



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0235IL-1 for Matteson School District 162

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The four core educational areas are addressed; however, they do not address these areas from a standpoint of how the vision will be implemented. The four areas only address what has already occurred, and not what will be addressed via the vision. The explanation for section (a) is not sufficient enough.</p> <p>The approach for (b) is not clear. The goals are non-specific and lack evidence of how S.O.L.E. (Students Optimizing their Learning Environment) will specifically enhance student achievement and learning.</p> <p>The classroom experience is described in a detailed manner, but the dialogue example is missing from the rest of the page.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant has effectively addressed the implementation plan. All lists of schools and students are present.</p> <p>(a & b) The applicant has chosen to select all the schools within the district for participation.</p> <p>The process is likely to support high-quality school-level implementation because all students will be served by this application. This includes students from low socio-economic status and all races. When a district chooses to serve all students with a proposal then all achievement gaps are addressed.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A large part of this section is missing. This section of the application contains one sentence and does not address the criterion sufficiently.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The S.O.L.E. (Students Optimizing their Learning Environment) plan is not adequately detailed and defined. The goals need more specificity. The strategies for the goals do not adequately explain how the goals will be achieved. For instance, decreasing achievement gaps is mentioned as a goal; however, a strategy for how to accomplish this task is not listed.</p> <p>Assuming that there are other minorities than "black" as listed on the graduation chart, then there should be data for other races.</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates targets for (d) college enrollment.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated performance on summative assessments in reading and math (a).</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated goal areas in decreasing achievement gaps (b) in the categories of black, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section is not adequately addressed. Section (b) is not addressed at all.</p> <p>Section (c) is barely addressed and does not demonstrate a meaningful way to make performance data available.</p> <p>There is not evidence of improving achievement gaps, raising student achievement, and increasing equity in teaching and learning. No descriptions such as charts or graphs are included.</p> <p>Points were awarded for some evidence in (c) and some discussion of reforms and alignment with Common Core standards.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The salaries for non-instructional personnel are not addressed.</p> <p>The actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers are included. Actual non-personnel expenditures are not included.</p> <p>There is not a high level of transparency in the LEA process because salaries are only available through the Freedom of Information Act.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The support from the state is documented thoroughly. The state actively endorses and supports the application and the regulatory requirements exist to ensure success.</p> <p>The applicant has noted numerous examples of state support through various pieces of legislation that has encouraged autonomy for the district.</p> <p>The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has demonstrated support and flexibility via the Charter School Law and the current charter school agreement with Southland.</p> <p>The flexibility and autonomy provided from the state as well as the ISBE has provided optimum conditions for the district to implement personalized learning environments as described in the applicant's proposal.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Section (a) is not addressed. The only evidence is a statement on noting that the application was developed from a wide stakeholder audience.</p> <p>Letters of support are found in the appendix. These letters are sufficient enough to satisfy the criterion of (b), however, the lack of evidence for (a) in regards to stakeholder engagement is not sufficient to receive full credit for this section.</p> <p>Letters from the mayor, Senator Kirk, the state superintendent, and local district stakeholders were included.</p> <p>The applicant has included a letter from the local teachers union (i).</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

An emphasis on college and career readiness is noted. The applicant explains what the students will learn and how the students will learn.

How these goals of college and career readiness will be achieved is not defined. The feedback aspect of this section is not addressed.

The applicant does not have a high quality plan. There is no clear outline of key goals and the activities to be undertaken do not lead to a high quality personalized learning environment. The content of the plan is vague and is overly focused on addressing the current curriculum with no clear direction leading to students being college or career ready.

There is no evidence of students being involved in deep learning experiences. There is no evidence of students having access and exposure to diverse contexts and perspectives.

This section does not adequately address any part of this section. The applicant has provided an overview of the current curriculum, with particular emphasis on Southland.

There is no evidence of training and support to students to use tools and resources provided to track and manage their learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	0
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section is not addressed. It is entirely omitted.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	2
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has written a significant amount about the history of the district. The specific elements of (a-e) are not adequately addressed in any meaningful way. The historical information does not connect to the district proposal.</p> <p>There is no discussion of organizing the LEA central office. There is a brief discussion of the structure of the central office, but not with relation to supporting the services to all participating schools.</p> <p>There is not a sufficient discussion of earning credit based on mastery (c) nor giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery (c).</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	1
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant states that everybody mentioned in (a) have access; however, how that access is accomplished is not detailed.</p> <p>Technical support is not mentioned. The data systems are barely mentioned. The systems that are mentioned are not given enough detail. The applicant did not provide enough evidence about parent and student access to their information in an open data format. The applicant did not sufficiently address the availability of interoperable data systems.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	1
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

This section is not adequately addressed. Monitoring, measuring, and publicly sharing information are key elements of a high quality plan, and this application does not address these elements.

