



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0160TX-1 for San Benito Consolidated Independent School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

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

The American Dream Challenge describes their vision for improving education in a high poverty, high minority environment. The basic parts of a comprehensive vision--standards, data systems, recruitment and the retainment of teachers and turning around the lowest achieving schools are included. Standards are based on the state of Texas College and Career Ready Standards. The data system called PEIMS is already in place. The transformation model will be used to turn around low achieving schools.

The components of the grant requirements were discussed but the section was very sparse on the need for a personalized learning environment. All of the points discussed were important considerations in light of the high minority, high poverty school community. The link to the need and development of a personalized learning system was not documented.

A clear and credible approach to improving academic goals was discussed in terms of creating a "cloud" environment for students and the families and using that as the basis for a personalized learning environment. The only clear method on how this could improve academics is by extending the regular school day into the home environment. The details of how this cloud will operate to be part of a personalized learning environment was not made clear.

Student academic interests will be identified and recorded and this will be the basis for a graduation plan, career pathway and then a personalized learning support system. This is unclear and lacks details how it is implemented. The assessment is not identified and how teachers will use the assessment to create a support system is undocumented.

The classroom experience description is targeted at the 5th and 9th grade levels. They will be given a computer tablet which will be used to extend the learning environment into the home. Teachers will then use the "Holistic Education Cloud" to send lessons and content to students. The narrative says differentiated instruction will occur with this process as will personalized learning. The details of web access costs from home environments are unclear. Since poverty rates are high for the district, connectivity costs or details of syncing machines to the cloud is not identified.

The cloud is promoted as the means by which a personalized learning system will operate. The cloud in itself is not described in detail, nor is the tremendous amount of professional development that will be required of teachers to effectively use such a system. The concept is interesting and needed in a high poverty environment. The description of the classroom experience is sparse. The narrative describes how teachers will provide content to the cloud and how the content can be available outside the regular school day. Lacking is how the classroom experience will be for students and teachers in a personalized learning environment.

Overall, the details of implementation are lacking prompting a mid level score.

**Strengths**

- They use the state initiative to reward teachers monetarily who positively impact student achievement.
- The district will use other state initiatives to develop, mentor, evaluate and develop capacity in the teaching staff.
- The district will turn around the lowest-achieving schools via the school transformation model

**Weakness**

- The Dream Center describes building data systems that will measure student growth, yet only describe a state system--Public Educational Information Management System, in the narrative. The linking this to a personalize learning system is not made.
- The school transformation model is described in detail in the narrative but there is no explanation as to why that model was chosen

Although important to the school community and academic achievement. a whole section on Maslow's hierarchy of needs did not help develop the personalized learning system to be developed

**(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)**

**10**

**7**

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant will use Title I eligibility criteria to select campuses that will have access to their proposed system. An 8 step process for selection is included in this section. The process includes inviting schools, having them commit to the requirements, meeting as a design team, organizing the budgetary items, determine funding levels, agreement on goals, finalize memorandums of understanding and prepare for onsite reviews. Many of the items in the selection are part of the planning and input process. The engagement of the schools and school community for grant development input seems limited. All schools should have had some sort of input into the development the proposal and school selection criteria.

Clearly the grant targets a high need population and community. All participants will need to go through an orientation to be part of this program. Parents will need to sign an agreement for monthly trainings and daily access to the community cloud. Details on how you involve all the parents are lacking. The section also mentions a Harlem Zone model, yet does not describe how that impacts the proposal. An outreach model to bring parents of poverty into the schools needed development. Transportation, unusual work hours, non functional parents and other issues of poverty needed to be addressed in this section.

The standardized approach to school participation is appropriate to the proposal. Involvement of parents, which is critical to the implantation and extension of the school day is limited in detail. A mid high score is appropriate.

**Strengths**

- Every campus will prioritize equity and access to resources
- PHD Vision is a professional grant consulting firm that will help with implementation
- 27 sites meet the criteria for participation which includes 14 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 1 intermediate school, 1 ninth grade campus, 3 correctional campuses and 3 high schools.
- 14,650 students are represented of which 84 % are Economically Disadvantaged.
- 956 educators would be part of the proposal
- 99% of the teachers in the schools signed a letter of support
- the grant targets a large geographical rural community with a high minority population and ongoing generational poverty and governmental dependency.

**Weakness**

Involvement of parents who may have transportation issues, language barriers or other socioeconomic problems that would affect implementation are not described.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The applicant has established the elements of a high quality plan that focus on improved student achievement, leadership effectiveness, increasing learning time, increasing parent/stakeholder involvement, teacher quality and improving the school climate. These are very valid for the current situation in the school district. Performance measures, Assessment tools, targeted performance, timelines and responsible personnel are presented. Based on a Harlem Zone Strategy model the district proposes to improve college and career ready effectiveness and creating an effective personalized learning environment. The high quality plan then is presented that seems like a shotgun approach to school improvement. Increase student achievement is certainly addressed with appropriate measures. School climate issues, leadership and community engagement, are all important issues, but miss the focus of a personalized learning system. The slant of the proposal indicates a need to provide technology to their poverty-stricken school community and a vendor happens to have a "cloud" model that will support that notion as well as provide an extension to the school day.

One statement says, the "ADC (American Dream Center) Model will work anywhere where poverty permeates." This is noted without any justification, research or data to back it up. Why this model would work anywhere in a poverty environment needed more explanation. A list of other locations the model is used would help shed light on the statement.

There is plenty of data to show that this district is in need of support to help break down cultural, poverty and minority issues in order to improve academics. The push to throw technology to increase learning time and create a personalized learning environment unclear. The need is demonstrated, the implementation of the cloud is weak. How the plan will address huge teacher development issues as well as community support in the home is not documented.

This section receives a mid-low score.

**Strengths**

- the district is using the Harlem Zone Strategy as a model for improvement

**Weakness**

- Section A(2) identifies students in Science, Math and Language Arts as participants, this section of the proposal adds social studies to the others as a performance measure.
- Some of the acronyms were not identified
- the performance measures were not targeted at a personalized learning system. Components of instructing in this type of environment and the selection of learning resources were undocumented. The professional development and teacher culture shift required to carry out such a program was vague. Because teachers are not the focus in developing this personalized learning system, the implementation across the district is weak. The cloud, which is vendor driven is singled out as the basis for the personalized learning system. Details on how that works are lacking. The teachers, who will be using the system seem left out of the development and roll out of the model.

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

**10**

**4**

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

Student assessment scores for all the Texas tested grade levels have performance level goals that will exceed the state averages. These are clearly ambitious goals and the consortium of schools claim that this is achievable. Subgroups on the state performance tests are not identified so the information presented targets the entire student population at the tested grade levels. The vision to meet these ambitious goals using a personalized learning system is unclear. Many of the other performance measures listed may help the district reach the academic goals.

Many services and resources are listed, some of which include: ebooks, cloud resources available 24/7, mentors to support homework & life skills, guidance programs, enrichment incentives so students attend school, early learning programs and Master Teacher training. Some of those services listed need further explanation. A new parent support system is listed but not described. Another is one to one technology so students can compete in the global market. This statement needs much more development.

