



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0222NY-1 for Newburgh Enlarged City School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not clearly distinguish between its regular goals and its vision for the proposed reform and as a result does not effectively articulate a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.</p> <p>The applicant states that its implementation of the Common Core standards along with experiential and inquiry-based learning will support student achievement. Since the applicant's state has adopted the Common Core standards, the applicant's intent to implement the Common Core standards along with only two proposed learning philosophies as part of its reform proposal does not demonstrate a comprehensive vision. Further, the applicant does not specifically detail whether its list of assessment tools such as the Scholastic Reading Inventory and the STAR Math Enterprise that will assess students' progress three times per year is part of its existing procedure or whether it is part of its reform vision. The use of formative evaluations in core subject areas to identify students who are at risk is discussed but the distinction of whether the practice is part of its regular plan or the reform vision. The applicant states that for the purpose of this proposed reform, International Baccalaureate programs as well as others will be implemented in grades six through eight. The applicant's vision to implement the International Baccalaureate program in its middle schools does not by itself support the notion of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, but rather a stand-alone program. Also added will be additional web-based assessment tools.</p> <p>The applicant provides a description regarding its current use of data. The descriptions that describe the purpose for the data collection lack detail and relevance to the proposed reform. The applicant states that it plans to use a data system in the future that will allow community-based organizations and agencies to add data to better support students in the district. However, this proposed data system is not described with sufficient detail</p> <p>The applicant discusses its current teacher and principal evaluation methods and states that a more sophisticated system will make data more readily available to leverage efforts. A Teacher Leader Academy is proposed to build capacity for teachers and leaders, however, the Teacher Leader Academy is not sufficiently described in terms of how it would contribute to this reform vision.</p> <p>The applicant states that it increased its level of accountability of district leaders to turn-around low performing schools while teachers and school-level teams attended training on how to turn-around low-performing schools. The data supporting this initiative does not provide a clear picture as the increase of graduation rates is not described. The applicant is also unclear about the claim that fifty percent of its school made academic improvements.</p> <p>The applicant proposes four goals to this proposal which are monitoring, planning realization, and support. The four goals proposed are not comprehensive and coherent enough to increase student achievement. In addition, they do not provide sufficient detail and rigor to achieve student success. Three of four components do not directly impact student achievement and only one component involves teaching and learning. This component describes students having access to Common Core standards and access to programs such as the International Baccalaureate. The applicant does not provide a connection of how the implementation of the four goals will support the four core educational assurance areas.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and Hindi.</p> <p>Not sufficiently addressed is what the classroom experience will be like for teachers and students.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal does not support high-quality school-level implementation. This is demonstrated through the applicant's lack of a clear description of the process that the applicant used to select schools to participate.

The applicant appropriately states that the schools that will participate in the proposed reform were selected because of declining State assessment scores, retention rates, and attendance rates. The applicant provides a list of schools that will participate in the proposed reform. Listed are four schools that serve grades six through eight. The total number of students participating in the proposed reform is stated as 4,275. The applicant states that 75% of these students are from low-income families and 80% of these students are considered high need.

Not clearly described is why the four middle schools were selected to participate in the proposed reform when the applicant's other schools show low state assessment scores, retention rates, and attendance rates as well. Also not clear is whether all students within the selected middle schools will participate in the proposed reform as the applicant's performance measures do not include all students but instead focus on students who are Black, Hispanic, and of low socio-economic background.

No data is provided regarding the number of educators participating in the proposed reform.

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

The applicant provides a list of problems with corresponding activities to address the problems which are insufficiently described to constitute a plan. The applicant's plan does not address the timelines for implementation and does not list the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

The plan does not include a description how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is not likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity. The applicant does not provide sufficient description to determine whether annual goals are ambitious yet achievable. The applicant provides no explanation regarding State ESEA targets, whether its proposed improvements are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets, and how its vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance. The applicant does not provide goals that are applicable to overall participants and by student subgroups.

a) The applicant's limited information regarding students' performance on summative assessments is depicted in an unclear description where the name of the test, the rationale for selecting the respective growth and student outcomes by subgroups are not sufficiently described.

b) The applicant insufficiently describes its rationale for a uniform 5% increase in its subpopulations' achievement rates to decrease the achievement gap.

c) The applicant states that it expects that all of its students graduate. However, the applicant's evidence of this only shows a growth in graduation, not a 100% graduation rate.

d) The applicant does not include baseline percentages for its college enrollment, thus, the applicant does not provide sufficient evidence in how its vision will likely impact college enrollment rates.

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not sufficiently demonstrate a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student

learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching.

The applicant provides an example of how it increased equity by reducing discipline referrals for minority students. The example, while noteworthy, is outside of the perimeters of the last four years as the example is from the early 1980s. In addition, the applicant does not sufficiently describe what specific efforts led to the decrease in discipline referrals. Another example listed by the applicant inconclusively states that all of its teachers are certified and that they receive professional development opportunities. The sentence explaining the provider of the professional development abruptly stops without describing its intended message. The applicant refers to a chart that insufficiently depicts the academic progress the applicant attempts to show. The chart does not include a breakdown of student demographics, and it is unclear whether the percentages shown are inclusive of all students per grade level or a subgroup. The applicant provides a chart that is providing inconclusive evidence of progressively increasing achievement level for a cohort over four consecutive years. The chart fails to demonstrate the applicant's claim as there was only a spike in increased achievement scores noted for one of the four years.

The applicant lists the number of students who score above level three on its state assessment test. The applicant does not provide percentages of students who scored above a level three as this would provide a clear picture of whether there is an increase in students who score above level three. The chart depicting graduation rates shows decreases in graduation rates in recent years for Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students and is not supporting the applicant's claim of raising graduation rates. The percentage of students who intend to enroll in college after graduation is not a strong indicator of success, and actual college enrollment of graduating high school student would be needed to substantiate the applicant's data. Retention rates that are described as dropping are listed in terms of numbers and not percentages that would depict a drop in retentions more effectively.

The applicant lists the number of teachers and administrators in terms of their ethnic backgrounds to demonstrate equity in providing teachers of the same ethnicity as students.

Also described are professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators as strategies to improve student achievement. In addition, the applicant lists several initiatives that the applicant says are designed to improve learning and supports that it advanced student learning and achievement in some areas.

The applicant does not provide information regarding how it achieves ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools.

