and software will not need any replacements, up-dates, or enhancements after the First Year). Also, the amount budgeted for Training Stipends remains level funded for Years One through Three and then jumps up in Year Four, again without explanation. It is not clear why personnel salaries and benefits would not increase over four years or how a district could implement an almost \$10 million dollar project with only \$7,000. budgeted annually for all supplies.

It is encouraging to see that the applicant intends to augment RTT/D funding with \$2.6 million in external foundation funds, \$1.8 million in donated technology and equipment, and \$1.2 million in taxpayers' donations through a state tax credit program. However, this is contradicted by the budget breakdowns by project components showing **zero** dollars in the 'Funds from other [non RTT/D] sources used to support the project.'

It also appears that the RTT/D funds requested will probably be sufficient to support its project that focuses on the Beyond Textbooks program (with training for teachers and additional personnel to help with implementation), an automated interactive phone system, and automated teddy bears. In the budget narrative there is also for the first time in the proposal a passing reference to the purchase of Chromebooks for all students in grades 3-8. This major investment had not been previously mentioned, explained, or justified.

Funds for one-time investments and those for ongoing operational costs are identified, along with the expectation that personalized learning environments based on the investment in technology will continue in post grant years when the applicant notes that "support needs will be minimal and

sustainable by the existing LEA technology support team."

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

**10**

**1**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

In this brief five sentence response to (F)(2), the applicant states that after the RTT/D grant funding period, the personalized learning environments will have been successfully implemented and "the major [sic] of the functions will be mostly automated." Further, the applicant contends that he project will provide training for staff members to take over the roles "currently handled by specialist positions for the personalized learning environments." It is not clear what functions are being referenced or how automation will be accomplished and on-going.

The applicant also states that the district has "an outstanding volunteer program" that would be able to supplement the existing LEA technical support staff after the RTT/D grant funding has ended. However, there is no description of how many volunteers are presently involved with the schools, or what their roles or responsibilities might be now, during the RTT/D grant's implementation, or after the grant funding has ended. There is also a lack of support letters from present volunteers or volunteer coordinators; if they had been included, perhaps there would be more evidence for the level of volunteerism and the volunteers' understanding of what they might be doing during (and after) the RTT/D project funding.

Similarly, the applicant notes that it has "an effective equipment donation program that would be sufficient to meet the minimal needs of the post-grant project," while not specifying the present and projected donors or the kinds (new or used, etc.), value, or levels of their donations in the past, in the present, and in the projected post-grant future. In addition, it is not clear that the needs would be "minimal." Technology hardware and software offerings are changing quickly; it is difficult to believe that in four or five years that any investment in the next eighteen months will still be current and useful in five years time. To the contrary, it is likely that there will be an on-going need for investments in new technologies, as well as up-dating and repairing what will be purchased in Year One, in the years following the RTT/D funding.

In addition, the applicant fails to provide the elements of a high quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the RTT/D grant. For instance, there is no information provided regarding the activities to be undertaken in the planning for post grant sustainability, a timeline for such activities, and the parties responsible for implementing these activities. Further, there is no mention of support from State and local government leaders, or information about how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and student outcomes to inform a post grant budget. There is no evidence of an estimated budget for the three years after the RTT/D grant funding or its budget assumptions, potential sources of revenues, and the uses of such funds.

In summary, the applicant's response is insufficient, lacking in details, and fails to respond to the (F)((2) requirements and expectations regarding the sustainability of project goals.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's response is confusing as it describes a partnership with Ak-Chin that is already in place. There is no explicit information provided about Ak-Chin's goals, staffing, budget, or its relationship with the applicant district and its RTT/D project. The partnership is scheduled to provide \$2.6 million for additional education and social-emotional programs for the applicant district (although

no timeline is provided for this investment, nor any information about the source of its funding that enables this gift to the district).