Graduation rates for the district are below state average. The makeup of the district population is a huge factor that affects the data. Here the vision and the outcome do not line up. How a personalized learning system will impact graduation rates is not described. This section lists a number of programs that the district can use to help impact the graduation rate. Some include business support for internships, community service learning, wall of fame, mentoring, college work study and many more. Many of these were not described in the vision. A personalized learning system is barely mentioned here.

College enrollment is also a difficult problem for the district. The district hopes to improve degree attainment rates to 50% by the conclusion of the grant. The applicant admits that the goal may seem unrealistic except for TRIO programs and American Dream Training. Personalized learning is not a component of this plan.

Here the vision for a personalized learning system is clouded with many other important district programs, initiatives and resources. This shotgun approach makes it difficult to judge the effectiveness of any one program. This leads to a mid-low level score.

**Strengths**

- Early college visitations, along with a college focus starting at the elementary level and mentors are used to target college attainment numbers
- PHD Vision Model has reached 70%-90% college matriculation rates

**Weakness**

- Some of the resources and support systems identified need much more development
- Local college retention and graduation rates at a local community colleges averages in the low teens
- The current district post-secondary degree attainment rate is 15%

- Some of the acronyms were not described making reading difficult

**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>4</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of winning several highly competitive grants. The implication is that because the district won many of these grants, student achievement would increase. There is no specific data to signify this. Data provided shows that many of the district schools were identified for corrective action through state testing and AYP information. The only data to support student achievement gains is the fact that in the last 4 years, 82% of the applicant's schools were removed from the state eligibility listing. The data to support this is a listing of schools rather than academic improvement and AYP data.</p> <p>Graduation rates have improved and evidence is provided.</p> <p>College enrollment and matriculation rates increased to 46-55% with an average increase of 15% over the past 4 years. The applicant also had some of the highest degree attainment data of 11-19% in the county.</p> <p>The district describes the transformation model for the schools that were identified as needing corrective action. The description of the model was described in detail, but no student or teacher data was provided to help make the case of ambitious and significant reforms.</p> <p>Student data will be provided through a number of methods and available in a bilingual format. There is a lack of detail on how this student performance data will be used to inform and improve instruction and services. The availability and actual use of data to improve the system is limited in scope.</p> <p>Overall the question is not fully addressed. Reform has been made but details are lacking on what has improved and what they have used to make the improvements. Winning grants does not necessarily improve student achievement. Many of the district schools were targeted for state assistance because of low scores. The district did document which schools moved out of this program. They detailed the reforms used in the transformation school model, but, there was not specific data to show what was improved over the course of the state over-site. This leads to a mid-low score.</p> <p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District has won many competitive grants including Safe Schools, counseling, TRIO, ACE, Reading First, Community in Schools and Improving Schools grants.</li> <li>• Graduation Rate Data is at 89% which is slightly below the state average but almost 10% higher than the Texas rate for Hispanic graduation.</li> <li>• College enrollment rates have improved</li> <li>• The PEIMS model--Public Education Information Management System provides a significant amount of student information</li> <li>• Student performance data will be provided in bilingual format</li> <li>• Information will be made available on the Community Cloud</li> </ul> <p><b>Weakness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acronyms are used such as ACE and TRIO which are not spelled out making the grant hard to read</li> <li>• Data provided was schools that were removed from state corrective action lists because of poor performance and AYP scores</li> <li>• Details are lacking on student achievement data and how this data is used in the district to make reforms. It was evident that state achievement scores were used to target schools throughout the district. The transformation model used was required by state over site. There was no evidence shown that the district reviews data and then uses it to inform instruction.</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>		

Sample financial information is available and provided in the application. The description of how the applicant makes this available in the categories required was unclear. An internal and external communication framework for publication of this information was not provided. Overall the narrative and description of how the applicant makes the data available was sparse. This leads to a mid low score.

Strengths

- Sample reports were provided that compared expenditures in the district to other districts in Texas. The public normally likes comparison data so that spending patterns are not out of line with other districts.

Weakness

- Information of actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers, non-personnel expenditures at the schools level and actual personnel salaries at the school level were undocumented. A teacher salary schedule was provided but these expenditures at the school level could not be found.
- Additional information was provided in the appendix (a sample LEA snapshot report from the Texas Department of Education and a sample salary schedule), but the method by which the school community can access this information was undocumented.

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

**10**

**5**

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

Successful conditions to implement a personalized learning system are not addressed in this section. The applicant describes state accreditation and certification of staff. There is no evidence to suggest that the personalized learning system can be used to learn via mastery instead of seat time. The waiver of these regulations were not discussed at the local or state level. This suggests that the personalized learning system--"cloud" will not be used as a way to make education more efficient. The only comment on personalized learning in this section refers to the state implementation of college and career ready standards, data systems, great teachers and leaders, turning around lowest achieving schools the the vision to further personalize education. Because the applicants' vision for a a personalized learning require modification in law or policy, this section only describes the requirements to be a public schools district. This justifies a mid score.

Strengths

- 99% of the educators signed support letters for the project

Weakness

- Letters of support from teachers were from 2012. This does not take into consideration, staff turnover, addition of staff or changes of attitude in a year. The letters of support were from last year's proposal.

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

**15**

**10**

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

A structure for the Dream Team--the group that worked on the proposal was provided. The massive scope of the project was identified in an organizational format structure. This team was responsible for research, planning and design of the project. The group had to build support from the community. The work of this committee was supported by PHD Vision who helped with the organizational structure, the focus of the work and mediating differences between partners. The focus of the work shows that 3 out of 10 goals related to school academic issues--graduation rate, early childhood education and college readiness. The others related to teen pregnancy, health issues, low technology usage, drug dependency, low parent engagement, workforce development and family support structures. The link to a personalized learning environment was not made.

There is no question that the problems in the school community need to be addressed and it will take a massive effort by all stakeholders to improve achievement for students. The stakeholder engagement and support plan is strong in terms of helping the school community but weak in terms of developing a personalized learning system.

With the focus of the grant on many outside of school issues, personalized learning, which in this case is extending the school to the home is a small component of the project. This justifies a mid-high score.

Strengths

- In a district the size of San Benito, the organizational structure, stakeholder engagement plan and scope of work

was impressive

- The committee came up with the top 10 needs for the district.
- A partner inclusion sample was provided showing how community resources can be used to help academic performance.
- The district did achieve the required support from the teaching staff. The problem which was stated earlier was that the signatures of the staff were from last year.

Weakness

- The personalized learning component of the grant is a small part of the overall scope of the project
- Much of the narrative describes community issues which certainly impact education in the district. There is little focus on personalized learning environments and linking that strategy to improvement in the school district and community.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>

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

The applicant describes a plan that is huge in scope. The proposal continues to add strategies to the overall program such as dropout prevention (This is also an appropriate goal not necessarily linked to the original aspect of the grant-- development of a personalized learning system. Because the proposal lacks elements of a high quality plan, the roadmap for implementation add additional routes and stops. Needs and Gaps are the first items listed in their plan. Research, goals, activities, partners roles, long term outcomes and measurable outcomes are then provided in the table. Timelines and responsible parties are not clearly defined.