The applicant does not provide information regarding how it makes student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant effectively describes that annual budget presentations are made to the community. Not described is whether actual personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures are made public as an effort to demonstrate transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	1
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide any evidence that State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal are considered.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not sufficiently address stakeholder engagement. The applicant insufficiently addresses how it was seeking input from parents regarding the satisfaction they experience regarding one of the proposed programs, namely, the International Baccalaureate program in elementary schools. Parent surveys of existing programs do not provide sufficient evidence of stakeholder support for the proposed reform. The applicant provides appropriate letters from stakeholders in support of this proposed reform.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	2
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides an incomplete plan to improve teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment.</p> <p>The applicant appropriately lists its goal of providing a student-centered approach to learning and identifies the use of advisory programs, however, the applicant does not consistently focus its efforts on the implementation of the described goals, but unclearly includes the implementation of Common Core Standards to its broad goals. Additional strategies are identified as Extended Learning Opportunities, implementation of an International Baccalaureate program as well as others. The applicant does not provide evidence of who is responsible for implementing the various components and the timeline for implementation. Missing is a description of how parents are engaged to help their students improve learning.</p> <p>a)i) While the applicant successfully addresses how the Extended Learning Opportunities program benefits students, it does not sufficiently address how students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals, identify and pursue learning and development, be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest, have access and exposure to diverse cultures etc., and master critical academic content. The applicant fails to document an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students and in an age-appropriate manner.</p> <p>a)iii) The applicant, contradictory to evidence, states that its student centered approach can deepen learning and prepare students to meet the demands of the 21st century. The applicant provides inconclusive evidence of how its plan can deepen learning.</p> <p>a)iv) The applicant's only reference to diverse cultures is within the context of the International Baccalaureate program. This is insufficient as only some students will participate in the International Baccalaureate program, and in addition, the connection between students' exposure to diverse cultures is not at all linked to how it motivates students and deepens learning.</p> <p>a)v) There is no evidence found that documents the applicant's approach to help students master critical academic content. The applicant lists the acquisition of problem-solving skills in the context of it STEM program but dismisses the STEM implementation by stating that it will be challenging to address teacher attitudes regarding the implementation of STEM.</p> <p>b)i) The applicant states that the International Baccalaureate program will provide a path for students to graduate on time. This approach is insufficient as it does not provide opportunities for all learners but only those who choose to participate in the International Baccalaureate program. Another sparse strategy listed is giving the responsibility of ensuring timely graduation to an advisory group which is to implement a national program, namely GradNation.</p> <p>b)ii) The application reveals no evidence regarding instructional approaches and environments.</p> <p>b)iii) The applicant does not sufficiently describe students' access to high quality content and also digital content. Digital content is insufficiently addressed within the International Baccalaureate program. The applicant insufficiently addresses that teachers will identify digital learning content.</p> <p>b)iv) The applicant provides no evidence that students receive regular feedback.</p> <p>b)v) The applicant provides no evidence regarding accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students.</p> <p>c) The applicant provides no evidence that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.</p>		

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	2
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<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide evidence of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant provides insufficient details regarding the implementation of instructional strategies for all participating students as it lacks coherence and logical sequences. The applicant's plan is extremely fragmented with several sections appearing in multiple locations throughout the proposal. The approaches and strategies often do not support the requirements listed in this section. The approaches are not described in terms of how they support students becoming college- and career-ready through enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students, in particular high-need students.</p>		
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a)i) The applicant provides insufficient evidence that educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student’s academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready; instead, the applicant vaguely and inadequately notes that teacher training will focus on helping teachers accessing appropriate technology-based instructional tools.

a)ii) The applicant does not provide any evidence that participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to adapt content and instruction.

a)iii) The applicant inadequately addresses how participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators. The applicant simply provides the names of two assessment tools and states that teachers will receive training on how to use them. No description is provided what these tools assess, how often they will be used to assess data, how they will inform the acceleration of student progress and improvement.

a)iv) The applicant provides no evidence on how it will improve teachers’ and principals’ practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA’s teacher and principal evaluation systems, including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

b) The applicant vaguely address that a portion of its professional development is designed to address how teachers have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources. The applicant makes no reference whether this training purposefully addresses the acceleration of student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements to include:

b)i) Actionable information

b)ii) High quality learning resources

b)iii) Processes and tools to match student needs

c) The applicant inadequately addresses how all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment. The applicant states that a Teacher Leader Academy will be implemented and addresses the objectives of the Teacher Leader Academy. None of the objectives listed provides specific evidence of how they meet individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements through:

c)i) Information, from such sources as the district’s teacher evaluation system that helps school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement; and

c)ii) Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

d) The applicant inconclusively addresses how it plans to increase the number students who receive instruction from effective and highly qualified teachers and principals. A sentence in this application begins to address this requirement, but the sentence is left unfinished.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.</p> <p>a) The applicant provides no evidence about its current organization of the LEA office to provide support and services to all participating schools. The application includes reference to a self-assessment the LEA underwent to determine if the division within the LEA central office have the capacity to strengthen instruction, and this information provides very limited information whether the LEA central office was re-organized as a result or whether the assessment determined that supports and services were in place.</p> <p>b) The applicant states that each of the building principals will review schedules to determine how to implement the three proposed programs with fidelity. This strategy does not describe the flexibility and autonomy schools are given to implement the proposed reform as it does not clearly describe whether principals will be given the autonomy to implement the three programs.</p> <p>c) The applicant states that high school students will have opportunities to recover missed credits. The applicant fails to address how students within the population of the proposed reform have the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic.</p> <p>d) The applicant appropriately states that students can demonstrate mastery of standards through essays, however, this strategy is limited to those students who participated in the International Baccalaureate program.</p> <p>e) The applicant recognizes that students with disabilities need additional support but does not provide evidence regarding what learning resources and instructional practices are used that adaptable and fully accessible to all students.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	2
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources needed, when and where they are needed.</p> <p>a) The applicant insufficiently addresses how students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal.</p> <p>b) The applicant vaguely addresses that students will receive support through the advisory component of the proposed reform. It is not clear whether this support includes technical support. In addition, the applicant states that technical support will be provided to teacher forty times during the first year, and continues that it has no idea how much technical support will be provided during the remaining years.</p> <p>c) The applicant provides no evidence regarding the use of technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information.</p> <p>d) The applicant does not describe how it ensures that schools use inter operable data systems. The applicant states that it intends to expand and increase access of technology-based data systems about student progress in all schools within the district in the Fall of 2014, informing the work of teachers and teams in each school, which inadequately addresses whether inter operable data systems are currently in place. The applicant also states that it provides 24/7 online access to tools and resources, however, it is unclear who can access the tools and resources, how the tools and resources can be accessed, and what type of tools and resources can be accessed.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant does not provide evidence of a high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The applicant limits its description of a continuous improvement process to ambiguous statements about deliverable calendars that several department will establish and submit. The applicant is unclear about what information deliverable calendars contain and how they contribute to the continuous improvement process.

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

5

1

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The applicant's approach is very fragmented as only two examples of communication are vaguely addressed. The plan lacks key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

Communication with internal stakeholders is addressed by the applicant in a limited way as the applicant states that communication of minutes will be submitted on a monthly basis by the applicant's Education Advisory Team, ELO Advisory Board, and school leadership teams. It is unclear in which context minutes will be established and how they are relevant to ongoing communication and engagement with external and internal stakeholders.

The applicant states that each division will support creating a district-wide emphasis on reciprocal communication between parents and families, community based organizations and higher education partners. The applicant does not clearly describe whether the emphasis on reciprocal communication is LEA wide or whether it is specific to the four participating schools.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not show evidence of a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan. This is evident in the following ways:

The applicant provides a total of eighteen performance measures all of which are confusing and unclear. Many of the performance measures are relevant to students in subpopulations only and not overall. The applicant focuses its efforts on students from the subpopulation of Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged not including all students in the participating schools.

The applicant does not provide annual targets but instead provides year two and year three targets and those targets are only provided for some performance measures.

The applicant does not propose a grade-appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan which is required for the students' grade levels of 6-8 proposed by the applicant.

