



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0130TX-1 for Rio Grande City C.I.S.D.

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant details their vision around a Continuum of Learning Advancement for Student Success project. This project is derived from a previous federal initiative titled Reading First.</p> <p>This section scores on the low end of the scale because the applicant does not detail how their vision builds on the work in the four educational assurance areas. Even though the applicant describes their continued need to support literacy prek through grade 12, the applicant does not articulate a clear and credible approach to increase student achievement nor does the applicant describe what classrooms experiences will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. These details are essential for meeting the requirements of the grant application.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant details their intent to improve reading and writing throughout the district. This section receives a low score due to the applicant not providing specific details to the process they used or will use to select schools to participate. They did not include a list of participating schools nor did they include the total number of participating students or their demographics.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant indicates their intent to implement a whole school reform model that will address all grade levels. This section scores low because the applicant does not provide details their logic or theory of change and how their plan will improve student learning. Furthermore, the applicant does not indicate how their proposal will support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant details their goals for improving student outcomes. The goals are broad and do not provide specifics on how they plan to increase performance of summative assessments, decrease achievement gaps, increase graduation rates and college enrollment. This detail is essential to support the intent of the listed goals.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides detail pertaining to previous federal grant awards and current district curriculum. This section receives a score of zero due to the applicant not providing a clear record of success over the past four years. Their is mention of participating in the Reading First grant, but the district does not provide detail as to how student performance</p>		

has been raised. There is no detail around reforming it's lowest achieving schools nor is their detail as to how student performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents that improve participation, instruction, and services. This information is essential in determining if current district initiatives have a positive impact on student achievement.

<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant complies with the rules and regulations provided by the Texas Education Agency regarding public access. This section scores low because even though the applicant states they will subscribe to state and federal grant guidelines for transparency and public access, they do not detail what this entails. There is no information as to how salaries and non-personnel expenditures are made available to the public.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant does not provide evidence that successful conditions to implement the personalized learning environments exist. It is not clear if the applicant has successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State requirements to implement the personalized learning environments.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant states teachers, school administrators, and district administrators reviewed specified data to determine the need to submit a grant application. This section scores in the low end because the applicant does not provide explicit detail as to how students, families, teachers, and principals were engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on feedback. This type of detail is pertinent to show stakeholder involvement and buy in to grant initiatives.

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

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

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The applicant details current course offering that support college and career readiness. This section scores low due to the lack of clarity and details that support their approach to implementing instructional strategies to all participating students. In addition, the applicant does not provide a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. A high quality plan ensures all students have access to high quality instruction, rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of all learners. In addition it is unclear as to whether the applicant has mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students to ensure they understand how to use tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**  
 Details are provided that include provisions of professional development for all personnel to include the newly hired instructional specialist. The instructional specialist will support instructional staff throughout the district. The applicant scores in the low end due to the lack of clarity regarding the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) 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's approach to teaching and leading is confusing and inconsistent by lacking details as to how personalized learning environments will be implemented. There is no mention of the districts teacher evaluation system or how their plan will increase student achievement through the use of highly effective teachers.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant indicates they will hire 12 instructional specialists, however their is inadequate detail as to their practices, policies, and rules for organizing the LEA for grant implementation. This section scores on the low end due to this lack of detail in addition to the insufficient detail on their plan to provide school leadership teams with flexibility in implementation of school schedules, calendars, staffing, and budgets.</p> <p>It is not clear as to how the applicant will give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards, even though the applicant indicates they will be flexible with how students attain credits.</p> <p>There is no mention of how learning resources and instructional practices will be fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant indicates they support the notion of personalized learning for all students as well as providing the support and resources needed for infrastructures. However, this section scores low because the applicant does not provide comprehensive detail as to how they will ensure stakeholders will access tools and other learning resources both in and out of school. The details provided around technical support are vague in that they lack clarity as to how students, parents, and relevant stakeholders will have appropriate support.</p> <p>There is no mention as to how the applicant will ensure LEAs and schools utilize interoperable data systems for data management.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant states the need to have a high quality plan for implementing rigorous improvement process, but they do not provide necessary details as to how this will be done. This section scores a zero as their is no detail provided as to how the district plans to promote continuous improvement. The plan must address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information regarding the quality of grant implementation. This application does not provide these details.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides detail regarding their communication plan in a table. The table includes communication strategy and the responsible party. This section scores low due to the lack of clarity as to who the internal and external stakeholders will be participating in the specified activities. For example the table indicates they will hold bi-monthly meetings overseen by the implementation specialist and director for educational opportunity, but their is no detail as to who will be participating in those meetings and how the information will be disseminated.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Performance measures are listed in a table that detail program objectives and the indicators of success. The applicant does include some information detailing the rational for selecting the specified indicator. This section scores in the middle range due to the lack of detail as to how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern. There is some detail as to how the assessments will be monitored by the implementation specialist, but it is</p>		