High need students are not specifically addressed in this section, but a case can be made that all students in the district are high need.

Details are lacking on how students would be involved in deep learning experiences with the cloud, and have access & exposure to diverse cultures, contexts & perspectives that motivate and deepen student learning.

As more strategies are added to the proposal, details of implementation are not included. In this case the district will adopt more rigorous academic standards, increase graduation requirements and improve access to advanced coursework. These are not included in the charted plan and are missing elements of a high quality plan.

The district lists strategies to ensure college and career ready standards but most do not correlate to a personalized learning system. Some of these include parental access to the cloud, scholarships provided by the ADC, test fees covered for college entrance exams, transportation costs for after school programs, cash or gift card incentives for academic achievement and others. The strategies may be very appropriate to the district and students, but the link to a personalized learning system is undeveloped.

The proposal says that the Cloud will effectively teach all children. This is not supported by documentation in the proposal. The cloud is a bank of resources and teachers will be responsible for education.

The learning plan is huge in scope. Many of the strategies are appropriate for the district and community. The creation and development of the cloud is through a vendor. Teachers can place items in the cloud for students and student groups. The target of the grant in terms of extending the reach of the school into the home and extending learning time is appropriate. The development of a personalized learning system through the cloud is only a small component of the strategies discussed. The link to a personalized learning environment is unclear and undocumented. A mid low score is appropriate here.

Strengths

- The structure and scope of work proposed is ambitious.
- A number of professional development activities are proposed that would support a professional learning community.
- A Community Technology cloud for parental engagement is described. Training for parents will be provided.

Weakness

- A contradiction exists in this section of the proposal. The applicant describes the use of tablets to get into the cloud. In one section, home bound students need to get to a WiFi area for connectivity. The access to the internet in the home environment is not discussed yet a vital part of the proposal. In an area with high poverty, access to a tablet that needs to connectivity to the internet for cloud resources is only one part of the strategy. The cost associated with providing Internet access is not addressed. A section in the budget says that the Kuno tablets do not need the Internet to access the cloud. This is confusing since homebound students with a table will need WiFi to get the cloud resources.
- Acronyms without explaining make the section difficult to understand
- The list of professional development programs are provided yet are not targeted at a personalized learning system.
- The approach to provide technology to homes and extending the school day is reasonable and appropriate in the school community that the applicant describes. The link to a personalized learning system is limited. The technology to allow access for all the homes is undocumented. Student on homebound instruction need access to WiFi, yet other parts of the proposal say that access in the home is available and free.
- The proposal in written in a manner that one program after another is proposed for implementation in the district. There is an overall lack of focus and broach reach in the grant.
- The district will "encourage" seniors to have at least 6 hours of college credit. The method of encouragement is obscure and unclear.
- Flexible schedules are mentioned but the concept is not defined. This possible component of a personalized learning system is not developed in the scope of the proposal
- A Community Technology cloud for parental engagement is described. Training for parents will be provided yet the details of a plan to reach 100% participation is undocumented.

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

**20**

**5**

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

The applicant tries to put forward a high quality plan that addresses the implementation of a personalized learning environment. "The Cloud" is identified as ensuring that implementation. Details are lacking on how teachers and students will use the cloud in a personalized learning environment. A case for the extension of the school day into the homes is made, but the connection to a PLE is vague.

The narrative describes resources and strategies related to the components of the question but there is no description of a unifying, high quality plan that ties all aspects of their improvement system together. The how of implementation is unclear. Many sections add another strategy to their improvement process but the implementation details and a high quality plan are missing. This section identified Blue Ribbon Schools, Race to the Top, Blended Learning, Master Teacher, Degree Plan and Research Based Optimal Learning Approach as additional strategies that will be used in the district. few. Many are not part of the plan describe in earlier sections of the proposal.

There is a huge reliance on the cloud to answer personalized learning issues and improving academic achievement. Some of the narrative in this section describes the Kuno tablet and all its strengths. A piece of technology and cloud are important aspects of a personalized learning system, but the heart and soul still revolved around the teacher and their ability to use the system to meet student needs. The involvement and training of staff to use such a tool is limited in scope. On many of the tables, there is a reliance on outside partners to implement the specific plan. Using and developing staff members to support and improve such a program is not part of the plan. The development of the teaching staff is inadequate in light of the huge scope of the project. The target of the staff working in a collaborative environment to support a personalized learning system is not developed.

Because the proposal is so large in scope, the details and development of a personalized learning system is lost.

The proposal uses outside vendor trainings to support the professional development for staff. Some like Master Teacher may be excellent, high quality professional development. The connection to a personalized learning system is not made.

Strategy after strategy and program after program are mentioned in this section of the proposal. Except for the plan to increase High Quality teachers and principals, none are part of a high quality plan. Because of the huge scope of work presented in this section, it would be very difficult to measure outcomes and tie strategies to the goal of the proposal--to develop a personalized learning system. Implementation details are lacking throughout the section. Teacher development seems secondary to the creation of the cloud to extend school and technology to the school community. The need for the strategies and programs listed are justified but they do not target a personalized learning environment. A mid low score is justified.

## Strengths

- Expansion of school resources into the community and homes through the cloud system
- All of the strategies and programs to be implemented are important to the students and families in the district
- Exposing the students to college through visitations and college mentors
- The district will use a degree plan program to help guide students in meeting coursework, college requirements, workforce development and academic goals to get into a secondary institution. Data shows that only 14% of students complete college without this strategy.
- A high quality plan is described to increase the HQ/HE teachers and principals.