The performance measures are unrealistic. For example, the applicant anticipates that there will be a 50% increase of students who are on track to college-and career readiness in year two of program implementation and a 70% increase in year three.

a) The applicant provides obscure rationales for selecting the progress measures. For example, goal eleven states that teachers and leaders will effectively transition data to action to impact student learning ad impact the learning community. The corresponding rationale for this goal is stated as the district has a commitment to developing an effective data-driven instruction process.

b) The applicant does not demonstrate 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 instead inappropriately describes how the performance measure will be assessed.

c) The applicant appropriately describes how it will measure and improve performance measures.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant restrictively states that it will implement a research and evaluation plan to assess program effectiveness. The applicant does not provide evidence of a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology.

The applicant lists several timelines to collect data in the form of site visits, parent and student surveys etc. but does not describe how the data will be used to continuously improve its plan. The applicant does not sufficiently describe how key activities such as professional development and activities that employ technology are evaluated and how the results are used to improve its plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant only describes the Race to the Top funds that will support the project and does not address other funds that may be used to support the project.

b) The budget is unreasonable as the cost per pupil is high, nearly 10,000 per pupil. In addition, the program implementation is limited to four schools with a targeted population limited to Black, Hispanic and low socio-economic students which does not warrant the costs of several directors to oversee programs that are often part of the building principal's responsibility to oversee.

c) The applicant does not provide rationales for investments and priorities. Also not provided are a distinction between one-time investments and those that will be used for ongoing operational costs.

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

The applicant does not demonstrate sufficient evidence of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan does not include support from State and local government leaders, financial support, and a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.

The applicant insufficiently demonstrates that program sustainability is incorporated in the America's Choice Student Improvement Model. Specifically, the applicant states that the Student Improvement Model incorporates structures and processes for sustaining, monitoring, and adjusting the implementation over time to ensure school-level capacity-building and a gradual transfer of responsibility from Student Improvement Model staff to school staff. This is done through distributed leadership and collaboration as well as through professional development, coaching and technical assistance. The applicant does not convincingly describe that its proposed reform will be sustained past the term of the grant using the America's Choice Student Improvement Model.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not demonstrate the extent to which the applicant proposes 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. This section is not addressed by the applicant, and only a model is provided that depicts the collaboration between the district, the community, students, and student support services providers such as America's Choice. This model does not describe an integration of these partners with the intent to augment the schools' resources.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not coherently and comprehensively address 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.

The applicant does not sufficiently address how it will create learning environments that use personalized strategies. Also not sufficiently addressed is how learning environments will significantly improve learning and teaching for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The applicant insufficiently address how it would accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning.

Total	210	40
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0222NY-3 for Newburgh Enlarged City School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that they have core values and beliefs in which "All students can learn, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, English proficiency, or socioeconomic status". They add that they have a student-centered focus of education. Their vision is to support this focus with outside support from community agencies, higher educational institutions, which will join together to assessment and target individual student needs. They feel as if their district needs to intensify the support needed where the students "appear" to have weaknesses in their learning and growth. They go on in this section of the application to address the four core educational areas, and the work that they plan to do with each one.

The applicant gives broad outlines of how they will build their work in the four core educational assurance areas, but they

do not define this work. They mention that they will build on the foundation of Common Core State Standards, and give curricular options that will be offered to grades 6-8 through this reform. They do not build a clear and detailed path of how this will be implemented.

In building data systems, the applicant claims that they are creating a "culture of data literacy" , and gives some programs (some of which have acronyms, but are not identified) that will be used. However, the applicant does not go into detail of how these programs will accelerate student achievement and learning.

They mention that support for teachers and leaders is in place; and give some processes in how the data from the principal evaluation system will be cross-walked against the performance of the school and the district effectiveness. This cross walk seems to be a useful way to calibrate how well the principal does against the data in each particular school.

The applicant addresses the fact that they are a high need urban school district, with socio-economic challenges. They mention that they have initiated a process to improve the educational programs in the lowest performing schools, but they do not really address how they are going to make this a reality.

The applicant speaks to the Professional Development that they are giving district leaders with turnaround courses through the Harvard Graduate School of Education. They link this training to the fact that their suspension rates have declined since the training; and state that the number of students that are graduating has had a "positive impact". However, there is not a correlation of exactly how district leader training helps with suspension rates, and they do not give details of exactly what the "positive impact" for graduation rates.

Their plan to support the middle school grades is outlined in this section. They plan to give more personalized approaches for student learning, through greater teacher and community support. They list the factors of this approach in this section. Each student will have a team that uses data to plan with the student and their family. They list programs that will be available to the students, and talk about the support that the student will get through bi-weekly sessions with teachers, in collaboration with community partners. Teachers will receive support in implementation of CCSS as well.

The applicant gives some broad goals and visions of what they want this program to look like in it's implementation, however, they do not give a clear and coherent picture of exactly what will happen in this vision. It seems to have missing pieces in this section, which would be very helpful to have to get a clearer understanding of their reform. The application also seems in this section to be a rough draft, with formatting comments and strike-throughs, so it may be that a final draft was not submitted. They do explain the goals for the student will be in this section, and they mention support for the teachers, but it would also be helpful to have a clearer picture of the classroom experience as well.

Overall, the above factors combine to give the applicant a score of 4.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant gives a statement for the problem (middle school students not prepared for college and career, tied to middle school education), interventions they have in place for this groups, outputs they would like, as well as short and long term outcomes that they desired. Although this is useful information, this is not part of the criteria of this section of the application.

The applicant does describe the process that they used to select schools that will be participating in this grant. The middle schools were targeted because of declines in state assessment scores, and retention and attendance rates. They list the four middle schools, and their AYP (yearly adequate progress) in this section. The applicant gives the total number of students in this proposal, as well as the numbers of the student that are from low-income families, high -need students, and participating educators. They mention that a table is in this section to show the demographic breakdown, but one is not visible in this section. Once again, the section has formatted text sections, and strike-throughs, making one wonder if this is a rough draft as well.

The applicant does give a list of the schools that will participate in this grant, as well as how they selected the schools. They fail to give demographic numbers that are received in sub-section C, and add information that really does not relate to the criteria listed in this section. This gives the applicant a score of 5.

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

The information for this section was omitted, giving the applicant a score of 0; when reading through Section A. When reading section B of this grant, information about A (3) appeared after the information of B(4) was given.

The applicant contents that their high quality plan will draw on existing research about student-centered approaches to learning, although they do not refer to specific research that actually backs up their statement. They plan to use current structures in learning that are already in the district, and strengthen and revitalize them, such as the concept of leadership teams in each school. They state that a student/teacher advisory approach that will address goal setting with students is a major plan of this plan.

The second approach to their plan is that professional development is needed for teachers, because effective instruction only gives the learner a stronger base. They mention programs that seem to be already in place in their district as part of this grant. The programs seem to be attached in some cases in particular schools, although the grant is written for target schools that have students in grades 6-8. A concern would be of how they will be able to track and monitor progress with so many programs that are not consistently aligned with all schools in the project.

The format of this section seems to be in rough draft form, with strikeouts and comments in the margins, making one think that the proposal was not edited before submission.

Overall, the applicant is lacking in clarity and purpose of how and why this reform proposal will be translated into meaningful reform. The criteria for a high quality plan is lacking in several area, and the applicant's statements of how a personalized learning environment will help them reach their goals is vague as well. This lack of targeted focus, clarity, and missing pieces gives the candidate a score of 3.