unclear as to how the monitoring will review and improve the measure over time.

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant will utilize an outside evaluator to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the grant funded activities. The applicant will ensure the evaluator will have full access to all data. The evaluator's vita is provided in the appendix. The district does not provide target data or details of benchmarking for success as a result of evaluation initiatives. The plan lacks rigor in the utilization of evaluation data or how they intend to make improvement to grant initiatives.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

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

The applicant identifies all funds that will support the project. However, there is no identification of the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs. This section scores in the low range due to this lack of clarity.

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

**10**

**1**

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

The applicant will utilize Title 1 and School Improvement funds to support and supplement funding. This section scores low due to the applicant not providing a high quality plan for sustainability of the project goals. There is no detail as to how the plan will include support from state and local government leaders as well as how the applicant will evaluate improvements and outcomes to inform a post-grant budget.

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant does not provide a competitive preference priority.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant does not meet absolute priority one due to their lack of evidence of how they will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve student learning. The applicant does not provide specific detail as to how they intend to improve student learning through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>22</b>
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0130TX-2 for Rio Grande City C.I.S.D.

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The Rio Grand City Consolidated Independent School District provided a reform vision which includes increasing the best practices components of their existing Reading Firist Program in grades Pre-K -5 that reflects common curriculum, consistent instructional practices, use of data to drive instruction and classrooms rich in literacy.. The Applicant provided evidence of the need of the district request for RTT-D funding based on the following: 1. 99% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. 2. 58.7% of students are classified as second language learners. 3. Many student's families lack literacy in either English or Spanish. 4. Most students do not meet standards of college readiness. 5. Only 3.4 % of the graduate class of 2010 projected college sucess in reading on the ACT. 6. 62% of students need remediation in reading when they enter the state college system.</li> <li>. The Applicant did not provide sufficent evidence of the programs plan tied directly to the four core educational assurances.</li> <li>. The Applicant does not describe what a classroom would look like for students and teachers participating in personalized environments.</li> </ul>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The Applicant presented a reasonable approach in implementing it's reform proposal which focus on issues that have already been identified in their district initiative: 1. Improving the level or rigor in on-going grade-level text by partnering with Pearson education company in provoding more complex materials and resources across the curriculum., 2. Building the rituals and routines of Reader's and Writer's Workshops in all classroom and provoding more ongoing professional developments for teachers., 3. Working with second language learners, or deepening academic vocabulary.</li> <li>. The Applicant did not provide evidence of a process used to select schools to participate in the proposal nor listed the names of the participating schools.</li> </ul>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The Applicant provided a thorough evidence of how their proposed plan of reform will improve student learning outcomes for all students: 1. Implementing a Whole School Reform Model that address all grade levels with the district's current data driven approach and with early intervention through formative assessment and instructional modificatin. 2. Extensive professional development of administration and staff in the area of academic rigor and relevance in the classroom. 3. Monitoring instructional practices 4. Parental and community involvement. 5. Alignment of the State's Essential Skills with the National Core Curriculum Standards. 4.District teachers, instructional staff and district administrators will be required to take part in annual evaluations.</li> <li>. The Applicant did not provide evidence describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up or translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.</li> </ul>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