The applicant mentions goals and assessment of conditions; however, the key goals, activities, rationale, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible for implementing activities are not addressed in any substantial way.

The applicant has not provided any evidence in regards to continuous improvement of a high quality plan.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 This section is not adequately addressed. There is not evidence of a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The goals are delineated in the charts, but there are no rationales for the goals and they are not tied to a high quality plan. The "review and measure" aspect is not addressed. Each criterion in this section is not addressed sufficiently.
 The goals include improve college-and career-readiness for all students, increase academic achievement in language arts and math for all levels, decreasing achievement gaps for all students and subgroups, and improving academic performance at the lowest performing schools. These goals are identified, but are not discussed.
 The applicant has outlined some performance measures, but they are incomplete and lack adequate discussion and rationale.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 This section is not adequately addressed. Detailed information concerning the implementation, revisions, and a rigorous evaluation are missing. There is no evidence of professional development and activities that employ technology.
 The only items present for this section are the discussion of a third party evaluation and the fact that professional development and technology will be evaluated.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 (a) All funds are identified that will support the project. The identification is not very specific and lacks detail.
 (b) It is sufficient but not reasonable. The details to support the development and implementation are not clear. The budget narrative does not provide enough rationale for each of the pieces of the proposal. The a large portion of the money is allocated toward staffing. There is not a clear rationale for each of the staff positions that relate to this proposal.
 (c) This description of the rationale for section (c) is not detailed and not sufficient to address the criteria.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The criterion for this section are not adequately addressed. The applicant did not provide enough information and detail.
 The applicant has noted that the partners acquired during this process will help sustain core projects.
 The applicant has noted that all evaluation data will be reviewed on a cyclical basis.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: This section is missing.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>This application is inadequate and does not sufficiently demonstrate any aspect of absolute priority 1. There is no evidence of a high quality plan that comprehensively addresses a personalized learning plan to enhance teaching and learning.</p> <p>The plan lacks synthesis in connecting the goals with the actual process of achieving these goals. The applicant states that Project SOLE (Students optimizing their learning environment) will develop a personalized learning environment for every student. The applicant does not make connections as to how Project SOLE will improve learning and teaching through personalization strategies. The applicant does not make connections that demonstrate how this project will make sustainable strides toward decreasing the achievement gaps within the district.</p> <p>The focus of the applicant's proposal seems to center on hiring more staff and focusing the curriculum to address the elements of a high quality plan; however, the proposal lacks strong rationales and an understandable synthesis that connects the pieces together.</p>		

Total	210	54
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0235IL-2 for Matteson School District 162

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: Even though the applicant has provided narrative to address a reform vision, the detail given lacked specificity and no appropriate detail to convincingly call this a comprehensive vision. While building on previous work around the four core areas and a vision that will execute a set of goals and strategies, the proposed goals are non-specific. The applicant		

describes a couple of convincing elementary and high school student and teacher classroom experiences. These scenarios demonstrate positive learning experiences and environments involving both students and parents. They also demonstrate the interactions among the students and their teachers.

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

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10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Matteson School District and the Southland Charter School established a consortium that includes an elementary school district and a charter high school and proposes to include all eight schools within the consortium. Both the district and the charter school are in the same community and the same superintendent oversees both entities. The applicant has included the names of the schools to be participating, the number and percent of total students participating by school as well as by total (3,650) and the percent considered to be low-income (2,670 / 75%), and those considered to be high-need (364), and the total number of participating educators (285). In order to serve K-12 students, the project elected to include all the students in the elementary school district and all the students in the charter high school; thus, proposing a high-quality implementation process.