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

10

4

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The information in this section was omitted, giving the applicant a score of 0. After beginning to review Section B, the information from Sections A(3) and A(4) appeared.

It is interesting to note that in the beginning paragraph of this section, there is a statement that indicates that "the narrative below doesn't seem to address the A4 indicators listed above". Once again, there is a sense from that this proposal was submitted from previous reviews, in rough draft form. There are formatting sections , comments, and strike-throughs in this section.

The applicant lists in this section the targeted goals that will result as this proposal is implemented. The goals are ambitious in year one of the grant; with state ELA goals going up 8% in sixth grade, 9% in seventh grade, and 8% in eighth grade. In years Two, Three, and Four, they just state they will increase to a certain percentage of proficiency, but they are not clear from which point this proficiency will come from.

In Math, their goals in sixth grade are an increase of 6% proficiency. In seventh grade, they have a goal of 8%, and in eighth grade, 5% proficiency. No mention is made of why this goal was selected. As they did in the ELA goals, the next 3 years just show an increase of proficiency, but one doesn't see the beginning measure of the year.

They also give an overall goal for each school targeted in the grant for proficiency, although it's not very clear what the measure is in these goals. Overall, the goals for summative assessments are very broad, with lack of information for these goals.

They list graduation rates for the cohorts and subpopulations. The college enrollment rates look as if they are in rough draft form. No data is given in this section.

Overall, the quality of this section is poor. The material presented seems as if it was in rough draft form, with omissions and an overall lack of targeted performance, leaving one to wonder how much consideration and thought was put into this section of their proposal. Their comment at the beginning of this section that "There should be a tighter connection to the programs listed above and the indicators in A4" is very apt. This lack of intent and information gives the applicant a score of 4.

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The intent of this section is for the applicant to give evidence of their success in advancing student learning and achievement, and to increase equity in teaching and learning.

In part A, the applicant states that they have worked to eliminate racial disparities in suspension rates at three of their schools. It is not clear whether or not these are the schools that are targeted for reform through the RTT-D grant. The data mentioning these decreases is from the early 1980's, and the criteria states they want to see the past four years. They do mention that the effort has sustained that suspension rates were at 7% for the 2010-11 school year, but this data does not correlate with the data from the 1980s, which gives total numbers of students instead.

They mention that all their teachers are certified by the New York State Education Department, and a steady percentage of Master's degrees in their district. While this is good information to know, it is not part of the criteria of this section, which indicates student outcomes, not teacher indicators.

The applicant does show performance data for the past three years, and they mention that the data shows a increases of proficiency levels, after a drop of proficiency when the NYSED changed the scores for reaching levels of proficiency. However, when you examine the tables, this does not hold true. The proficiency levels in some areas drop, or remain the same. So their contention that they have raised student achievement does not hold true when you examine their table.

At looking at closing achievement gaps, they looked at student cohorts that could be followed for four consecutive years. They state that after making the shift to more rigorous standards in 2010, students have made progress in both ELA and Math. When you look at the table that is presented, it does not correlate to their statement. For example, white third grade students were at 31% in Math in 2010, 40% in 2011, but down again 2012, with 35%.

The applicant does show evidence that there is a downward trend in student's performance on the number of students scoring at or above a three on the New York State Comprehensive English and Math Secondary Assessments, which is not a trend that shows improvement in closing gaps. They do show evidence in the percentage of their graduation rate by subpopulations, with black students going up from 52% in 2010 to 58.61% in 2012. There are also decreases in the number of students in subpopulations that dropped out of school.

The applicant inserts information about faculty by ethnic groups, but this category is not stated in the criteria for this section.

They also mention Professional Development initiatives for teachers and leaders, but it is not clear how this relates to student performance, as they do not actually make a correlation to it in this section.

The applicant does address how they are going to improve instruction for all students, including those attending the lowest performing schools. They have a Pre-K program in place, and a magnet school that has the students aligned in learning communities that meet their preferences. They have a International Baccalaureate Program at one elementary school; and a high school that is divided into two campuses, with academies, that make the learning environment more personal; as well as a H-Tech High School that will create a program for high school students, lasting six years, that will give each student a high school degree and an associate degree at no cost to the student.

The applicant makes their data decisions known to the community through presentations to their Board of Education; through media outlets, parent conferences, and through the New York State Education Portal. They place their district report cards on their website as well. Although this are ways to share information, the applicant seems to be at the beginning stages of this process.

Overall, the applicant seems to give data and information that is not aligned to the criteria of this section of the grant. Their data stating that student achievement is increasing, and achievement gaps are shrinking are not supported by the evidence they give. They do have some programs in place that seem to give extra support and new ways to meet student needs, but other than indicating that these programs help high needs students as well as all students, that criteria is not mentioned. Their communication with the families and the communities is in a beginning stage of implementation. This above information gives the applicant an overall score of 5.

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

5

1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that they make budget presentations annually to the community at a Board of Education meeting. It is also shared in a news letter. There is no mention of actual personnel salaries at the school level, instructional level, teachers, or non-personnel expenditures.

This lack of information for this section gives the applicant a score of 1.

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

10

0

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not address the correct evidence in this section of the applicant. Instead, they give evidence of State and Federal Grants that they have been awarded to improve teaching and learning.

The omission of the information needed in this section of the application gives the applicant a score of 0.

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

15

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant mentions the support that they received for their elementary IB program, and went into detail, giving examples of how well pleased the parents were with this program. However, this program has nothing to do with the RTT-D grant that they are proposing (except it was mentioned previously as being a program that may be implemented) , especially since the RTT-D grant is written for middle school students as the focus. They do mention that they met with representatives of their two bargaining units, to share their thoughts about the grant, stating that there is "general enthusiasm and support for the grant application".

Stakeholders (teachers, administrators, Board of Education, community members) met to discuss the grant application, and gave general agreement to the criteria of the grant. Letters of support, and ways that they will support the grant, are given by community stakeholders. There is not mention of support from teachers, (except to say that two representatives met to share their thoughts) and they do not mention is they have collective bargaining representation, or without collective bargaining representation.

The information given in this section is lacking in clarity and detail of how stakeholders were involved, and how teacher support is for this initiative. They do demonstrate evidence of support from the community with the letters they submit. This lack of information gives the applicant a score of 6.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant reiterates in this section their reasoning for the premise of their proposal, and then goes on to describe the demographic makeup for the district.; stating that the rich diversity of the district provides the district for rich resources for learning, and that the Expanding Learning Opportunity offered to middle school students will build on these heritages. Although this is useful information, it does not relate to what is required in this section of the grant, except to perhaps give a very vague background on why they are proposing the "Expanded Learning Opportunity". They do give some background on why retention is not effective, referencing the fact that will provide students that have failed two or more core subjects and are in danger of failing will benefit from ELO. This plan will focus on their learning gaps , with support from teachers that the student works with during the day.

The applicant then goes on to give an overview of the ELO program. This program gives students experiences, and partners with community service agencies. The program will offer blended instruction, integrating technology, with direct instructor involvement, and real world experiences. There is high parent involvement in this program as well. Students are identified for the program based on current retention status, and performance on specified assessments.