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

- . The Applicant provided reasonable evidence reflecting their district-wide goals for improving students' learning outcomes.
- . The Applicant did not present a vision that likely increase equity by addressing performance gaps between student subgroups, or evidence that the district's goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA Targets for their participating schools.
- . The Applicant did not provide clear evidence for improved student learning and performance in each participating school's targeted areas: 1. Performance on summative assessments 2. Decreasing achievement gaps 3. Graduation and college enrollment rates.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The Applicant has presented evidence of providing a record of success in two areas in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. The district received numerous grant projects from 2004-2009.</li> <li>. The district's plans for reform are to: 1. Support teachers with more effective coaching and monitoring, 2 Providing extensive professional development that is focused on personalized environments. 3. Collection and analysis of teacher effectiveness data , 4 Providing individual digital tools to motivate and support student learning, 5. Providing access to technology that support learning in isolated communities in rural South Texas.</li> <li>. The Applicant did not address a clear record of success in the past four years. For example they did not provide detailed description, charts, graphs, raw student data or other evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to: 1. Improve student learning outcomes, closing achievement gaps or raising student achievement, graduation and college enrollment rates. 2. Achieve significant reform on it's persistently lowest-achieving schools 3. Make student performance data available to students, educators and parents that inform and improve participation, instruction and services.</li> </ul>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The Applicant provided reasonable evidence on increasing the LEAs processes, practices and investments including making public their actual school's expenditures for PreK-8 instruction.</li> <li>. All of the district's financial operational processes will be subject to rules, and regulations prescribed by the State.</li> <li>. The Applicant did not describe the extent to which their plan already made available school level expenditures from state and local funds that relate to actual personnel salaries.</li> <li>. The Applicant did not provide evidence of how data can be available to students and parents.</li> </ul>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The State Texas Educational Agency declined to comment on the LEAs application for the 2013 Race To The Top - District Grant funding. The Applicant provides evidence of the State decline to comment in a letter located in Appendix A.</li> <li>. The Applicant does not provide evidence that successful conditions to implement learning programs exist.</li> </ul>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The Applicant did not provide evidence of meaningful stakeholders engagement throughout the development of the proposal or how the proposal would be revised based on stakeholders engagement and feedback.</li> <li>. Evidence was not provided of direct support for the proposal from teachers in the participating schools with or without collective bargaining representation.</li> </ul>		

. Letters of support from key stakeholders were not evident in the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>.The Applicant stated the district's commitment to preparing all students for college and careers and their capacity to successfully implement the grant program.</p> <p>. This section of the application scores low due to the lack of clarity and details that support their approach to implementing instructional strategies to all participating students</p> <p>. The applicant has not provided a comprehensive and coherent plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment to provide support to students to graduate college and career ready. Strategies were not provided to meet the criteria for preparing students for college and careers or how to involve students in deepening their learning experiences.</p> <p>. The Applicant did not describe the plan's approach to learning that engages and empowers high need students nor evidence of an approach of how to increase students in structuring their learning to achieve their goals.</p> <p>.The Applicant did not provide evidence of : 1 Students having access and experiences to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives to deepen their learning, 2. Students developing skills of goal setting, teamwork, critical thinking, communication and problem solving, 3. A personalized sequence of instructional courses and skill development 4. Providing students with feedback using updated data 5. Accommodation and high-quality strategies for high need students and providing training for students in the use of tools and resources provided to them.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>. The Applicant provided a feasible plan for improving teaching and leading. The proposed plan includes an approach to teaching and leading through provision of professional development for all personnel( administration, faculty, staff) that helps educators improve instruction and increase capacity to support student progress and providing an Instructional Specialist to support instruction.</p> <p>. The Applicant did not provide reasonable evidence of an approach to teaching and leading that enables the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students. Evidence was not provided in describing the specific grant's program training requirements of educators that supports the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies to: 1. Meet students's academic needs, 2. Use of data, tools and resources to identify achievement gaps and accelerate student progress, 3 Use of feedback to improve teacher's and principal's effectiveness by conducting formal evaluation, 4. Increase more highly effective teachers and principals in hard to staff schools, subjects and specialty area( such as Special Education).</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>. The Applicant does not describe the organization and governance of the district's central office to provide support services to all of its participating schools.</p> <p>. The Applicant described the school district's design and structure at each of its participating schools. Each of the nine Elementary and three Middle school campuses are staffed with highly qualified teachers and reading intervention teachers. The RTT-D grant would afford the district to hire 12 Instructional Specialist to provide expertise in subject areas (PreK-12) for teachers staff and parents. Students will be provided autonomy to access online opportunity, intervention and assistance</p>		

for flexible attainment for credits. The district's Chance To Be Program offers drop-out prevention and recovery opportunities for the disenfranchised of the community.