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

10

1

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an unfinished sketch of what its reform and change effort and scale up plan looks like. The applicant is proposing a LEA-wide reform and change plan by creating individual instruction for the students that will help meet their needs. It is proposing to use several conceptual frameworks to guide the reform and change model. Unfortunately, the applicant provides no substantive evidence beyond these statements. It does not describe how the plan will be scaled up or how it will lead to transformative and meaningful reforms. Furthermore, the conceptual frameworks have not been identified or articulated.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) is being used to demonstrate performance on summative assessments with percent showing proficiency as the methodology and value-added as the methodology to measure growth. Reading and mathematics goals for grades 4-10 are ambitious and achievable and are provided for the overall student population and for 3 subgroups, Blacks, Economically Disadvantaged, and Students with Disabilities. Included in this section are goals set to increase equity among all subgroups such that the applicant proposes to use PARCC for each assessed grade in reading, ELA, and mathematics by comparing mean averages of the LEA subgroup to PARCC mean average. These goals are also considered to be ambitious and achievable. Although the charter high school does not have a graduation or college enrollment track records as its first graduating class will be May 2014, the applicant proposes goals that appear to be ambitious and achievable. However, since the applicant did not provide state graduation and college enrollment comparisons, it is not possible to determine whether these goals are indeed ambitious and achievable. The applicant did not propose to address post secondary degree attainment. The applicant also presents conflicting graduation percentages. In one area, the applicant states a graduation projection of 90%; however, in the chart, the applicant proposes a 50% graduation outcome.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The evidence for demonstrating the applicant's record of success begins on a positive note. The information states that the elementary school district is undergoing an accelerated educational reform and has aligned both mathematics and language arts curriculum for all grades to the new common core state standards. Also, the elementary school district is piloting a model co-teaching approach in three of its schools to better support all students inclusive of the special education population. The information further states that the first graduating class is poised to graduate over 90% of its seniors. This, however, is the extent of the narrative; no other supporting evidence is included to describe the applicant's success record. Left blank is the section about how ambitious or significant reforms have changed the persistently lowest-achieving schools or its low-performing schools. Evidence regarding the extent to which the applicant will make

performance data available to all is only a statement that this will occur once the technological infrastructure has been enhanced and when all families have immediate internet access. Therefore, the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence to evaluate the applicant's record of success.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant lists in Appendix F administrator and teacher salaries; beyond this, no other narrative or attachments have been included describing transparency in the processes, practices, and investments either by school or school-level expenditures for instruction, instructional support, pupil support or administration. The applicant only states that these are not immediately available to the public but are available through the Freedom of Information Act. Therefore, the applicant has not presented evidence demonstrating a high level of transparency.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant provides appropriate evidence that demonstrates having conditions and sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments. This evidence is provided for both units in the proposed consortium. The narrative further states how the state board of education establishes goals and learning standards and school districts establish learning objectives and instructional systems to measure progress toward the objectives. Individual schools also have autonomy over hiring, curriculum, and schedules.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	4
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant merely provides a sentence to state that the consortium's project was developed with input and ideas from a wide stakeholder audience. The narrative lacks an appropriate response to this criterion such that there is no description for how students, families, teachers and principals were engaged. There also was no response for having sought engagement and support from teachers in the charter school. Since it appeared that the charter school does not have a collective bargaining group, no evidence was given for having engaged these teachers. Letters of support from a number of constituents have been included.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	2

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The proposed narrative lacks depth and does not appear to be wide enough in scope to be considered a high-quality plan. It further does not include all the elements (goals, activities with rationale, timelines, deliverables, and personnel) needed to be considered a high quality plan. There are also pieces that were mentioned but narrative or attachments were not provided or developed and no narrative was provided for sub-criterion c: mechanisms. By providing information entirely dedicated to the high school charter school program, the applicant fails to address an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students in an age-appropriate manner, for understanding what is being learned or how all can identify and pursue goals linked to college and career standards and graduation requirements. Further, examples for deep learning experiences and for mastering critical content and exposure to diverse cultures and content were only given in the context of students attending the high school charter program but not for students in the elementary district.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	0
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant did not provide a narrative for this particular section, although some elements of what might be considered an attempt to address this could be found in other sections. For example, there is a statement in the vision section regarding training to support teacher effectiveness. The statement mentions a two-year mentoring and induction