## Weakness

- A blended eLearning program is described but not linked to a personalized learning system
- A web-based post test certifies competency of student core subject matter but there is no plan to allow students to move to the next course based on this mastery. The whole idea of seat time versus master is not discussed.
- A powerful data system will be developed that tracks student progress after high school and into the work force or college. This is not identified in any high quality plan. Later in the narrative all follow up contacts will be documented in the computerized tracking system. This is inconsistent with the development of a system. Details are lacking.
- The applicant places 100% responsibility on parent support for specific feedback on the successful outcome of student goals. This statement is unclear and contradicts the idea that the district shares responsibility for student achievement.
- Family meetings will be held when students begin to fail or have discipline issues. Resources are then targeted at the family to support the student. This is a good practice to adopt and should already be implemented.
- Competencies are created for their target population. These are added to the long list of strategies to be implement but not addressed in a high quality plan. The first competency on having parents make college bound strategies a life style describes that parents will have a deep understanding of important it is for their children to reach core subject proficiency. It goes on to describe how reading is an important family lifestyle. The details of implementation are lacking and not part of the overall high quality plan.
- A teacher evaluation system that is linked to student achievement is not described.
- A Research Based Optimal Learning Approach table identifies practices and activities that the teachers will be implementing in the proposal. Few of the activities relate specifically to changing instructional practices to meet the needs of a personalized learning environment. This professional development plan lacks goals, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties. This section describes leadership teams and vertical team meetings but does not translate these structures into how actionable information will be used to develop learning approaches that respond to individual student needs.
- High quality and national award winning resources for teacher coursework and professional development are listed in a table. Few relate to development and implementation of a personalized learning system. The word "suggested" program makes it unclear as to how these resources will be offered to staff members.
- Another listing of Key areas of Focus and Specific prioritized needs is shown in a table format. A plan to provide feedback about the effectiveness of any strategy is lacking. The table described is not in a high quality plan format and throws more strategies toward school improvement (for example flexible scheduling and curriculum alignment) without establishing their impact on a personalized learning environment.
- A discussion on school leadership teams and their importance in the development of personalized learning strategies is lacking.
- The teacher evaluation system described does not explain how it would lead to an improvement of effectiveness, school culture and school improvement. No data is presented on teacher quality ratings or teacher turnover rates. Teacher development in the proposal is secondary to the expansion of technology into the home environment. Rewarding effective teachers is mentioned but details on the implementation is undocumented.
- Ongoing training for closing achievement gaps is covered in 3 sentences. Gap data and target subgroups are not identified. Training programs are listed without any description, timeline, responsible parties, deliverables, goals or activities.
- Although the details of a high quality plan are described for increasing effective and highly effective teachers is described, details on awarding teachers and principals for excellence are not described. Incentives are based on criteria that is quantifiable, reliable, valid and objective but the details of these incentives are undocumented.

### 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 LEA practices, policies and rules lack details on implementation. The lack of a high quality plan prevents some of the details from being clear. A personalized learning plan is secondary to the extension of school resources to the community. A governance structure is in place for central office needs but the details of how school leadership teams would be able to have autonomy over schedules, calendars, personnel decisions and budgets is undocumented.</p> <p>The plan to create the cloud, extend school resources to the community and provide family support is justified. The details of its use and how teachers will use it are not fully addressed. The cloud in itself can not teach. It is a resource that teachers and students can use to support the education system in the community.</p> <p>Components of this section need more development. Implementation details are lacking. This calls for a low-high score.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of extension of resources and technology to the school community is feasible</li> <li>• The applicant has made successful partnerships with many community organizations</li> <li>• Students will create an ePortfolio and have access to it for a lifetime</li> <li>• The expansion of resources to the school community is appropriate for Adult GED, ESL and other family support programs</li> <li>• The design of the cloud--allowing for bilingual resources is strong for the community</li> </ul> <p>Weakness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high quality plan is not described in this section of the grant. The description is of the cloud, school governance structure, some credit flexibility programs, access to the cloud and technical support plans. None are in a high quality format--goals, activities, timeline, deliverable and responsible parties are not described.</li> <li>• The policy or legal changes required to fully develop a personalized learning system is not discussed in this section. There is a mention of students being able to gain mastery credit through demonstrated mastery, but this is not fully developed and is vague on detail.</li> <li>• An Accelerated Learning Academy that allows mastery over seat time is mentioned but details on how that works is lacking as is the ability to scale up this concept to the consortium.</li> <li>• State approved lessons will be available on the cloud, but the vetting process is not documented.</li> <li>• It is stated that the grant will establish an early-warning system to identify at-risk students. The grant will provide the consortium staff members the opportunity to develop such a program.</li> <li>• Economically disadvantaged parents must attend training to gain access to the technology and cloud but the practical approach to this requirement is not sufficiently described.</li> </ul>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The idea of a "cloud" full of school resources that is free and available to the school community is sound. Students, parents and educators will have access to this resource. Teachers will be able to provide content to the system. Technical support is built into the plan. The proposal is not in a high quality plan format (activities to support implementation, a timeline, deliverables and responsible parties are lacking) which can lead to problems on implementation. By not delegating responsible parties and timelines, the proposal can quickly become bogged down. The Inter operable Data system section needs much more development. Many vendors and software programs may be stored on the system. Information on inter operability is lacking in light of all those resources on the system. Reports and data transfers are not defined in detail. Vendor agreements on providing such open source information is not documented. A mid high score is valid.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning resources are available 24/7 via the equipment and cloud</li> <li>• Many technology devices can access the cloud</li> </ul>		

- Parents must take classes to get the technology and access to the cloud
- Content on the cloud will be bilingual in nature
- The system is designed to allow for full social networking within the cloud structure

Weakness

- The details of the parent training system is lacking. A plan to require 100% of the parents to get this training may be unrealistic.
- The requirement for an inter operable data system is not sufficient. Some aspects of this environment meet the standard such as the Public Education, Information Management System and the Texas P-20 Public Education Information Resource. There is no evidence to support this concept in regards to the many vendors who will be part of the cloud. Those data resources, structures and format are not documented. Agreements with vendors allowing access to the data is lacking.
- Security, theft and damage of the technology is not addressed
- An around the clock support system is mentioned but the full mechanics are not described.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The basis for the continuous improvement process is noted. Specific rationale, deliverables and responsible parties are not delineated in the plan. As in the other sections, new programs and strategies are added to the proposal. In this case a professional development plan that "...propels teachers to higher levels" is introduced but not explained. This is mentioned in the educator improvement through effective communication section and details, definitions and implementation is undocumented. The applicant does not describe a continuous improvement process that has been imbedded in the district's normal function. There is no tie in to the original implementation plan so it would be difficult to judge the effectiveness of the cloud, professional development or other investments that will be made in the development of a personalized learning system. A mid score is justified.

Strengths

- An external evaluator will help with the collection of qualitative and quantitative data
- Communication strategies are described but not in a high quality plan format
- Much data will be collected

Weakness

- The lack of a high quality plan makes the continuous improvement process difficult to measure
- A complete research study with experimental and quasi-experimental structures is mentioned but not defined
- The improvement process or data collection does not look at the personalized learning system.
- The continuous improvement system designed calls for a corrective action plan. Since this is not in a detailed high quality plan, the need and reasoning behind the corrective action plan is not developed.
- All educators will be provided sufficient professional development to propel them into a higher level of performance but is plan is not documented or defined.
- There is no mention of a personalized learning system in this section

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

As in other sections of the proposal, ongoing communication and engagement is not described with all the elements of a high quality plan. The goals and responsible parties are unclear.

There is evidence described to support ongoing communication and engagement of internal and external stakeholders. The structure of the ADC as the connecting piece to the districts and school community helps with communication and ongoing engagement.

The proposal makes the statement that their model is geared toward massive parental training. A mid score is appropriate.

Strengths

- Quarterly over site meetings, monthly reports to the Boards of Education, weekly staff meetings and daily communication with partners are listed
- Staff surveys, PD Evaluation surveys, student surveys a parent surveys will provide communication and information
- Many community partners helped develop this proposal
- A partnership with local news media will provide ongoing communication to the school community
- The ADC will use the cloud to provide ongoing communication to the school community

Weakness

- The cloud will support curriculum from all grade levels. Teachers will be able to look at content from grade levels above and below their own. A massive digital curriculum overhaul will be required but not documented. A system to rate local content is mentioned but not developed. Teachers will somehow rank content which could be used district-wide. Criteria and rubrics were not described.