On 9/11/13 there was an annual plan developed and approved by the applicant's Governing Board and the Tribal Council; there is no explanation as to the relationship of this Tribal Council and Ak-Chin. The plan basically outlines the sharing of student information between the district and the Ak-Chin police, courts, and social services. The district will provide Ak-Chin representatives individual student information regarding health and disciplinary issues/records as well as student-by-student information on homework completion, attendance, grades, and assessment results -- "assuming Parent/Guardian Release of Information form is provided." District and Ak-Chin staff will collaborate on plans for addressing student issues as they transition from school to school and beyond. This overall cooperative partnership has a positive potential for assisting students; however there is a lack of necessary detail about any and all aspects of this partnership, and no mention of how the families or teachers of targeted students will be involved.

However, the Competitive Preference Priority response fails to address the specific requirements of explaining a coherent and sustainable partnership between the district and Ak-Chin that describes (3)(a) through (d), (4), or (5)(a) through (e). The applicant does address (6), providing ambitious performance measures of all grades 3 - 8 students in all subgroups achieving **100%** proficiency or above in Reading and Math by 2017-18. It is not clear why all subgroups are included since it is implied that the Ak-Chin organization is tribal in nature and only supports American Indian students. It is important to note that the American Indian/Alaskan Native subgroup is one of the lower performing subgroups and thus the stated 2017-2018 academic goals do not appear achievable. For instance, only 25% of 5th grade students in this category were proficient or above in Math in 2013-14 (compared to 87.25% of White 5th graders), and only 21% of American Indian/Alaskan Native 8th graders were proficient or above in Math in 2012-2013.

The American Indian/Alaskan Native subgroup performs better in Reading, but there remains a significant discrepancy between their proficiency levels and that of the White subgroup, and a very significant gap between their levels in 2012-2013 or 2013-14 and the projected goal of 100% proficiency in 2017-2018. For instance, 46% of 8th grade American Indian/Alaskan Native students were proficient or above in Reading in 2012-2013 while 73% of White students achieved at that level in Reading during the same year.

Overall, the applicant's response to the Competitive Preference Priority fails to provide the information required, such as an explicit description of the District/Ak-Chin partnership; a strategy for scaling the described sharing of information and how that would improve results over time; how the partnership would integrate (unspecified) Ak-Chin services to improve students' academic achievement and social-emotional success; how the partnership would build the capacity of educators in the district's participating schools and engage parents and families of participating students; or what the decision-making process and infrastructure will be for selecting, implementing, and evaluating any partnership provided supports that address the individual needs of participating students to help them graduate and become more college/career ready.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to coherently and comprehensively address how it will create engaging and effective learning environments through the personalization of strategies, tools (beyond the Beyond Textbook program), and supports for students and educators that will accelerate student learning/achievement, increase the instructional effectiveness and assessment skills of educators,

expand student access to the most effective educators, decrease achievement gaps across student subgroups, or increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school college/career ready.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>64</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0088AZ-5 for Maricopa Unified School District

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The application includes a long list of individual ideas or innovations that are already in place or will be implemented as part of the project. This is followed by an overview of the project broken down by each of the core assurance areas. For example, Ohio has adopted the Common Core State Standards. However, each section provides very limited information about the applicant's vision. Information such as "schools have extensive data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals" are included, but these do not illustrate the applicant's vision for reform. This also doesn't make it clear how the Common Core State Standards will be assessed and used in a way to provide feedback and inform instruction. The application also stated that the applicant already has programs in place to recruit, develop, and retain effective teachers. It's not clear what the district plans to do that is new or innovative. Much of what is described is already happening and/or was implemented at the state level.</p> <p>No specific reference is made to turning around the lowest-performing schools besides a general reference to an increase in the district letter grade.</p> <p>The state rating of the district have moved from a C to a B showing some past success. References are made throughout this section to a goal of personalized learning. However, few details are included for what classroom experiences will be like and/or how these experiences translate to personalized learning. There is no clear approach for how the district will personalize learning to increase student learning.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Section A2 provides no other information other than stating that all students in grades K-8 will participate. This is due to other work already taking place in the high schools. A list of participating schools is also included. This list includes percentages of low-income and high-need students.</p> <p>No information is included to demonstrate that the district's approach to reform is likely to result in widespread adoption or implementation. It isn't clear that the project described is likely to be adopted by all schools.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant's primary theory of change involves automated instructional and social-emotional resources to provide personalized learning. This includes automated teddy bears at the K-2 level and computers and tablets at the elementary</p>		

and middle levels. The proposal states that the district already has the processes, procedures, management, distribution, and support systems to do this, but no plan is provided.