program but this was all that was said about the mentoring program. Additionally, the applicant provides a four-year plan that includes activities, goals, deliverables, and responsible personnel but this timeline is about the entire project's proposed activities and not about teaching and learning. It includes when project personnel will be hired and contracting the external evaluator. Consequently, the elements making up a high-quality teaching and leading plan were not noted. The very limited information identified throughout the proposal was insufficient for evaluating section (C)(2) Teaching and Leading.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has included appropriate detail addressing sound practices, policies, and rules at the consortium governance level to facilitate the personalized learning support and services to all participating schools. Beyond state autonomy under the state legal and statutory requirements, the applicant has identified a governance structure and MOU with the charter school to facilitate this support. Each school has been given authority to hire and to choose its curriculum and set schedules; however, no mention was given for having autonomy over school-level budgets. The proposed plan does not include the elements for making the proposed plan a high-quality plan that will support implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. A score in the middle range was given due to a lack of evidence in several areas. The applicant did not provide evidence for providing opportunities to demonstrate mastery and mastery of standards at multiple times and way. While mentioning a pilot co-teaching program, there was limited information for the availability of learning resources that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>While addressing a plan to support implementation, the proposed plan cannot be considered a high-quality plan. Most of the elements of a high-quality plan are missing. For the most part, the plan does not address how each of the key players will be given appropriate levels of technical support and is vague with respect to how parents and students will be given access to and be allowed to export and use data in appropriate open data formats. The only access to access by parents and students is a data system that is web-based. There was no mention for whether the consortium and the schools are using interoperable data systems. In fact, it appears that each of their respective systems is working separately from each other as both appear to have their own systems. The applicant does not state how or if these systems are sharing human resource data, or student, budget and instructional improvement data.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	1
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's plan is poorly articulated and only provides a very narrow statement to describe the process. The applicant states that both districts use an online virtual tool to assess current conditions; this is done by using 50 research-based indicators. The indicators are then used by district and school-level administrators to help measure progress. This is the extent of the applicant's proposed high-quality plan used for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. Thus, the plan lacks evidence for having the critical elements needed for a high-quality plan.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The proposed narrative comments for this to be considered a high-quality plan should have addressed each of the required elements which the plan does not. The extent of the plan is a three sentence paragraph that mentions two activities. One activity is to hire a media consultant who is to give updates and data on progress made during the project. The other activity is that it will monitor and share the plan with all stakeholders. These two statements alone would not be</p>		

considered a high-quality communication and engagement plan. For having these two activities, a low range score has been given.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provided by the applicant is an incorrect response to what is being asked. For one thing, four goals have been identified which are not considered to be ambitious performance measures and do not include annual targets (no numbers or percentages provided). The goals are: improving college and career-readiness for all students, increasing academic achievement levels in language arts and mathematics, decreasing achievement gaps for all students and subgroups, and improving academic performance levels at the lowest-performing schools. Furthermore, the applicant is not proposing performance measures for all the required measures. Because the narrative completely lacks substantive information, it does not provide a rationale, the methodology to provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information. The plan also does not propose a plan for reviewing and improving the measures over time.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed plan lacks the elements of a high-quality plan and is devoid of much needed detail to efficiently evaluate whether what is being proposed would rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the RTT-D funded activities. The applicant states that a third party evaluation consultant will be hired for the majority of the data and research and will use the objective data to make adjustments to ensure program effectiveness. No other explanation was provided to help understand the kinds of objective data to be used. A statement that gives a priority to being good stewards of the appropriated funds is not appropriate evidence to consider the plan a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the funded activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified funds that will be supporting the project from local, state, federal, foundation, and RTT and provides the project priorities being funded from each of these sources. However, the budget, as depicted by the applicant, does not make sense and presents a very narrow description that does not present clear rationale for the investments and priorities. The majority of the project priorities are for professional development, which is interesting as the applicant did not address the Teaching and Leading section. Even more surprising is the fact that only \$45,000 are being requested from the RTT program.

The applicant's proposed budget is not reasonable.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is no high-quality plan addressing the sustainability of the project's goals beyond the grant funding. The narrative lacks sufficient evidence even though the applicant plans to review data on a regular basis to drive purchasing and planning decisions. Statements to continue to refine personalized learning environments after the grant and partners that were acquired during the program will help sustain all core projects do not appear to address a plausible plan nor deserving confidence that the sustainability plan is appropriate.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Applicant did not address the competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan has many missing pieces for it to be consider a sound project; it especially does not integrated all the pieces. It did not provide clear evidence for how learning environments will be created and given what was provided and did not include in the very critical Learning and Teaching criteria, it is not known how or whether the plan will significantly improve teaching and learning, accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning. The proposed budget lacked detail such that it is not clear how any of the goals, strategies and activities will be supported.

It clearly did not coherently and comprehensively address how it would build on the core educational assurance areas.