The applicant also states that research shows that there is a concern that middle school students do not feel connected to their school, and skills that they need to be successful with the new mandates of the CCSS; the advisory role is crucial to this plan. They go on to list choices of programs that these students will have to choose from ; STEM (a science based approach) America's Choice (a reform company) and International Baccalaureate. They go on to explain the premise of the programs, and how they align to CCSS. They are not clear on how the students are selected for these three programs. Is it based on what school the student is part of, or specific student needs? Is there a baseline assessment given to determine what program is best suited for the needs of the students, or is a random selection? All this information would be very valuable in getting a clearer picture of the programs.

Although the applicant lists the criteria for sections B, they do not address this section of the application at all. Perhaps it will be found (as previously) in other sections of the grant.

Overall, the applicant does list the programs that they have in place for this grant. However, there does not seem to be a clear picture of the tenets in section A. They do touch on features of parent involvement, and how they will master content and other areas, although it also seems that the applicant puts in previous information from other sections, and adds information that is not needed. The criteria needed in section B is totally absent. Once again, it seems as if the applicant submitted a rough draft in this section of the proposal. It seems as if the applicant needs to closely read and edit what exactly is required in the grant, because a lot of information is mis-aligned. This lack of focus and information needed gives the applicant a score of 7.

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

20

6

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant addresses the information in Section A of this part of the proposal in broad terms, stating that they have demonstrated a commitment to implementing data driven instruction, or DDI. They are refining their knowledge of Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's ways of effectively using data, and are implementing STAR reading and Math assessments, a quick way to gage progress and measure achievement gaps. This seems very simplistic in terms of what is needed to accurately and frequently measure student progress. Criteria to address how they are going to support effective implementation and adapt content are absent.

The applicant goes on to address how they will use tools, data, and resources to accelerate learning. Their focus are methods for differentiating instruction resources, although they do not explain what those methods are. A teacher leadership academy is mentioned in several sections of this proposal; it will be an annual event, and show teachers how to select effective tools to enhance instruction, as well build on the work of evaluation systems. It seems that an annual event to address so many criteria that are important to teacher development of so many facets is not enough to meet the needs of on-going training and assessment.

The applicant does speak to the fact that they will enhance instruction by using technology, however, this aspect is very generalized. They mention smart boards and tablets, software, and social media training, but it does not meet the criteria of a high quality plan, and there is not a lot of detail in the why and how this will be a part of the student success factor.

The applicant does not address how this training, systems, and practices will help improve school progress, or submits a high quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

Overall, although the applicant does provide some pieces of information in this section that are relevant to the criteria needed, a lot of information is missing and the information presented is disjointed. This section does not meet the criteria of a high quality plan, giving the applicant a score of 6.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant submits the format of the criteria in this section of the grant for Sections D(1) and D(2) at the beginning of this section. This section is numbered, although it does not match the format of the grant, and once again, there are formatting boxes and strike-throughs in this section.

The applicant restates the goal of their reform proposal again, although this information is not required in this section of the grant. They then list goals, followed by activities and rationales for each goal. There is no information given about organizing the LEA central office, except to mention that this information was addressed in Section C. *There is information found in Section D (2) of this application about the reorganization of the LEA office. They state that they reviewed and analyzed school district organizational structures in similar school districts in New York. They also sent a team to participate in a training on protocols and evaluation systems to monitor school and district effectiveness. A team also attended a "Turnaround Leadership" course, offered through the Harvard Graduate School of Education. This analysis lead to strong recommendations for big changes. Due to this work, they reorganized their structure in August of 2013. They*

show several models of this change, with a "Focus on the Big 6" although they did not elaborate about what this focus was.

The applicant gives more of a timeline of what the school leadership teams will be during throughout the year, but once again, this information does not meet the criteria set forth in part B of this section. They do not address how they are going to give students an opportunity to progress and earn credit on mastery, how they are going to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple times or ways, and how they are going to provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students.

Overall, the applicant gives general information about the timeline of how the proposal will roll out in some areas, but does not address the criteria needed for this section of the grant. Information was found in Section D(2) of this proposal about section A. This lack of information and total disregard for the criteria gives the applicant a score of 3.

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

10

0

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant in this section talks about the communication that will be present between parents and families (makes you wonder if they meant students and families), community organizations, and higher education partners. They are forming an Advisory Council that will focus on a District Comprehensive Improvement plan. Although they give a little background about this plan, it does not seem to have a connection with their grant proposal. They do not mention how stakeholders will have access to content and learning resources, or have levels of technical support. They also do not mention how they will use information technology systems that allow students to use data, or mention that LEAs and schools use inoperable data systems.

The applicant seems in this section of this application to give information that does not apply to the criteria of this section. Once again, this lack of alignment and disregard for the criteria required in this section gives the applicant a score of 0.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant gives in this section a broad outline of how the district will review information. This is done through the use of calendars; the Director of ELO will give an overall calendar of plans every 3-4 months to the district. The Director of the Teacher Leader Academy will submit a calendar of their overall plan every 3-4 months to the District. Consulting partners of outside programs will submit a calendar of plans every 3-4 months as well. They also give a calendar outline for program plans every 3-4 months, and speak to how communication will be submitted every month of minutes of teams to the district.</p> <p>This plan does state they will give out the information of what they are planning to do in each area, but does not speak about the feedback process, or how they are going to monitor, measure, and publicly share this information, except to mention that they want to be transparent.</p> <p>This lack of detail into this section of this proposal garners the applicant a score of 5.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant does list the criteria written above for this section, but does not mention how they plan to do this. Once again, it seems to be a rough draft. The applicant is given a score of 0.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The performance measures listed in this section do not connect; the applicant mentions that a performance measure is a minimum of 10% of the students in the three target subgroups, then in the same sentence, has the teacher of record and principal rated as a highly effective teacher and principal. Their goal is also by the third year of the grant, which does not meet the criteria for rigorous and timely. They give a percentage for improvement, but not a number.</p>		

The applicant does list the the rationale for the measure, how the measure will provide information, and how it will review and improve the measure over time in a very disjointed chart. They list the criteria that is needed by subgroups for grades 4-8, and social and health information as well.

However, the applicant's performance measures at time do not measure a goal; the goals are broad, and the rationales, how they will measure and review the implementation seems very general, without a lot of specific information. There are formatting boxes in this section, leading one to believe again this is a rough draft. The applicant did attempt to follow the criteria of this section, which gives them a score of 2.

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

Overall, the applicant has a thorough plan in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT-D funded activities, with outside evaluators meeting monthly with stakeholders, site visits, and creating a analysis plan prior to beginning the qualitative data analysis. They mention an ELO evaluation that will take place 3 years after the start of the grant, although this seems to be a long period of time to wait to evaluate such a large undertaking. They also give ways that they will measure the social and health services that they provide.

This section of the plan seems to be more coherent and well thought out in terms of need. The applicant lists the timelines and objectives in this section; with a list of the questions that the American Institutes for Research will aim to answer, with a list of scivities that will be used for evaluation (such as Scope reviews describing the state of the RTT-D activities at each school, and establishing and using a framework for communicating results to district personnel and key stakeholders) It gives the applicant a score of 4.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does give costs and budget outlines for the initiatives of their proposal. It seems that all the cost of this proposal will come from the RTTT-D grant moneys, as no mention is given of other funding. They do not mention strategies that will ensure the sustainability of the personalized learning environment. The budget table is the only information in this section. Although they do have a few narratives within the budget table of the rationale for certain positions and timelines, that is the only narrative that is present.