This section is missing much of the information required for a high quality plan. Passing reference is made to general goals and outcomes, but no timeline, specific action steps, or outcome deliverables are included.

Note that the proposal states that the US Department of Education requires effect sizes be computed using Hedges g values. This is not in response to the selection criteria and is not accurate. Effect size reporting is required, but which effect size to be reported depends on the situation. More importantly, this information as provided does not represent a high quality plan describing full-scale implementation. No information has yet been provided in the application regarding how the district will arrive at the goal of personalized learning.

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

**10**

**4**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

This section begins by re-stating that the district has already implemented personalized learning and that participating students have already shown gains of +1sd. Although this provides evidence that whatever the district has done or is planning to do will result in increased student learning, very little information has yet to be presented regarding the planned reforms or what will be changed in the district in line with the core assurance areas. Simply stating that past reforms have been successful does not provide evidence that a plan for further reform will be successful.

Tables are presented which show performance measure goals. Goal presented are ambitious but some are not achievable. For example, nearly all goals are for 100% proficiency in every area for every subgroup. This is not achievable in all but rare instances. This goes along with goals of zero achievement gaps. Again, this is not achievable. Graduation rates are already high, and the goals are for them to also reach 100%. This is not achievable.

College attendance rates are ambitious (moving from 58% to 87% by project end) and achievable. Similar numbers show postsecondary degree rates reaching 55% from 33%. This is ambitious and achievable in a four-year period. However, college enrollment numbers are not broken down by student subgroup.

Although goals are presented for each area, no information is provided as to how the district will arrive at these goals. As such is it not likely that based on what is included in the application that the district will achieve these goals - some of which are unachievable given any intervention.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

Section B1 includes very little data, description, charts, or information of any kind demonstrating past success. The proposal does state that the district has moved from a C to a B on the state scale which is made up of factors such as graduation rates, proficiency ratings, dropout rates, and graduation rates. However, no individual factors are presented regarding past success at closing achievement gaps, raising student achievement, etc. The aggregate state letter grade is not sufficient to satisfy the selection criteria. No reference is made to equity or student subgroup performance in general. Most of this section relates to the structure of the state letter grade system.

No reference is made to turning around lowest-performing schools.

No reference is made to making performance data available to students, teachers, parents, etc.

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

**5**

**2**

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal states that the district already publishes data and "extremely detailed information about every individual purchase". However, stating this is not the same as providing evidence.

The proposal states that the public has access to financial information through an online portal. However, exactly what data are provided is not specified. It's not made clear the degree to which salaries are made available or to what lengths people must go to obtain these data. Simply saying that an online portal exists does not equal evidence of a commitment to

transparency. Charts and tables are presented but it's not clear of these are the data that are available to the public.

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

**10**

**5**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The application includes a letter of support from the state Superintendent of public instruction in the appendices. This could indicate some level of flexibility for the district to carry out its proposed project. The letter indicated approval.

The application makes several references to the fact that several of the district schools are charters and under the control of a charter board. This suggests greater autonomy. However, this is not true of all schools in the district. It's not clear how this flexibility will matter if it doesn't apply to all schools. The proposal does state that Arizona provides great flexibility to schools, but this statement does not demonstrate autonomy.

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

**15**

**3**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The application includes letters of support from the president of the teachers' union as well as the president of the governing board. No other information is included regarding support from educators.

Section B4 includes examples of general engagement with parents, students, and teachers. However, none of this is specific to this project nor does it explain how stakeholders were involved in the crafting of this proposal.

No information is included regarding the level of support from teachers regarding this proposal (though a letter of support was included from the teachers union). No letters were included from parent or community groups or from students or individual parents.

Overall no evidence of support was included from parents, students, or teachers (beyond teachers' union approval). It's not clear who was engaged in the crafting of the proposal and how they contributed.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The information presented in this section does not include all of the components required for a high quality plan.

a. In this section brief paragraphs are included for each subsection which make passing reference to teacher practices (e.g. kindergarten students engaging in team projects) but no reference is made to a plan of implementation, goals, activities to be undertaken, etc. It further states blended learning as part of its plan to reach college and career goals, and the Beyond Textbooks programs evidence of deep learning. These activities could be part of a high quality plan in order to help the district reach its goals, but no information on what these activities will involve or when they will be implemented is included. Nearly all components of a high quality plan are absent.