Total	210	58
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0235IL-3 for Matteson School District 162

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant described the consortium's initiative: Project SOLE: Students Optimizing their Learning Environment.

This plan builds on their three year project aligning their curriculum to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and English Language Arts.

The applicant explained the consortium's development of a web-based data system providing results of both formative and summative assessments to educators and parents.

The application addressed their belief in the importance of the teacher in the classroom and discussed their hiring and mentoring program for the first two years of employment; however, details addressing the definitions of effective and highly effective teachers and principals were not included.

The application stated that they have only one low-achieving school and that they have been able to achieve higher-than-average state test scores than area schools by implementing a number of staff, curriculum and assessment changes, although those initiatives were not described or elaborated on in the narrative.

The application outlines the goals and strategies for achievement of those goals to develop a personalized learning environment for every student in the consortium schools. The goals are aimed at increasing college and career readiness through improved achievement in language arts and science, decreasing achievement gaps, and improving achievement at low performing schools. Their plans include individualized mastery of curriculum, flexible scheduling, co-teaching, project-

based learning, career immersion programs, dual-credit, distance learning, 24/7 access to online educational resources, and additional personnel to implement these programs.

The application includes descriptions of the classroom experiences for an elementary and secondary student under the vision outlined for this project; but the teachers' experiences were not included in the narrative. The descriptions for both the elementary and secondary students' experiences focus on their involvement in tracking their own progress and their ability to participate in project based, integrated learning opportunities and their ability to utilized the customized learning environment to be able to have appropriately paced instruction.

Balancing the included components with those that were not included or developed led to the mid-range score awarded.

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

A brief description of the process to select the participating schools was provided stating that the goals of developing and implementing a comprehensive curriculum in language arts and science cross all grade levels, and that lowest-performing students are present in the majority of the schools. These reasons support that the consortium of schools submitting this application needs to include all of the schools.

A list of schools as well as the required information regarding total students, the number of students who are high-need and from low-income students are clearly provided.

The required data is included to address these components. The low, high-range score was awarded due to the limited discussion of how the decision was made to include all schools in the project.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium is planning to include all schools, so there is no need to explain implementation and reform beyond the participating schools.

The applicant did not include a high-quality plan to support how it plans to implement this project across its schools and reach their outcome goals. The narrative did not provide enough information to support that a plan is in place.

The lack of a clear plan for implementation to ensure the applicant is ready for this project led to the low-range score.

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

The goal of the Project SOLE project is to implement individualized learning in order to address achievement on summative assessments, achievement gaps, graduation rates, college enrollment rates and post-secondary degree attainment.

Performance goals for reading and math tests are provided for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessments, which were previously listed as beginning in 2015, but are listed in the chart as having a baseline in SY 2012-2013, with no explanation of how that baseline was established. Achievement rates are listed by grade level, but only for grades 4, 6, 8 and 10, without explanation of the odd-numbered grade level achievement rates and goals. Increases in achievement to reach the goals range from 20-30 percent more students reaching proficiency for most groups and subgroups, with a few larger than average projections. Goals for most areas are set between 75 and 88 percent of students demonstrating proficiency, which does not seem to be an ambitious enough goal. No information was included to explain state targets for comparison.

Decreasing achievement gaps goals are realistic when looking at the projections, however; they are also based on stated baselines for the SY 2012-2013 for the stated PARCC assessments for mathematics and reading, but these tests are not being implemented until 2015.

Graduation rates appear to be ambitious and attainable, rising from 95% to 100% of students graduating for all groups except students with disabilities, which is projected to rise to 95%. It is not clear where the baseline percentage comes from since the charter high school in the consortium has not yet had a graduating class.

College enrollment goals are ambitious, rising to a range of 80-95% enrolled, depending on sub-group, from a start of zero, since the high school has not yet had a graduating class.