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

**5**

**3**

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

Almost 50 critical elements are listed that the applicant will "try" to improve. These run the gamut from Anti-bullying to increased achievement scores. These will be measured in some way related to the actual performance measures which are described in detail later in the section. The details of where and how they are measured in these areas of concern are lacking. One measure related to a personalized learning environment is listed but the target is use of the cloud resources instead of a measurement of accelerated student achievement or increased effectiveness of educators. Overall the section rates a mid-high score.

Subgroups are identified for improvement measures.

Strengths

- The applicant has provided data on its plan to increase highly effective teachers and principals--rationale is provided.
- The applicant places extended personalized learning environments with parent monitoring. Rationale is provided and the measurement will be via documented use of the system.
- In grades 4-8 the applicant will track college and career readiness via an on-track indicator

Weakness

- The teacher evaluation system that will be used to measure effectiveness is described as not phasing in until the spring of 2013. This is a past date. The details of how teachers will be evaluated related to academic achievement and the cloud should now be described.
- Details of how the principals are deemed high quality are lacking. Subgroups and all students having effective teachers and principals are detailed on tables.
- The performance measure on advanced course and dual enrollment students shows gains that may not be considered rigorous. For instance the district proposes that 40% of the students are on track for college and careers in SY2011-12 and 51% by SY2017-18. This seems to be a low number in light of the fact that 49% of the students would be on track for something other than college or careers.

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

**5**

**1**

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

The ADC will use an internal evaluation team and external evaluator to assess effectiveness of the proposal. The section goes on to discusses teacher evaluation, rewarding teachers and removing teachers. A high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of investments is sparse in nature. There is no connection between the narrative, expenses listed in the budget and and evaluation of the effectiveness of those investments. This whole section is limited in nature and does not provide a true evaluation of what the applicant proposes to do. The grant grows in expansiveness throughout the proposal. The lack of focus on the personalized education system is overshadowed by all the other strategies they want to implement. There is no discussion on evaluating the whole technology infrastructure as it is implemented to improve student achievement. Tutors, college tours and some of the other investments are not described in this section to be evaluated.

Strengths

- An external evaluator will be used to provide unbiased reporting of data from the proposal

Weakness

- Because a high quality plan is not provided one of the statements in the evaluation effectiveness section is vague. Here the "evaluator may participate in observing or conducting quarterly benchmark reviews....". This demonstrates the lack of detail in the plan and plan evaluation.
- Some of the highest costs in the budget relate to college visitations, equipment and purchased services. A plan to evaluate these items in terms of effectiveness is not included in the evaluation plan.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

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

The applicant has clearly developed community support from a number of organizations and political bodies for the proposal. Some of the narrative details in this part of the proposal were unclear. How the total in kind support was determined was vague. The link to a personalized learning system is inadequate. A mid score is justified.

Strengths

- The application has garnered support from many organizations in the school community. They have listed over 9 million dollars in funding sources outside the scope of the grant to help support the program.
- Cities will donate public community center space to help meet the requirements of the grant.
- The applicant describes its many successful grant awards adding up to over \$150,000,000 in funds.

Weakness

- The narrative in this section is hard to follow and contradictory numbers are used. In one column of a table-external and In kind support is listed at \$638,225 yet the next column--that is only a list of intended use of funds shows a figure of \$9,364,500. How this figure was determined was obscure.
- The American Dream Center is requesting a yearly cost per student of \$426, family participation of \$213, Upward Bound and educational talent search individuals at \$2475. These figures are very obscure. How the costs were determined and who pays the costs is not stated.

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant claims that a high quality plan for grant sustainability is included in the documentation. This web diagram produced by an outside partner is not high quality and lacks goals, timelines, responsible parties, deliverables, activities and rationale. This web shows relationships of some of the components of the proposal. No dollars are associated with this plan. The evaluation of improvements in the system is not described. The plan to sustain funding is strong. This leads to mid high score.

Strengths

- The applicant is targeting a 60% sustainability plan with 40% being provided as in-kind support.
- the Valley International Community Development Corporation will be used to help sustain funding with the local business community.
- The applicant shows a sample 5 year projection for post grant funding. This comes to a total 5,087,500 dollars
- Local cities will provide in kind support to the project--involving space at local community centers

Weakness

- The applicant is targeting a 60% sustainability plan with 40% being provided as in-kind support. How this was determined is undocumented.
- Under other income for post grant sustainability is a line item for renovations. This is included as an income source which is confusing.

There is no evidence of state support for sustaining the proposal

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The Competitive Preference section describes how the applicant will extend school resources into homes of the school community. The listed desired outcomes are very appropriate to the proposal and the school community. This section makes a case for the need for a community cloud to improve the academic program in the community. There is a weakness in the program because the elements of a high quality plan do not organize the collection of data, goals, responsible personnel, deliverables or activities. Overall this is a ambitious community/school improvement plan that is huge in scope. Although the link between a personalized learning environment and the plan is weak, elements in this section of the proposal are very strong in design and weak in detailed implementation. A mid high score is appropriate.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal was written with the support of many public and private organizations in the area.</li> <li>• Parents and students were on the design team</li> <li>• The proposal lists 10 partnerships which will serve the needs of the program. Some include health organizations, academic enrichment groups, career exploration groups, technology companies, post-secondary preparation programs, summer camps, recreation programs, workforce development programs, special service groups and mentoring groups.</li> <li>• 10 Population-level desired results are listed. The population group targeted, type of result and desired results are shown in the table. Nine of the results directly impact the educational program and the others relate to the reduction of criminal mischief.</li> </ul>		

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Not Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The scope of this proposal is large in nature with the link to building a personalized learning system obscure. The idea to extend the school day into homes of technology poor families is ambitious. The applicant has done much homework on technology structures. The applicant has also garnished much community support for this project. The heart of the project is in the proper place but the implementation details and the target link to building a personalized learning system is weak. The lack of a well developed high quality plan that is the basis for all work in the proposal causes the project to be weak on the implementation of a personalized learning environment. This resource that will be used by students, teachers and parents is appropriate in the environment described. Teachers must be fully trained on how to use such an investment. The "cloud" itself will not teach, but the teachers will. The professional development and training that will be required to implement this project is huge. A culture shift in the delivery model needed to be addressed further. How students will progress through mastery rather than seat time is not developed through the proposal. Details of a continuous improvement system were lacking so that the investments in technology relating to student achievement could not be made. The grant added program after program during the course of reading. Had there been a high quality plan that the project was based on, the focus and expansiveness of the project would have been easier to follow.</p> <p>This is an interesting concept that could impact the communities. Shifting the focus to developing teachers, improved student performance and less vendor promise would have strengthened the proposal. The concept does not meet the priority of the grant--to develop a personalized data system.</p>		

Total	210	95
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0160TX-2 for San Benito Consolidated Independent School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

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

The applicant details a reform vision entitled the American Dream Challenge (ADC) set forth by the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) Consortium to build upon 23 years of college readiness LRGV grant work. The ADC model was designed by a select group of teachers and administrators representing all participating districts. The ADC proposes to target 14,650 rural students on 27 campuses: 100% receive free/reduced lunch and 99% are Hispanic.