No plan is included for how students will be engaged in deep learning experiences that are college-career focused nor how they will have access to diverse cultures. Instead, a telephone system and grade-appropriate curriculum are referenced. This does not equate to a high quality plan. Reference is made to students working in teams, but little detail is provided.

b. This section makes reference to an automated personalized learning system that will allow the creation of individual goals. Although this idea is in-line with the absolute priority of personalized learning, no information is presented regarding how this system will be implemented, when, or what it will actually mean for teachers and students.

ii. The Beyond Textbooks program is referenced as evidence of a variety of instructional resources. This is one resource but no others are referenced. Insufficient information is provided to evaluate if this is a high-quality instructional resource.

iii. No reference is made to any digital resources.

iv. The Beyond Textbook program is referenced here as a way students already receive data. No information is included explaining how this happens or how these data are or will be used to inform instruction.

v. The proposal states that no barriers exist for its personalized learning system for high-need or low-income students but

no evidence or details are included.

c. The proposal states that teachers will receive 30hrs of training and that students will not require any training. It further states that individual staff will be available at each school to assist teachers and students. This information does not represent a high quality plan.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>
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<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>a. The proposal states that teachers will have 30hrs of training each summer and that they have occasional early release days for collaboration. This does not represent a high quality plan as it does not included, goals, activities to be undertaken, a timeline, deliverables, or responsible parties. The proposal goes on to describe general programs already in place. This existing programming is not described in sufficient detail to equate to a high quality plan. It further does not describe the applicant's plan for future planned innovations or reforms.</p> <p>iii. Reference is made to principals using data to analyze best practices and allow teachers to learn from the most effective schools. However, no information is presented for how this will happen, how principals will know ho to accomplish this, or how it will help teachers to better used the data to inform instruction.</p> <p>iv. No information is included regarding the use of principal or teacher evaluation data.</p> <p>b. No reference is made to how teachers or principals will have access to data and know how to use it. Passing reference is made to Beyond Textbooks as a learning resource, but no plan is included for how it will be used, what it can do, or how staff and students will be trained to use it. As presented the district believes this will simply happen on its own via the Beyond Textbook program.</p> <p>c. The proposal states that the district already has a teacher evaluation system through the state. However, this does not address the selection criteria regarding school leaders having training and tools in order to use these data to inform practice.</p> <p>d. Passing reference is made to teacher training as well as technology support and Beyond Textbooks training. This is not in response to the selection criteria. No information is included for how the district will increase the number of students being taught by effective teachers.</p>		

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>a. The proposal states that district support staff (business services, network, etc) have already been allocated to support the project and that a project director will be hired for overall management. This does not represent a high quality plan for how administration at the district level will function in order to support personalized learning. No reference is made to existing district administration or their roll. No goals are referenced nor are activities, timelines, or responsible parties.</p> <p>b. The proposal states that schools already have sufficient flexibility to implement the proposed project. This statement does not represent a plan that will assure successful implementation of the project.</p> <p>c. The statement is made that students can earn credit via mastery but no details are provided for how this already happens or will happen in the future.</p> <p>d. Passing reference is made to teachers differentiating learning and assessment but no plan is presented for how assuring this will happen in the future is included.</p> <p>e. The proposal states that all resources are fully accessible and that the district has experience with adapting instructional materials. However, simply stating this does not represent a high quality plan.</p>		

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
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<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>a. Personalized learning technology (which is not defined or specified) will be provided free of charge to participating</p>		

students. No plan for how this will be accomplished is included.

b. General reference is made to district technology support, but no reference is made to technical support for parents, students, or teachers specific to the technology to be used in the proposed project.

c. The proposal states that parents already have access to data. It's not clear what data are available nor that the CSV format that the proposal states is possible is actually made available. No reference is made to student access to data.