.The Applicant does not provide evidence of school leadership teams having flexibility and autonomy over school's schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators, and school level budgets.

. The Applicant did not provide evidence of providing resources and instructional practices adaptable to all students including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
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<b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>. The Applicant has not provided reasonable evidence of developing an infrastructure supporting personalized learning for educators, parents and and students.</p> <p>. The District's Plan provide reasonable evidence of students, educators and parents having additional opportunities to access content tools, and internet in and out of the school day for parents, students regardless of income, by developing an open door policy, maintaining web-pages, , providing online access to student's grades and providing open electronic communication with teachers and administration. All parties will be assisted with technological support and academic support through helplines and online assistance.</p> <p>. The Applicant does not provide evidence that the district's high need population of students and families will have access to technology and broadland Internet.</p> <p>. The Applicant does not provide evidence to ensure that the district's existing data systems are interoperable to support implementation of the proposal.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>. As part of the proposal's continuous improvement process, the district stated it will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of it's investments funded by RTT-D grant such as their investments in professional development, technology, and personnel staffing through bi-monthly meetings,</p> <p>.The Applicant has not developed a thoughtful plan with a strategy for implementing a rigorous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward the proposal's goals for on-going corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.</p>		

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
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<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>. The Applicant provided evidence of implementing strategies for on-going communication and engagement with stakeholders both (internal and external)</p> <p>. The Applicant developed a reasonable Communication Plan Process Chart identifying the plan's communicaton strategies and responsible parties addressing the strategies throughout the proposal's implementation. The Project's Implementation Specialist will give monthly updates at parent/community out-reach meetings at each school regarding the proposal's progress and development.</p> <p>. The Applicant did not provide a timeline and benchmarks to indicate evidence of a high quality plan.</p> <p>. The plan lacked clarity of identifying the internal and external stakeholders</p>		

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
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<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
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- . The Applicant provided a chart reflecting the district's proposal's program goals/ objectives to reach by June 2015 with identified indicators of success.
- . The Applicant did not provide the grants's required 12 to 14 performance measures by subgroups, annual targets, a rationale or a review process to improve the measures overtime.
- . The applicant did not provide target data or benchmarks to evaluate each measure.

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

- . The Applicant provided an evaluation plan that outlines their specific goals and objectives and includes the role of the district's Implementation Specialist and an outside evaluator working together to analyze and collect the plans data( formative and summative) as part of their continuous improvement effort. The proposal's team , CLASS, will provide on-going monitoring of the proposal by interacting with parents, community groups and partnering educators. School site visits and classroom walkthroughs will be conducted to monitor the plan's development and make adjustments in the plan's components where needed.
- . The district's evaluation plan will include: 1. Formative evaluations 2. Summative evaluations 3. Identificattion of appropriate measures for each phase of the evaluation 4. Data collection process and timelines, 5. Process for sharing evaluation information.
- . The Applicant did not provide evidence of various components of the proposal to be evaluated nor evidence of evaluating the plan's personalized learning strategies for student outcome while aligning with the proposed components.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

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

- . The Applicant identified all funds to support the proposal's development that includes the requested RTT-D funding of \$23,897,451.00 for 10,836 participating students during the proposal's four year of grant funding. The budget funding is reasonable and is linked to the proposal's established goals.
- . The Applicant did not provide a projet level budget narrative or a thoughtful rational for investments and priorities or identified funds used for one-time investments versus those used for on-going operational cost that will be incurred during and after the grant period.

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

**10**

**2**

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

- . The Applicant did not provide a detailed incisive plan for sustainability for the proposal's goals after the term of the grant.
- . The plan includes support to sustain the proposal's goals from the school district's use of Title 1 and School Improvement Funds and training of teachers to become mentors to new incoming teachers for sustaining effective teachers after the grant funding ends.
- . The Applicant did not provide evidence of support from State or local government leaders or described how the proposal will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments or use their data to inform future investments.
- . An estimated budget projected for three years after the term of the grant was not evident in the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The Applicant did not address competitive Preference Priority.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

.The plan did not provide thorough evidence of how the participating schools will build on the four core educational assurance areas to improve learning and teaching through personalization of strategies, tools, and support of students and educators that are aligned with college-career ready standards and graduation requirements or plans that accerates deepening students learning and increases effectiveness of educators. The plan does not show evidence of steps taken to decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups and increasing rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>34</b>
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**Race to the Top - District**

**Technical Review Form**

**Application #0130TX-3 for Rio Grande City C.I.S.D.**

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

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

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

A somewhat vague summary of the project identifies a literacy focused program for a districtwide student population of high poverty (99% FRL) and English language learners (58.7%). The RTT-D project will incorporate some successful strategies from the LEA's Reading First Initiative, designed to address the needs of children birth through grade 12.