The applicant does identify RTTT-D funds, leaving one to wonder if LEA, state, or federal funds will be used. They do give a rationale for investments and priorities, but do not identify the funds. This gives them an overall score of 3.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is no mention of any of the above criteria in this section, giving the applicant a score of 0.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority information was not addressed at all in this application, giving the applicant a score of 0.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: <p>The applicant did not meet the criteria for Absolute Priority 1. The information was not aligned in what the criteria seems to be for most sections of this grant; not clear in what they mean, information is inserted that is not relevant to the section of the grant that is addressed; rough draft, editing and comments in a lot of the sections, indicating that they did not thoroughly read the expectations, nor did they edit.</p> <p>The applicant did mention some specific goals for a personalized learning environment, but the information was not organized in a way that made the information coherent and targeted for accelerated student learning. In some places in the application, total sections of the application were missing.</p>		

Total	210	58
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0222NY-4 for Newburgh Enlarged City School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes numerous student needs and the variety of ways the district's schools and teachers have worked during the past several years to align their teaching program with the State's RTTT effort. The district proposes to use the RTT-D resources to upgrade teaching and achievement in alignment with the core assurance areas.

This application appears to be in draft form and the numerous edit indications, incomplete paragraphs, typographical errors, and repeated grant criteria distract the reader from understanding the district's plans.

The district states that it has been engaged in varied learning experiences and has adopted new assessments, new teacher learning opportunities, and is seeking to integrate the Common Core standards into its programs, but the neither the data-based evidence nor its proposed action strategy are coherently described.

The data presented is poorly presented (e.g., charts and figures are not numbered; several columns and totals are missing in the list of school demographic data), so it is difficult to follow the explanation of the data in the text. The figure, which appears to serve as a logic model, does not put the program in any context and does detail the planned qualities of coaching and training that will be offered

The vision builds on the RTT-D core assurances, as the notice defines, and itemizes a host of programs and assessment systems that the district has adopted to date that align with the assurances. However, the rationale for the choice of this particular set of programs is not provided. There is no explanation about why or how the applicant thinks the newly proposed programs will

personalize and upgrade students' learning when past initiatives failed. The applicant does not include a description of what classrooms will be like either for teachers or students after grant implementation, although there are statements promising that data systems (which are ill-defined) will be brought on board and teachers will have opportunities to participate in extended coaching and training.

The absence of specific substance as detailed above keeps the vision from being either clear or coherent, as required for this criterion.

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

The application describes a significant districtwide academic need among nearly all students in all but three of the district's schools. In this section, the applicant states its plans to focus on students in grades 6 through 8, although in other places the applicant indicates that the proposed project include some components that will serve fifth-to-ninth graders.

The applicant indicates that its approach to implementation will have "four elements: monitoring, planning, realization, and support." Its description of these components is confusing, however. It is not clear what content will be addressed or how classrooms will be "personalized." The applicant does not provide enough information about the content of its proposed program components to make clear what the program will look like in classrooms when it is actually implemented.

The applicant states that four schools will initially participate in the project and then it says that 16 schools will constitute the "first cohort." It does not continue to explain how many additional cohorts will be phased in or on what time line. The applicant offers broad generalizations about selecting schools based on AYP status and demographic makeup, but it is not clear what AYP characteristics or what demographic configurations will be targeted .

Although the applicant provides a list of schools to be served, its description of its selection process and the information charts about the school demographics are unclear, so it is addressed this criterion with the required evidence.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This criterion was not addressed. Only a bulleted list of various potential interventions and activities are included in the text without a narrative explanation or rationale for the items. No plan is presented for how the district will implement or scale-up its reform and there is no meaningful narrative, lists of activities, timelines, or deliverables that would be the foundation of the district's plan.

This section, as in other sections of the application, appears to be in draft form. Sections of text are repeated and there are continuing typographical errors. The editing errors make it impossible for a reader to understand what is being proposed.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a difficult-to-read narrative statement of its proposed outputs, short-and long-term outcomes, and projected impact. The information is a bulleted list of process outcomes and not a clear set of goals or related outcomes. The categories of information are internally inconsistent across sections and non-specific as to which students will be included in the assessments, what measurement strategies will be used, or what quantitative outcomes or impacts are anticipated. Also, the processes planned (e.g., Teacher Leader Academy, Individual Learning Plans, Advisory groups) do not include timelines, responsible leaders, target schools and/or students, or deliverables.

Under Section B, the applicant provides various data charts that broadly summarize districtwide information, however, the charts do not provide school-specific information. Demographic and school status information is woven into the narrative without an apparent logical intent. Although the section includes charts, the charts are poorly labeled and the reader cannot be clear about the implications of the evidence presented.

Most of the analyses examine districtwide data without clarifying how it applies to the Grades 6-8 target groups that are proposed as the beneficiaries of the RTT-D funds.

Summary data indicates post secondary degree plans for high school completers in 2011 and 2012 but there is no explanation about post-secondary degree attainment over the live of the grant. Moreover, this is described as a middle-school program, so it is not clear how the post-secondary degree attainment will be an adequate measure of middle-grades outcomes since post-secondary degree attainment will not have occurred. More appropriate measures of middle-grades attainment might be high school grades, course taking, and the number/percent of students who are on-track for graduation during their high school years.

Additional evidence is provided about the demographic characteristics of the district's teaching and administrative personnel, but the applicant does not explain how that information relates to the program outcomes.

With the information provided, the applicant does not demonstrate how its vision will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

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	2
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>In this section, the applicant lists five reform initiatives implemented in recent years at several grade levels, but its evidence of the programs' accomplishments is unclear. The applicant states its commitment to "consistently use[ing] data to drive decisions," but the narrative presents only a broad discussion of its efforts to make summary outcome data transparent and available to community stakeholders. Furthermore, it does not provide examples of the data or how it was actually used in schools or by the community to benefit learning and achievement.</p> <p>The narrative briefly summaries how the content of the reform activity will be implemented in specific grades, however, it is not clear how these reforms relate to one another and how they work together. This information would be clearer if some of it were charted, indicating precise grade levels and numbers of students served, dates the reforms were undertaken, and specifics about what progress was made and what additional progress is needed.</p> <p>As presented, the list hints at the district's previous efforts to align teaching practices with the Common Core, but the evidence is non-specific. The list of initiatives undertaken in the past does not meet the requirements for criterion and it does not demonstrate how prior reforms improved outcomes or what challenges remain to be addressed in the future.</p> <p>Finally,, Section B, like Section A, is full of typographical errors and it appears to be a draft document. Ideas are incomplete, unclear, and repeated for no apparent reason. The redundancy and poorly edited text make it very difficult to understand the program the applicant is proposing and to evaluate its potential for success.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant itemizes a list of activities it has undertaken in the past to make available to the public budget and performance data using periodic newsletters, Board of Education hearings on the budget, available budget data that includes personnel salaries for public review, and achievement data. Examples of these materials are not included so their potential value cannot be assessed. As a result, the narrative is a fragmented list of a few strategies the district has used to provide transparency.

This section would be strengthened by specific examples of data, newsletters, agendas of meetings, comments from stakeholders or evidence of the type of web-based reports offered. It would also be helpful to show how student achievement data is displayed in a sufficiently transparent manner that it can be easily understood by community stakeholders, including parents.