The ADC project proposes to address all four core educational assurance areas. Standards and assessments are aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CRRS), ACT standards, Advanced Placement standards, and English Language Proficiency standards. However, the applicant doesn't clearly define how the ADC will prepare students or utilize these standards in a meaningful, comprehensive way. The 95% post-secondary completion goal is unrealistic given the current enrollment rate of 56%. In addition, the proposal never clearly addresses a comprehensive high-quality plan for achieving this goal.

The ADC proposes to build data systems that measure student growth and success by utilizing the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The applicant does not provide any quantitative or qualitative information to support the success of this system.

The applicant states the ADC is actively recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals and anticipates utilizing other TEA programs such as the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards to further this effort. However, the applicant does not detail a coherent reform vision. The applicant does state principals leading ineffective schools will be replaced, this is a strong example of significant reform.

The applicant states the ADC will focus on turning around low-achieving schools, but does not detail how this will occur.

The applicant also states a new initiative, Curriculum Loft (Cloft), will be used to provide 24/7 support to students and their families. This is supported by the fact that 80% of the targeted families do not have any type of technology access during non-school hours. One component of Cloft is 24/7 tutoring in math and science. However, the applicant does not detail what this support will look like other than the partner is Brainfuse Supplemental Education Support.

The applicant states each student will have an Individual Graduation Plan and Career Pathway.

Overall, the applicant does not provide a clear, credible approach to the four core assurance areas or accelerating student learning. The applicant's narrative primarily restates the criterion expectations without specific examples of what the personalized learning environment is or what it will look like.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's process to develop and implement a reform proposal included selecting schools that are targeted as Title I campuses that meet Race to the Top-District eligibility and have academically challenged families. The poverty rate of the 27 campuses collectively is 43.1%. The applicant lists the schools and provides the total number of students and

participating educators. However, the applicant does not provide data on the special needs students or Limited English Proficiency. Being Hispanic does not automatically mean a student is Limited English Proficient. The large number of applicants coupled with the limited program descriptions and goals do not support a high-quality LEA-level and school-level reform.

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

**10**

**4**

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

The applicant identifies three major needs and gaps for college and career bound schools. The second need stated by the applicant is to reduce the criminal mischief in schools by increasing responsible decision-making. The applicant supports this need by stating 10% of the targeted population has an incarcerated parent. The applicant did not state the evidence to support the need to decrease criminal mischief in schools. The third need for afterschool and weekend programs is supported with the data that 63% of students do not have an adult present during afterschool hours.

The applicant identifies five needs and gaps for effective personalized learning environments. These included sufficient data for support. For example, only 6% of students exceeded state standards and only 65% met them; approximately 50% of 9th grade students do not complete high school within four years; and less than 50% of students pursue college immediately upon graduation.

The applicant provides a chart detailing 44 performance measures. The chart provides the assessment instrument, target performance, timeline and responsible parties. However, the majority of the measures are vague or there is no rationale to support them. For example, one measure is to improve teacher observations for highest teaching elements. This is vague because the highest teaching elements are not detailed and how this improvement will take place is not stated. Some of the targeted performances are not ambitious. For example, the number of parent and community evening events to engage ADC academic support is four. Engagement is much different from involvement and will require more regular attempts to be impactful on the previously stated goals, especially given the concerns of current parental involvement.

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

**10**

**2**

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

The applicant's vision is not likely to result in improved student learning and performance as evidenced in the proposal. The academic performance goals are achievable and not ambitious. For example, the science goal is to improve from 69 to 80. In addition, the goals are only provided for all students. These are not provided for grade levels or any subgroups other than Hispanic. On table three, the applicant states the anticipated high school graduation four-year completion rate will increase from 81% to 90% from 2013 to 2014. The later years only demonstrate 1-2% annual growths. The methodology and rationale for the sudden increase and then limited expectations is not provided by the applicant. The college-ready math performance noted in table three shows an expected 38% growth from 27% to 65%. The post-grant expectation of 65% does not support the applicant's goal to have 95% of the students graduate within four years and 90% immediately advance to college.

The applicant also stated SAT and ACT scores will be monitored, but only provides data for "Texas White" students. This is irrelevant without providing data and expectations regarding the proposed targeted students.

**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>6</b>

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

The applicant states the ADC consortium has clear records of success in the past four years and the targeted LEAs have successfully implemented highly competitive grants which resulted in a superior achievement rating under the state's Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST). However, the applicant provides no data to support a record of success other than a list of grants previously received by individuals districts and schools. The grants received are noteworthy, but do not demonstrate the magnitude of responsibility and expectations surrounding a RTTT-D grant. For example, the applicant details grants received including community service learning and several tennis grants. These are individual grants, not collaborative in nature.

The applicant states graduation rates over the previous four years have increased to 89%, which is noteworthy. However, the applicant does not appear to build upon those successes within the proposal because the applicant does not provide

specific evidence to support those successes.

The applicant states several significant reforms such as job-embedded professional development, comprehensive instructional reform strategies, and community-oriented full service schools. However, the applicant does not describe how these efforts will be part of the proposal.

The applicant provides a detailed list of items to be included in regular reports to all stakeholders on the Internet and as requested. This information will also be available in Spanish.

<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 states personnel salaries for instructional and support staff as well as non-personnel expenditures will be available online. However, the examples provided by the applicant are very outdated (2009). In addition, the expenditures are listed for the entire project. The school level personnel salaries are not provided within the example, only the salary schedule is provided.

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

Ninety-nine percent of educators signed the support letters. The State is not reviewing any RTTT-District applications and declined to comment within the allotted timeframe. The applicant states the collective years of experience and credentials of the participating superintendents have met Texas standards, but does not provide the actual number or standard which has been met.

The applicant does not clearly demonstrate evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy within the application. The letters of support are outdated.

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant sufficiently addressed the components of this criterion during the proposal development. Approximately 60 ADC design team members met over two years, an extensive list of activities completed by the design team was provided, the partners were representative of the communities proposed to be served, and at least 70% of the teacher from participating schools support the proposal. However, it is not clear if any students or parents were involved in this process.

Letters of support (over 50) were provided and an ADC Memorandum of Understanding is in place for all major stakeholders (receiving RTTT-D funds).

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

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

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

The applicant does not have a high-quality plan for improving learning as stated within this criterion. The applicant provides several good, research-based examples of effective learners, but never provides the necessary details to make these ideas seem realistic or cohesive. For example, the applicant details an extensive list of high-quality instructional approaches and environments, but does not state and details on their inclusion within the ADC model. The applicant provides a noteworthy list of professional development opportunities for educators, but again, fails to address the key components of a high-quality plan -- timeline, goal, parties responsible, rationale, and deliverables.

Many of the goals and objectives provided within the charts were strategies and/or deliverables. For example, goal 1.2 "afterschool services with community support, open all schools for 2 hours of after school with a 24/7 American Dream Center." This is not a goal. There is not an expectation stated for the students or families involved. There is not an academic expectation stated.