Missing from this section is an ambitious, high-quality, comprehensive reform vision that addresses the four core educational assurance areas. Not provided is a clear, credible approach to improve school culture and learning environments. Missing is how student progress, teacher quality, and administrative leadership are expected to improve during and after the project. Information is not included how student personalized learning will be designed and the expectations for successful outcomes. The applicant identifies the disconnect between grade 11 student reading proficiency (90%) on the state Assessment of Knowledge of Skills and only a 3.4% reading proficiency on ACT and SAT exams for graduating students in 2010; however, no information is included how this problem will be addressed in the RTT-D project. Not found in this section is an explanation or scenario how the classroom experience will change from business-as-usual to challenging and innovative for students and teachers. Without a clearly defined, ambitious, innovative, cohesive project design it is not possible to assess project efficacy.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The LEA intends to provide all teachers districtwide with professional development that will expand their skills and access to resources to improve student reading and writing proficiency.</p> <p>The statement is made that the LEA has the capacity, "courage and the will" to improve the education of all students. The capacity is not defined and how the courage and will transfer to effective teaching and learning is not described.</p> <p>Absent is a table that provides demographic data for each of the participating schools. Stated is that a partnership with an educational materials publisher will increase ". . . complex, informational text resources across all content areas in the curriculum." The type of resources for specific student needs, grade levels, and teachers is not explained. "Rituals and routines" for effective teaching of literacy do not describe what is entailed and how teachers and students will be evaluated on successful implementation and expected outcomes. An issue identified as a priority for the project is "deepening academic vocabulary" for English language learners; however, there is no explanation what strategies will be employed at what grade levels and how this will differ from current vocabulary instruction.</p> <p>Based on the minimal information provided in this section, absent is a high-quality approach to implementation of a RTT-D project, particularly one that will support school and LEA level improvements in literacy and other subjects. A positive, progressive transformation of the LEA education system is not realistic without a clearly articulated reform vision supported by implementation goals, objectives, data driven expected outcomes, and alignment of defined resources to detailed project activities.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>A plan for scale-up and meaningful reform is not described. A "Whole School Reform Model" and "Professional Development Appraisal System" are referenced without an explanation or description that defines these assessments or programs. The applicant states that the LEA agrees that principals and the superintendent should be subject to evaluation. The evaluation is stated to be an annual performance review of professionals, but without an explanation of which professionals or what type of data will be collected and analyzed to link evaluation of leaders to project scale-up and a reform vision. Missing is adequate information required to address this criterion.</p>		
<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Listed are five LEA goals to improve student outcomes. Missing are descriptions of how the goals will be achieved, baseline and target data that are realistic and achievable, summative performance targets, identified achievement gaps and how they will be mitigated, and how secondary graduation rates and college enrollment rates will be improved. Ambitious yet achievable annual goals are not provided for any students districtwide or by subgroups. Missing is adequate information required to address this criterion.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Although the applicant lists several grant initiatives in which the LEA has participated and/or managed, absent is any information regarding the success of the initiatives. Some information is provided about activities the LEA intends to implement during the RTT-D project; however, missing is any information or evidence that the LEA has a track record of program success or reform in the past four years. Missing is information required to address this criterion.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p>		

Although LEA "financial and operational processes" are described as subject to the state education agency, state, and federal regulations, the processes are not defined and the RTT-D four required categories of transparency are not addressed.