The lack of clarity regarding the implementation timeline for the PARCC assessments, and the subsequent baseline and

goal setting in reference to these assessments, led to the high, mid-range score.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has discussed in the narrative work that has been done to improve achievement by aligning math and language arts curriculum to the Common Core State Standards and implementing new teaching strategies of co-teaching, blended learning and flipped classrooms. However, no specific data has been provided to demonstrate their past success in improving learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps, or improving graduation and college enrollment rates.</p> <p>No specific information regarding past district efforts at achieving ambitious and significant reforms in the lowest performing schools has been provided, other than a brief explanation of the need to start the charter high school due to low achievement at the local high school, and a lack of cooperation from the personnel at the local high school when the district tried to intervene. The application stated that only one school is currently identified as low-achieving, although that school has not been identified.</p> <p>The application states that the consortium has demonstrated the capacity to ensure that meaningful academic data is available to administrators, parents, teachers and students at any time, and that this will be improved once the infrastructures have been enhanced and families have online access, through the awarding of this grant. No examples or specifics regarding how the information has been made available were included.</p> <p>The lack of detail and explanation regarding the consortium's past success with ambitious and significant reforms in their lowest-achieving schools and the lack of data to support closing achievement gaps led to the low, mid-range score awarded.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant stated that teacher and administrator personnel salary and benefit information is available in print and online at the school level; but that support staff information is not included. The applicant provided a list of instructional and administrative personnel in an appendix, alphabetically, not by school site.</p> <p>Support staff salary information and non-personnel expenditures are currently available through requests through the Freedom of Information Act. No examples of these reports were provided.</p> <p>The applicant appears to have the required information available to stakeholders, although data was not provided to demonstrate the availability of each type of report was not included, leading to a high-range score for this section.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application explained that the state provides individual districts and schools the authority to hire, choose curriculum and make scheduling decisions regarding school days and required hours; although it is also stated that schools are required to have a specified number of hours within the school day. The application specifically explained that the state of Illinois supports the development of personalized learning through a law passed in 2009 authorizing "remote educational programs." The state has been implementing changes regarding teacher and principal evaluation; implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and related assessments and implementing a state Race to the Top grant, of which this district is a participant.</p> <p>The charter school included in the consortium is one of only three chartered in the state outside of the largest metropolitan area. As a charter school, this site is granted additional flexibility under state law. The application states that they have the authority to vary the length of the school day and year, the number and length of class periods, and the number of credits required to graduate.</p>		

The district and charter school in this application appear to have the autonomy under state law to implement the personalized learning environments proposed, leading to the high-range score awarded.

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

The application included only a brief and general statement that a wide stakeholder audience was included in the development of the plan, without any information about the method or depth of involvement of those involved.

The representative of the bargaining group signed the application, as evidence of engagement of the teachers in the district. This served as evidence for the district in the consortium. There is a statement included that the charter school does not have a bargaining unit for the teachers at that school; however, no other evidence is provided that at least 70% of the teachers from that school support this proposal.

A few letters of support were included from a US Senator, the President of one of the local villages served by the schools in the consortium, the local education association and the PTA President. No student groups, early learning programs, members of the business community, advocacy groups, community organizations or institutions of higher education were represented in the inclusion of letters of support.

The low-range score was awarded due to the deficiencies listed across each of the required components in this section.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Specifics of learning under the grant project are described in the application for the charter school, Southland, in the consortium, but not for the K-8th grade students attending the schools in the LEA. The focus is on implementing personalized learning environments for all students, focusing on language arts and science curriculum. The curriculum has been previously discussed as having been revised/aligned to match the English Language Arts and Mathematics Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Students at Southland are involved in extra-curricular activities including team sports, debate and the arts, and complete these activities during a 90 minute last class period at the end of the day. There is a focus on becoming college ready throughout a student's time at Southland High School, Students interact with a college counselor during high school to be sure they are on the right track to be admitted and successful in college.

There is a general high-quality plan included in the application which includes aspects of the learning requirements. These requirements include aligning curriculum and assessments for language arts, aligning science curriculum with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), developing a 1 to 1 technology initiative, and fully implementing learning models. No discussion was included as to why mathematics was not included as a focus area of the curriculum.

Specific information regarding the focus of this project, the personalized learning environment, presumably facilitated by the implementation of the 1 to 1 technology initiative, was not included; and no information regarding the learning focus for students in the K-8th grade schools was included in the application. While this charter school is in the district's area, there was also reference to another high school in the proposal narrative. It is not clear that all students from the K-8 district schools will attend this charter school.

The application included plans for training the staff, but the plans for training the students and their families were not included.

The lack of detailed information regarding the implementation of personalized learning for students and ongoing feedback on progress in mastery of college and career ready standards, lack of an explanation of training and support for students in their new online learning environment, and accommodations for high-need students led to the low, mid-range score awarded for this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	0
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section was not addressed in the application.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The high - quality plan included in the application identifies personnel at the consortium/district level as well as the school site level responsible for implementing the project.