The applicant does not clearly describe any mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students for the

successful utilization of Cloft.

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

**20**

**4**

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

The applicant addresses some components of this criterion, however, the applicant does not detail a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. Specifically, the applicant provides several good strategies, but never pulls them together in the form of a goal. This approach is haphazard as it lacks the necessary timelines and specific expectations. For example, the applicant details an extensive list of training for educators to accelerate college- and career-ready graduation requirements, but does not state when these will be offered, who is offering them, and most importantly what is the expectation/requirement of teachers? Likewise, the Cloud Platform often referred to by the applicant sounds promising, but the specific details and assurances are lacking. For example, the applicant states there will be a 24/7 math tutor, but fails to address what this will look like. This is key given that the Cloud platform primarily consists of videos since Internet access is not necessary. Table 9 details an innovative approach to interventions and preparing students/families for college. Specifically, because of the course titles and content. The applicant also states parent feedback and support is 100% the responsibility of the parent. Based on the data and information provided by the applicant, this is not a probability. The applicant has not addressed the parent component of this proposal adequately.

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

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

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

The applicant states 23 campuses and 30,000 targeted participants will be served, however, in all previous sections the applicant stated there were 27 campuses and approximately 14,000 students being served. In addition, the applicant now states there are over 100 letters of support as opposed to the 50 previously stated. These are unclear changes.

The organizational chart provided does not adequately describe the LEAs' central offices and support for the project.

The applicant does not sufficiently meet the flexible autonomy criterion by stating the ADC will provide school leadership teams with flexibility. It is more important to note the district-level and state-level support.

The applicant does have a plan to create mastery credit through the demonstration of mastery as opposed to the amount of seat time.

The ADC Cloud Computing Diagram states teachers will push ADC state standardized lessons and homework through existing infrastructure via Cloud. As described, this is not an example of a personalized learning environment.

The applicant proposes to hire staff who are bilingual and who are sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of the targeted population. However, the applicant does not provide learning resources and instructional practices for students with disabilities.

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

**10**

**4**

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant refers to a new position that has yet to be detailed in the proposal, a Cloud Curator. The Cloud Curator is responsible for populating the cloud with unlimited parent and student bilingual information. This is a strength for the targeted population. The Community Cloud (previously referred to as Clout) is a one-to-one home solution which contains online solutions. The inclusion and reliance of online technologies does not support previous statements regarding the use of apps as opposed to technologies requiring the Internet.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Overall, the applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for continuous improvement. The applicant details a continuous improvement process that includes data disaggregation, instructional improvements, and continuous improvements. Minutes from quarterly consortium dream team meetings will review RTTT-D progress and adjustments. These are strong strategies of a continuous improvement plan. The applicant states principals and teachers will be evaluated on a regular basis utilizing a SWOT analysis. However, the applicant does not state who is responsible for the evaluations. The narrative is lacking measurable goals and timelines. Also, the applicant does not detail how the information will be shared. Parties responsible are detailed in table 13.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant adequately details a plan for ongoing communication. This includes weekly and daily communications with horizontal and vertical alignment. The applicant includes several research-based success factors for engaging parents -- materials in native language, trained staff on cultural diversity, and ESL training for parents.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant details ten performance measures. A rationale was provided for each measure. The applicant includes the number and percentages of participating students by only two subgroups, economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient. The methodology for selecting each annual target was not described. A few were ambitious, but most were not. For example, the post-grant expectation for highly qualified teachers is only 61%.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant proposes to hire an external evaluator to conduct quarterly benchmark reviews, weekly departmental and weekly grant staff meetings. These are essential components to evaluating the success of the project. However, the applicant does not describe a high-quality evaluation plan. For example, the applicant states principals will discuss the project daily, but does not describe the insurances that will take place. It is also an unrealistic goal to state principals will discuss the project daily.</p>		

**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>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant's budget and narrative tables identify all funds that will support the project. The amount of adults to be served by the 19 San Benito campuses (23,883 and 30,000 total) is unrealistic. Over \$9 million in additional funding is detailed by the applicant. A thoughtful rationale for the investments and priorities is not provided by the applicant. In addition, the applicant states a requested amount of \$426 per students, however, it isn't clear in the narrative how this amount was derived.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a chart detailing the estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant. This includes budget assumptions, sources, and uses of funds. The expected amounts detailed within table 16 as an example are not</p>		

realistic because they are clearly described in the narrative and the amounts are in increments of ten-thousand dollars and the same for each year of the post-grant project (2018-2022).

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant details ten population-level desired results as part of the competitive preference priority. A strong list of partners throughout the community are detailed for each of the ten areas. However, the letters of support are one-year old and clear evidence of collaboration is not provided. The applicant details how the partnerships would include tracking indicators, scale up design, holistic design, and capacity building, but does not adequately describe how the partnership would build capacity of staff or which students would benefit from the proposed services.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant details a reform vision entitled the American Dream Challenge (ADC) set forth by the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) Consortium. The ADC model was designed by a select group of teachers and administrators representing all participating districts. The ADC proposes to target 14,650 rural students on 27 campuses.

Overall, the applicant does not provide a clear, credible approach to the four core assurance areas or accelerating student learning. The applicant's narrative primarily restates the criterion expectations without specific examples of what the personalized learning environment is or what it will look like. The proposal is too mechanical and there is limited evidence of collaboration. In addition, the letters of support were one year old.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>80</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0160TX-3 for San Benito Consolidated Independent School District

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

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>

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

The applicant puts forth a clear and comprehensive reform vision that addresses students' and families' needs both in and out of school. The applicant builds on the four core educational assurance areas by adopting state career and college-ready standards and clearly proposing how the data systems and learning plans will be coordinated to help students succeed through a personalized environment. The classroom environment is credibly described as being one in which students will be provided opportunities to meet standards through a cloud environment, especially in the middle and high-school years, that will be built upon individual student academic interests. The vision is overarching and takes into account students' physiological, emotional and academic needs by employing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as an organizing principle and recognizing that, to get to the highest levels of self-actualization, students' physical needs must be addressed first by making sure that they are appropriately clothed and fed, as well as being certain that students and their families feel a sense of belonging within the school community. This has the potential of deepening student learning by allowing them to achieve at rates that are differentially challenging. The plan also includes ambitious goals of expanding infrastructure (e.g., Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the county) beyond the school and into the community; this is a necessary step if the vision of the cloud delivery system is to become a reality.