<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
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**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**  
 The only information provided in this section is a statement that the state education agency (SEA) has declined to comment on the RTT-D application and a letter stating that is included in the Appendix. The LEA provides no evidence that it will have the autonomy or support of the state to implement a RTT-D project. The applicant does not cite state legal, statutory, or regulatory requirements under which it must operate and how any regulations or laws will specifically apply to or impact the RTT-D project. Missing is information required to address this criterion.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**  
 Other than "Input" from "Site-Based Decision-Making Teams", absent is evidence that parents, business leaders, civil rights organizations, or any other community stakeholders were involved in the planning, design, and/or preparation of the RTT-D project and proposal. The applicant states that after examining various data, educators and school and LEA administrators "felt that [RTT-D] funding should be sought". Not stated is the number or demographics of these stakeholders who were involved in the decision to proceed with the application. There is no evidence presented that a minimum of 70% of teachers who would participate in the project support the RTT-D proposal. Missing is the majority of information required to address this criterion.

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

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

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**  
 Absent is adequate information to address this criterion. Missing is a high-quality plan to prepare students for college and careers. A list of current pre-AP, AP, and dual credit courses are listed, followed by a statement that RTT-D funds will increase availability of AP courses. Absent is a list of the latter courses and a plan to engage teachers, other educators, and parents in a program to promote pre-AP, AP, and dual courses for students, as well as guide and support them during the courses. A statement is included that vocational courses may be offered to students who want to enroll.  
 No evidence is provided that a partnership will exist with higher education institutes and community businesses to ensure design and implementation of a rigorous program of learning to ensure students are college and career ready. Missing are descriptions of outreach programs to parents and students to inform and prepare them for enrollment in vocational and college-prep courses. Missing is evidence of support of parents, business leaders, and teachers.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**  
 Absent is adequate information to address this criterion. Although professional development (pd) will be provided for teachers and Instructional Specialists, not described is the type of pd, number of teachers to be served through specific pd, expected outcomes for teacher improvement, impact on learning, and alignment to the RTT-D project. Instructional Specialists will annually attend two conferences to improve their knowledge to train teachers; however, what type of conferences and how the knowledge will be aligned to specific teacher needs to improve instructional delivery and student achievement is not described. Not explained is how teachers, principals, and other educators will learn to use and analyze data to support instruction and project goals.

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

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	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Although the applicant states that each school has highly-qualified and reading intervention teachers at the nine elementary and three middle schools, information is not provided how these teachers are linked to LEA and school practices, policies, and rules. Not provided is the number of these specialized teachers located at each school and whether or not current governance structures and policies support or impede their effectiveness.</p> <p>Information is included about the number of administrators at the elementary and middle and high school levels. Not provided in this section is any description, form, table, or chart that lists numbers and demographics of students, teachers, and administrators at each participating project school. Unexplained is how the infrastructure of the LEA is designed and governed based on those numbers and demographics. Roles and responsibilities of teachers, principals, and other personnel are not defined.</p> <p>The RTT-D project is summarized as a plan that will address the needs of students through alternative education options (e.g., online, intervention, flexible credit attainment); however, absent is a description of the specific student needs and alternatives, as well as alignment of alternatives to college and career ready programs and summative and formative assessments. Not defined in this section are goals, outcomes, and types of options available for students to design their personalized learning plans and how they will master subject content, achieve at or above grade level, earn credit, and decide if they will enroll in and/or are identified as in need of alternative programs. Without a clear, cohesive, coherent system of practices, policies, and rules to support project implementation, it is reasonable to predict the project at any scale is not feasible and will be unlikely to result in any positive outcomes.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The short paragraph in this section is a concise restatement of the criterion, with one reference to a program that ". . . maintains a lifeline for many at risk students." Additional information about the program is not provided to address this criterion and/or sub-criteria.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>In this section is a restatement of the criterion without any additional information how the applicant intends to address it; therefore, the applicant did not address this criterion.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>A table lists communication strategies and the party responsible for each strategy; however, one of the strategies cannot be identified as linked to communication; "coordinate purchase order requests". Strategies include both internal and external information gathering from and dissemination to numerous stakeholders; however, not explained is how the strategies will engage stakeholders over the project period. Not included is a timeline, expected outcomes, and/or benchmarks to enable ongoing assessment of communication and engagement activities, as well as identify any need for modification of the plan. Without a high-quality plan to ensure ongoing communication and engagement of internal and external stakeholders, the project is unlikely to succeed.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The evaluation plan has yet to be developed. The applicant states that a plan will be developed by the project team and external evaluator; members who will comprise the project team for this component are not identified. Required RTT-D performance measures for applicable populations are not addressed. Not described are RTT-D required data to be used in</p>		

the evaluation plan design or the rationale that may be used to select data

A table titled [Project] Goals does not define goals, but lists only objectives and indicators of success. Acronyms of specific indicators of success are not defined. None of the indicators listed include specific data that will be collected and analyzed. For example, "enrollment records", "course completion records", and "complete and accurate reports as monitored by District team" do not provide information about what data will be used and how these indicators are specifically linked to program objectives or will inform project progress and efficacy. As listed, the project goals and indicators of success are not likely to provide the data and other information that would be required to adequately gauge project implementation progress.