In particular, the applicant fails to include a description of the availability of the four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds that are called for in this criterion.

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

10

1

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that the SEA has supported the district with funding to build its "P-Tech" High School in partnership with IBM. The narrative states that the proposed RTT-D funding will help the district build a high-school-to-community-college transition program in cooperation with the area community colleges. Also with State support, the district's leadership has participated in "turnaround" courses at Harvard School of Education.

The narrative does not provide further detail of State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements that enable the district to undertake its proposed reform. It does not indicate which leaders participated in the Harvard training and how that training will benefit other educators in the district or what role these leaders will have in the proposed grant-funded initiative.

There is no discussion of how the district will benefit from or coordinate with State reforms although, in various other sections of application, the narrative references the State's adoption of new Common Core Standards, professional evaluations, and ambitious assessments that align to the new standards. The applicant does not explain how these State-led initiatives will influence its own planning or practices.

Without a clear description of how the SEA's policies and practices will promote personalized learning through this grant, the applicant has not met the requirements of this criterion.

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

15

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant shows that it has sought out stakeholders' engagement as it developed the proposal, but the outreach strategies used and the specific inputs received are not clearly delineated. The appendices include several letters from stakeholders that endorse the application, including letters from the city's mayor, state representatives, and community colleges, among others.

The applicant describes several actions taken to secure information about the perspectives and preferences of parents and community organizations. Parents were invited to meetings and the applicant reports that they endorsed the initiatives proposed. The teachers associations were contacted for feedback, and the mayor's office was invited to participate. As written, however, the applicant provides only a second-hand report of what changes or adjustments stakeholders recommended at specific meetings. Systematic evidence of meetings held, groups solicited, survey results, or revisions suggestion and made, etc. is not provided and the applicant does not explain how input from stakeholders changed or influenced the final RTT-D application.

A stronger case would have been made if the applicant had differentiated the input they received from each participating stakeholder group (e.g., parents, teachers, community members, and students), making it clear what substantive additions and contributions each group offered. It is a particular concern that the applicant did not demonstrate how teachers or school leaders contributed to the program's conceptualization or the application's development.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant states that it intends to implement research-based programs that will personalize learning in its middle schools. The five proposed programs include: "expanded learning" with an extended day program; advisory classes of 12-15 students, and three enhanced academic programs, including a STEM program, an America's Choice school improvement model (SIM), and an international baccalaureate program.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that the five separate systems are complementary and are grounded in similar critical values that undergird the RRT-D grant program, but it does not provide an integrated logic model or conceptual map to show how separate programs will be coordinated within the district's classrooms and schools.</p> <p>For five different and complex programs to achieve their potential for success, they must be gradually rolled with a systematic plan for preparing teachers to teach and students and families to understand what is expected of them. The plan provides inconsistent evidence about coordinated implementation timelines for the five different programs in schools. Many and varied components are proposed, but the applicant does not make a case for how these independent and varied programs will complement one another to improve student learning.</p> <p>Missing are the required detailed timelines, task-specific implementation plans, milestones, benchmarks, and defined responsible staff members who will bring about the proposed changes. The plan does not explain how students and their parents are informed of a systematic rollout that ensures their understanding of how the new systems work. There is insufficient detail showing how students, especially those most at risk of failure or who require special educational or language accommodations, will be taught to work with the more ambitious content, digital opportunities, or adaptive learning strategies. There is no clear vision of how classrooms will integrate so many systems simultaneously so students gain the promised new learning skills and traits they need to achieve college-and career-ready standards .</p> <p>Finally, the applicant does not show how the project will move from theory to practice within the system's middle schools. Significantly, it also does not show how the middle-school's feeder schools and high schools are changing to align with the new middle school initiatives. Ambitious changes within middle schools without adequate elementary preparation will leave entering students unprepared on entry into middle schools; without coordination with high schools, middle-school students will be unlikely to sustain from the eighth grade achievement advances.</p> <p>In short, the applicant has inadequately demonstrated a coordinated roll-out plan and has provided insufficient details about mechanisms for implementation, time lines, responsible agents, and deliverables that ensure systematic and integrated adoption of the multiple and inter-locking grant components.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	5
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant proposes to upgrade teaching practices among teachers and school leaders by introducing a district-based leadership academy. The narrative describing its plans does not successfully address the mechanisms it will use to rollout out the systematic training in using the new assessment and data systems that it proposes. In this section an additional assessment program (the Renaissance STAR Reading and Mathematics assessment systems) is proposed as an add-on to the five learning systems described earlier under "teaching and learning." It is not clear why the applicant feels that an additional assessment system is needed on top of the many assessment systems that are already integrated into the proposed SIM, STEM, and IB programs and how these assessment systems contribute creating high-achieving and personalized learning environments.

The district proposes to adopt the NSBA's model of teacher and leader professional development to implement the Common Core curriculum. It also proposes to upgrade the quality of its existing "Teacher Center" with the courses, proposed processes, and teaching tools offered through its local Teaching Leader Academy.

The weakness of the applicant's teacher professional development focus is that it neglects to discuss how various educator evaluation systems will be coordinated with the new State teacher and principal evaluation systems, or how the proposed new initiatives within the district will support a personalized evaluation system for teachers and leaders that integrates teacher observation-based evaluations with results from the many other student-centered assessment system.

There are many critical components of this criterion that are not described in the application, substantially weakening the case that it makes for its Teacher Leader Academy as a successful professional development model. Among the elements NOT discussed are how:

- the proposed teacher academy will ensure that educators engage in systematic and continuing training, working in teams and individually to learn to adapt content and instruction within personalized learning contexts;
- the learning approaches will promote teacher and leader development (e.g., discussion and collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio, manipulatives);
- the content, tools, and processes will establish effective process for measuring student progress toward career- ready graduation requirements the LEA's proposed teacher and principal evaluation systems;
- the new systems will put actionable information at educators' fingertips that help teachers better respond to individual student academic needs and interests;
- more rigorous learning resources and assessments will be integrated within the SIM, STEM, and IB programs; and
- feedback systems will ensure that teachers are ensuring that students are on track for learning college- and career-ready skills.

Further, there is no evidence presented showing that the many proposed and varied assessment systems have been validated so that they will provide reliable and correct diagnoses and support systems, tools, and resources to ensure teachers will be better able to direct students toward achieving college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice).

In short, the applicant has not defined a high quality plan that demonstrates mechanisms, strategies, plans, or timelines and deliverables that will adequately support the implementation of the proposed new initiatives. Missing from the proposal are concrete examples of how courses, agendas, deliverables and evaluation ensure that teachers and principals will become more effective in serving hard-to- staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).