d. No reference is made the the nature of the existing or proposed data systems beyond stating that they will be interoperable.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section of the proposal states that various data (academic improvements, goal tracking, behavior, etc) will be monitored and compared across classrooms and schools in order to refine practice. A Plan Do Check Act system is also referenced but is not defined or explained. Further, a return on investment analysis is referenced but also not explained. A high quality plan for ongoing evaluation and revision is not included. It's not clear what will happen, when, and by whom in order to revise the program.</p> <p>General reference is made to "sharing" the results of the project but no details are provided as far as how this will happen of with whom results will be shared.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section references the personalized learning staff, project director, and an online communication system as evidence of a plan for ongoing communication and engagement. No details are included for how these staff will work to maintain engagement or how the online system will be used in a similar fashion. Goals, deliverables, activities, and timelines are not included.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>A brief paragraph follows each of the proposed measures. However, none are described and/or rationalized. For example, the section on the number of students taught by effective teachers simply states that effective teachers are important. The measure is not described nor is a rational included nor details for ongoing revision. The same is true for every measure. In some places "reading scores" are referenced as the measure for reading achievement, but this is still not a rationale nor a description.</p> <p>The first performance measure table relates to effective teachers and principals includes "0s" for the principal categories. It is not clear what principal evaluation system exists or will be used.</p> <p>No academic performance measures are included before grade three. Several grade three goals are not achievable as they plan for 100% proficiency by the end of the post grant period. In some cases the district plans for certain student groups to move from 18% - 100% proficiency in five years. 100% proficiency is not an achievable goal as there will always be a few students in all but the very highest-performing districts who do not make grade-level proficiency standards.</p> <p>No growth nor college and career readiness indicators were included. The only measures included in the performance goal tables related to teacher effectiveness and academic achievement.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section of the proposal states that that return on investment analysis methods are described in section E1. What is described in E1 does not represent a high quality plan. The proposal states that increased academic achievement will be</p>		

aligned to economic benefits. However, a plan for how these data will be collected and analyzed is not included.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal includes budget tables for the project which note that all funds will come from RTT. Overall the majority of the funds will be expended in year 1 and will relate to technology purchases with the second largest category relating to personnel. This gives some indication that most of the costs will be one-time expenditures but this is not explicit.</p> <p>Evaluating the reasonable nature of the budget is difficult since the project has never been described in sufficient detail to understand what will happen. Overall, the focus on purchasing technology and training specialists to support that technology is reasonable.</p> <p>Several of the budget components are not described in enough detail to evaluate. For example, personalized learning technology is referenced for more than \$2million but it's never made clear what this technology will be. Reference was made in Section A to net books as well as teddy bears, but this is never explained.</p> <p>The budget narrative indicates that external support will be provided in the competitive preference priority.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal states that the nature of the project means it is sustainable. It goes on to suggest that technology and support needs will be less in later years because all of the costs will be up front. This does not represent a high quality plan for sustainability and is not a reasonable proposal. Technology support and replacement as well as the retraining of staff will still be required in later years.</p> <p>The proposal states that an existing volunteer network plus the training of existing staff will replace the staff hired as part of the proposed project. No details or plan for how this will happen are included.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section of the proposal described a collaboration with Ak-Chin with an annual plan that has already been approved. What is provided is a number of goals or deliverables that relate to collaboration between Ak-Chin and the district. In some cases these goals reference responsible parties or activities, but overall very little detail is provided on what will happen, when, and how it will result in positive student outcomes. The entire section is approximately two pages long (plus outcome tables) and does not provide sufficient detail regarding the nature and set-up of the partnership how it will leverage resources from different sources to achieve its goals, how it will build staff capacity, etc.</p> <p>Some of the general population-level goals are very vague or not achievable. For example, one goal is for 100% of students to be proficient on state achievement tests while the other states that community engagement will be expanded. Beyond these the academic performance measures proposed are the same from the earlier parts of the proposal (academic achievement in reading and math starting in grade 3).</p> <p>Very little information is presented in this section.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
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<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>
<p><b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This proposal did not provide sufficient detail to demonstrate how what will be done will result in personalized learning for students. In almost every section, the district states that things would or already were happening, but rarely included details for exactly how those things would happen. Much of this proposal was not in response to the selection criteria.</p>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>63</b>