The plan addresses the broad topics included to implement the project, including the need for school leadership teams and oversight from the central office.

The narrative also supports that the high school has plans to offer alternative methods for students to demonstrate mastery and obtain course credit to advance through the curriculum, although details were not provided.

Instructional staff in the consortium are already working on implementing new strategies to include students with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms, making the curriculum more accessible to all students. Special education students are enrolled in all schools in the consortium.

The charter school has specific areas of flexibility, but they do provide services and accommodations for special needs learners. Providing bilingual education was addressed in the narrative.

Balancing the included required components with those that were not included, or lacking detail, resulted in the mid-range score awarded.

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

10

2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The high-quality plan included in the application is too general in scope to address the specifics required in this section. Only one section addresses the technology implementation without details related to teachers, students, and parents being trained

The consortium members are already using an online system to communicate formative and summative assessments to parents, although no explanation of whether it is possible to export the data in open data format and whether interoperable data systems are in place was given.

The lack of detail regarding the implementation and the lack of clarity regarding the data systems led to the low-range score.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The high-quality plan included in the application is general in addressing the specific aspects of implementation; it lists major milestones such as, "align language arts curriculum and assessments," but not the processes necessary to provide oversight, such as a method for continuous improvement.

The narrative stated that the district in the consortium has been working with an online tool to work with continuous improvement. The information from this system is used at the district and site level to help them set goals and measure progress.

The lack of detail regarding the consortium's plans to ensure the implementation of a continuous improvement process led to the low-range score awarded.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application included a high-quality plan which provided an overview for the implementation of the grant project, identifying major projects to implement, but it did not include information regarding the ongoing communication and engagement plan between the members of the consortium and the internal and external stakeholders. There is currently an online system for parents to access student data and progress. The narrative explanation is quite brief stating that they will follow their process and hire a media consultant to assist with communication updates.</p> <p>The lack of a high-quality plan outlining the implementation of the aspect of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders led to the low-range score awarded.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's information to support these requirements was incomplete, without specific assessments and projected goals identified in the application. The application included four goals to be the focus of their project. The applicant stated that each goal would have three or four objectives written in SMART goal format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). These objectives were not included, nor were any performance measures identified, and no goals for performance measures were identified.</p> <p>The omission of these important components led to the low-range score awarded.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application included a plan to hire an outside evaluator and set up a plan for the evaluation. The high-quality plan included only general references to setting up the evaluation and hiring a director, with no specifics about the data or timelines included. The extent of the plan at this point in time is only to contract a third party evaluation consultant, so there can be no judgment at this time regarding the rigor of the evaluation of their project.</p> <p>The detail that is lacking led to the low-range score.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget provided in the application is a broad overview of the past year's district funding, identifying local, state, Federal, foundation and "other" sources of funding for personnel and programs within the consortium. It was stated that the consortium members will plan for one-time and on-going operational expenses, although the application then stated that the Project Director would be a one-time expense, although my understanding would that that this person would continue to work for more than the first year.</p> <p>The detailed budget in the application has narrative support for each section and which years of the grant would fund the expenditures, but no specific funding amounts are included, making it challenging to evaluate the reasonableness of the proposal.</p> <p>The lack of detail in the budget led to the low-range score.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is no high-quality plan in the application to address the issues related to sustainability of the project beyond the years of the grant. The only reference to sustainability is a statement that the members of the consortium will continue to refine the personalized learning environments for all students after the grant project is completed.</p>		

The lack of a high-quality plan and detail regarding plans for sustainability for the project led to the low-range score.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: No Competitive Preference Priority was included with the application.		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>The application is focused on the implementation of personalized learning environments for the students in the consortium; however, little attention was paid to fully explaining the students' course acceleration, curriculum and focus for students below high school grade levels, or the purchase and training for the implementation of the technological devices to make this possible. The project goals were related to language arts and science, but there are no science assessments included for students. The mathematics and English Language Arts curriculum have already been aligned to the Common Core State Standards.</p> <p>While quality teachers and a two year mentoring program were discussed to ensure high-quality teachers, no emphasis was made in the plan or the narrative to include the required project definitions of effective and highly effective teachers and principals.</p> <p>The district referred to having one low-achieving school identified by the state. This school was not ever identified and not enough detail was included regarding the consortium members' efforts at reforming their lowest achieving school sites.</p>		

Total	210	64
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