These missing elements weakens the applicant's case that it has adequately addressed the essential components required by this criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant itemizes goals, activities, and the rationales designe to help schools implement its proposed reform components. Its list of activities addresses some aspects of within-school changes that must be made, but it is not clear how the proposed change processes coordinate across classrooms and within and among buildings. The activities lists include year-one time targets and some deliverables. However, the applicant does not clearly explain how these proposed activities and deliverables will be coordinated districtwide so they occur systematically within all schools. The plans also address STEM, SIM, and IB implementation, although the performance measures listed in Section A indicates only ELA and math teaching and learning comprise this program.</p> <p>Much of the text simply restates the requirements of the RTT-D Grant application without a narrative plan, taking up valuable space in the application and leaving the reviewer baffled about program purposes, processes, and implementation strategies. The activities are large chunks of what might be pieces of a larger plan, stated without showing how school leadership teams implement critical program components, including data-driven programming; effectively functioning data dashboards and a "culture of data use."</p> <p>To accomplish these activities, the district will need to create specific tasks and benchmarks that specify achievable steps to implementation. If specific milestones were indicated, the staffs charged with implementing the programs and activities would be clear about how their tasks connect with other tasks and ensure the activities will be completed on schedule. Many of the activities proposed are also missing timelines or they do not identify a specific person or office which will be responsible for ensuring the tasks are accomplished.</p> <p>These fragmented components fail to systematically demonstrate the LEA's high-quality plan for redirecting practices, policies, and rules in support of personalizing its teaching and learning systems districtwide. The plan does not show how these new rules and policies will be disseminated and applied across the district over the four-year project period to accomplish the goals of the grant proposal.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	1
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application indicates that its proposed restructuring will "focus on the Big 6 [tenets]" that will integrate and organize themes that cut across all schools of the district and serve as supports to innovation. The "Big 6" are important organizational focus areas for any effectively functioning school or district, but it is not clear how these six focus areas align with the many proposed program elements that the district is introducing into the middle schools to personalize learning and teaching.</p> <p>This section states important goals for tightening up the school and LEA infrastructure, however, there are insufficient details about how these tenets will be applied in specific schools, classrooms, district offices or in the grant-funded programs. The narrative promises an increased focus on community engagement and on better serving the needs of struggling students, but it is a vision or a mission statement not a high quality plan, as defined in this notice.</p> <p>Missing from the plan are specific timelines, responsible agents/offices, deliverables, and feedback loops. The proposed changes should be detailed for the duration of the proposed four-year grant period but that information is not provided.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	0
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a list of project components and a statement that each component will be required to submit a calendar of activities and verifying time lines. However, the information does not constitute a continuous improvement process. The narrative indicates an INTENT to plan, but not a plan, and the list of intentions does not meet the requirements of this criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not address this component in any identified component of its plan.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The charts in this section provide 18 performance goals and measures. Embedded within the charts are brief and incomplete rationales for using the designated target measures and the measures are inadequate assessments of indicated outcomes. For example, for the outcome of reducing middle-grade retention to 0 percent, the proposed measure is the number of students with poor attendance records who attend out-of-school programs. This is a worthy goal, but it is not a measure of middle-grades academic achievement. Other performance measures are also not actually measurable outcomes, but are, instead, process goals (e.g., increasing district partnerships through participation; providing professional development to support data-driven instruction, etc.).</p> <p>The information showing how the district will review and improve its evaluation measures over time is not correctly presented. The column designed to demonstrate how measures will be reviewed and improved periodically does not show a plan for improving measures but it gives a series of monitoring indicators and planned actions that will be taken if students fail to progress. These confusions suggest that the applicant does not understand how to define or measure performance outcomes. As result, the stated "measures" cannot be relied on to provide rigorous, timely, or formative information that will effectively assess the applicant's proposed plans or the impact of its theory of action.</p> <p>Finally, as in other sections, the charts here appear to be drafts. They include incomprehensible text elements which make them difficult to understand and interpret, causing the information provided to fail to meet the requirements of this criterion.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section is the only section in the application in which instructions were followed. Still in draft form, however, the text is more difficult to interpret than it should be. The plan proposed describes a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District-funded activities. The applicant proposes to hire the national evaluation organization, AIR, to conduct both process and product evaluation components. The evaluation design calls for conducting a series of routine and non-routine evaluation activities to monitor implementation and to provide feedback on implementation progress and on emerging outcomes. The design calls for evaluating four of the core project components described as the heart of the district's RTT-D initiative: enrichment-focused learning; the effects of the advisory periods; curriculum and instructional reforms; and the effectiveness of collaborative professional development and practices.</p>		

The evaluation design is comprehensive and specific and comprises key elements of a high-quality evaluation plan. It details multiple levels of data collection, appropriate measures and analytic procedures, and provides for reporting time tables that will support the key elements of monitoring, continuous improvements, and outcome/impact attainment. The plan calls for using previously validated evaluation instruments through the evaluation process.

This section would be stronger if the text were more clearly finalized and free of editing marks and typographical errors which leave vague and unclear the applicant's plans and intentions.

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 proposes a budget which includes only RTT-D grant funding. No other sources of funding are indicated as contributing to the program. The grant funds that are directly requested are spelled out with supporting cost narratives provided for each budget component. The budget appears to adequately address the cost components proposed, although it does not address costs associated with the implementation of data monitoring and feedback; this seems a substantial oversight. The budget tables include summaries of how the key personnel, supplies, and administrative costs, but does there is no indication of plans to continue the project after the federal funds are no longer available.

An example of an apparent oversight is that there is no budget category for supporting the hardware, software, staffing, or training associated with building proposed instructional data systems or for "creating a culture of data literacy."

The budget does not anticipate additional funds or funding sources that may be needed to accomplish all implementation goals during the life of the grant. It does not separate one-time investments from those that will be ongoing to support operations, and no information is provided anticipating a sustaining budget. Thus, there are no projections of what it will cost to sustain the innovations beyond the life of the grant cycle and the application does not anticipate potential future funders to step in when the RTT-D funds are no longer available.

In sum, the budget narrative and tables are incomplete and fail to provide a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, so the reasonableness and sufficiency of the budget is not demonstrated.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not address this criterion and includes no budget or cost assumptions, potential funding sources, and or projected uses of funds to sustain the RTT-D initiatives proposed.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The competitive preference priority was not addressed in the application.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Although the application shows interest in new ideas and a stated desire to upgrade programs, the text is incomplete and the proposed program plans are often unclear and ill-defined. The application is presented in bits and pieces. Its component elements are poorly articulated and there are no clear expectations of how planned components will interact with one another. The application also does not include its plan districtwide roll out plan.

A particularly important weakness of this application is the poor framing of the proposed method for developing a data-driven, assessment-focused, content rich and personalized teaching and learning systems. There are insufficient explanations or plans of action, and the applicant fails to make a convincing case that its plans will serve students with a personalized learning environment that meets the four core assurances. Moreover, the proposed system for upgrading teaching and leading fails to include any reference to plans for an improved and continuous process teacher- or leader- evaluation system other than what is mandated by the State education agency.

Although the applicant proposes to implement a middle-grades International Baccalaureate system and upgraded Common Core-based instruction, it is not clear if the programs will occur in grades 5 - 9 or grades 6-8, as this targeted grade range changes in different component descriptions. The narrative does not constitute a strong plan for ensuring that new programs will prepare students for more ambitious middle-grades course content, and it does not show how the program will help students prepare to complete high school courses and become college-or career-ready.

Finally, the application appears to be a draft. Because there are so many incomplete ideas, typographical errors, and misplaced or half-described ideas and charts, the document is in a form which weakens its own case. It is unclear what programs are new and what are already in place; some sections are repeated several times for no apparent reason; and other sections are not addressed. A poorly prepared proposal dilutes the applicant's case for its proposed program and, as a result, the application does not meet Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	42
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