Some objectives lack quantitative and/or qualitative measures. For example, one objective is "Each campus will demonstrate an increase in parent involvement through data collection"; however, not defined are how many parents representing which student subpopulations, specific quantitative and/or qualitative data that will be collected, and baseline data by which efficacy and progress will be measured. Indicators of success include "parent attendance and participation records" without an explanation of attendance and participation in specific activities. Essential to determination of project progress and success are data based, precisely aligned goals, objectives, and outcomes; therefore, without this alignment the project may be unlikely to achieve expected outcomes.

A plan is described to monitor students to assess instructional appropriateness and rigor. Some specific assessments and instructional materials or strategies are included; however, how and what these assessments measure are not described. Individual instruction will be monitored three times annually; however, it is unclear how this monitoring will be analyzed and used to inform adjustments and modifications to instruction. Without a detailed, high-quality plan with ambitious and achievable performance measures for all students, a project is unlikely to be successful.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

As described, the plan to evaluate the effectiveness of project activities and investments to support them includes, but is not limited to, classroom visits, observation of administrators, oversight of the budget, timely reporting of project progress and achievements, and assessment of student progress. As described in this section, not found are benchmarks by which to gauge success or specific data that will be collected and analyzed, as well as who will provide oversight for the data collection. The plan appears to be in the early planning stage, rather than a high-quality, solid plan that will only require some modification as the project progresses.

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

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

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

The extent of the Budget is a spreadsheet with limited information. Missing in this section are a Budget Narrative and/or RTT-D forms to provide a rationale for expenditures. Not provided is an explanation for one-time use of funds vs. funds that will support ongoing operations and sustainability. The number of items and per item costs of supplies and materials are not included. Not included is how many students, teachers, principals, and/or support staff will benefit from each funding allocation. Without a rationale for the cost basis, numerous expenditures appear to be excessive. A detailed budget with funds and resources allocations aligned to project activities is essential to the success of this project. As presented, the budget is insufficient to ensure fidelity and cost-effectiveness of investments, the critical foundation for project design, implementation, evaluation, and outcome achievement.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

Sustainability is not fully explained in this section, referencing only that "Title I and School Improvement Funds" will be used beyond the grant period. How these funds will be allocated and in what amount, and whether or not state, local, and/or additional grant funds will be sought is not addressed. Sustainability includes training teachers to become mentors; how this will be funded for how long is not explained. Absent is a post-grant period three year estimated budget with a plan to evaluate the impact of grant and post-grant investments. Without a solid plan for sustainability, it appears that the

RTT-D project would be a one-time investment; unsustainable post-grant.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>		
The CPP is not addressed.		

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>Based on the information provided, it is unclear if the project is a continuation and expansion of the LEA's Reading First initiative or an entirely new concept. Insufficient information and details are provided to articulate a cohesive, innovative, ambitious yet realistic, data supported project design and budget. Minimal information is frequently generic and does not describe a project that meets the RTT-D definition of a high-quality plan, including comprehensively addressing the four core educational assurance areas. Not defined are specific, detailed strategies aligned to teacher, principal, and support staff professional development and evaluation systems. As described throughout the Narrative and Budget, it appears that insufficient planning was conducted to develop a clear, coherent, comprehensive project that would address the lack of services for the high-poverty and English language development needs of participating students, as well as students districtwide.</p> <p>Absent is baseline data from which the performance and progress of students and teachers can be measured, as well as reasonable and achievable targets for improvement and to narrow achievement gaps, increase the graduation rate, and address the needs of teachers who are ineffective. State and other assessments are referenced as student performance measures; however, benchmarks are absent that would indicate defined goals for improvement and expectations of gains for specific student and teacher populations. As described, the project lacks a majority of the required RTT-D information, as well as the components that would support implement and project efficacy during and post-grant.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>20</b>
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