**(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)**

**10**

**10**

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant makes a compelling case for the need that all schools, students and teachers in the consortium be included in order for the initiative to be implemented systematically and make a systemic impact. Data are provided that show that significant percentages of children meet the definition of high need, especially in terms of low-income (mean of 84% with range of the 27 schools from 67-100%). The applicant describes an 8-step process of determining participation from LEA to Campus level and they have all agreed to work within the requirements of the RttT-D program. A list of 27 schools is provided and each school has provided raw numbers and percentages of students who meet participating student requirements, including student from low-income families (as cited above). For each of the 27 schools, 100% of students (n=14,650) and their teachers (n=957) will be participants. That the proposal is designed for 100% participation will allow for high-quality LEA- and school-level implementation if successful

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

**10**

**2**

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

The applicant provides a table that identifies information required of a high-quality plan that addresses specific goals of the reform. These include improving academic performance by 11-23% in subjects tested by the state assessment; access to quality data to drive instruction; increasing leadership effectiveness; increasing learning time; and others, all of which identify areas that could lead to meaningful reform. Many of the assessments and targets for determining success, however, appear to be necessary but insufficient measures, or in some cases are so decontextualized as to be unclear of the potential, of the success of the particular performance measure in effecting reform. For example, there are several measures in "quality data to drive instruction" that are related to improving attendance by teachers (+4%) and students (+3%). There is no narrative to support how these measures are providing quality data that will drive instruction. Similarly, in "increasing learning time" the applicant identifies a performance measure of providing Saturday events for parents and students with the intention of increasing by +6 Saturday events. Given that this is a 4-year grant, it is not clear from the timeline (which merely says "Yr. Round", whether this is 6 additional events/year or whether these events will increase by 6 each year; readers are left to guess). More significantly, however, merely having the events does not ensure that this will increase learning time; while that is a necessary measure, it is insufficient to determine to what extent learning time is being improved, especially for high-needs students. These same concerns -- indeterminate timeframes, insufficient measurement of key objectives -- are evident throughout the applicant's response and limit the response's quality as defined in this notice.

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

**10**

**5**

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

The applicant has set ambitious yet achievable goals for academic summative tests. In all cases, they project to increase all state performance data to above state averages; this will require as little as an 11% increase in science scores (5-11) to reach 80% passage and as much as 23% increase to reach 80% passage in writing (4-7). They provide many activities (e.g., e-books in tablets, cloud resources, mentors to support learning, etc.) designed to decrease the achievement gap and provide data that identifies gaps that currently exist for all LEP/ED students in tested grades as compared to white Texans as a mean. As is the first section, they identify these goals in aggregate but it is not clear to what extent these gaps exist for different subpopulations or in how the gaps differentially exist at different grade levels. This lack of specificity may make it difficult to target specific needs of different grade bands or subpopulations. The applicant does provide clear evidence of ambitious goals for high school graduation and possibly overly ambitious goals for college-and-career-ready

math and ELA (as the current 27% will have to increase by more than 130% in 4 years to get to their target of 65%). The goal for college enrollment is equally ambitious as the consortium will need to increase their college-going populations by more than double over current levels, when factoring in the increased graduation expectations. These are clearly laudable goals and the applicant has an extensive set of supports to students' achieving this goal, yet it is not clear that these goals are achievable in the timeline provided. Similar comments apply to the goal of increasing to 50% (from current 15%) by the end of the grant period. The applicant recognizes this when they state that the goal may seem unrealistic but cite the experience of TRIO programs that have had similar successes when they begin with students in 6th grade. They then state that their success will be more guaranteed because they will begin in PK. However, the PK student in the first year of the grant will only be in 3rd grade in 2017-18 and the full effect of the program will not reach these children for another decade.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant consortium cites a record of success that includes having 82% of their schools making significant progress in being removed from TTIPS funding. The applicant referred to an attachment that could not be found in the packet that had data on student achievement; lacking this data provided no corroborating data to support their claims. They have also improved graduation rates to just below state average and claim an average increase of 15% college enrollment in each of the past 4 years. These accomplishments were achieved by changing leadership in the school, using rigorous, transparent and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that took into account student data, as well as using observation systems that considered other factors. The campuses provided ongoing job-embedded PD and provided teachers and principals with financial incentives for improving student achievement. The applicant further claims that the RttT grant will allow them to make performance data available to parents and students; there is no narrative nor other supporting evidence that student performance data is being made available to parents and students in ways that improve their participation, which was one of the elements of this criterion.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>There is some level of transparency in the LEAs' processes, practices and investments. The public can get information on school-level expenditures via the web or, if they don't have access to internet (which the applicant has made clear is not universally available to the targeted populations' families), then a request for this information can be made in writing. Given the description of the communities as being largely ESL and the need for cloud services to be in Spanish, this method would seem to fly in the face of transparency for the most at-risk of the population. That said, it does appear that the information (i.e., actual personnel salaries for instructional staff and teachers, as well as non-personnel expenditures) is available and other information on practices and investments that impact on K-12 instruction and support for instruction and students may be gleaned at quarterly public meetings, but this would also appear to be limited in terms of transparency to attendees of the meetings.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant states that they have sufficient autonomy and authority to implement the personalized learning environment described in the proposal. It is clear from both the narrative and the support letters from educators (99% signed) that there is great support for the plan. There are signed MOUs that the partners are committed to the process and the applicant states that the superintendents have strong vision and ability to carry out the vision. This is corroborated somewhat by the extensive grant awards that have preceded this application in that the consortium partners have a record of being able to carry out plans for improving learning that are funded. It is not clear, though, as the applicant notes that the State of Texas was not providing comments on any RttT grant application, whether there will be sufficient autonomy to carry out the personalizing of learning environments sufficient to meet the vision. For example, there is no evidence that the consortium has the authority or autonomy to require additional learning time for children who need it most. As there are a number of planned Saturday events and after-school tutoring (both virtual and face-to-face), it is not clear that school officials can require attendance at these events for the child's benefit.</p>		

<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant engaged a "Dream Team" of 60 individuals representing a variety of stakeholders (e.g., mayors of all 3 cities, superintendents of all 3 districts, students, parents, local business leaders, educational consultants, etc.) in each of the three cities in which the grant will be implemented. They provided a variety of structures in place that facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement. Their narrative shows clear evidence of their engaging in a multivariate approach to planning that has called upon school and community members, outside experts and local leaders to engage with the school in drafting or commenting on this plan. Teacher group letters of at least 70% support for the reform were garnered from each of the schools as required; it should be noted that the signarures were one year old but the overwhelming (greater than 95% at each school) support for the grant last year would still seem to make this support viable. The appendices provide multiple letters from parents, community service agencies, students, teachers, political leaders (both local and state) that convincingly makes the case for wide-ranging support; there is no specific evidence provided about revisions based on engagement and feedback, although the multi-stage process within the two-year time frame implies that feedback was incorporated throughout. The lack of specific information on how feedback was incorporated and the year-old letters of support from teachers relegated this to the lower end of a high response.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant points to the primacy of educators as supporters of student learning and has some elements of a high-quality plan that describes how their educators will support students in setting goals and monitoring their progress toward meeting college- and career-ready goals. There is a mention of parental involvement as being key to helping students improve their learning and master critical academic content. However, the plan includes no specific mention of parents when the details of the plan are identified. There is a great deal of training that is described; fully 13 different trainings/activities (data systems, new gradebook, moodle for personalizing lessons, etc.), all of which are instructor-centered will be engaged and there is no mention of phasing these in. The brief description of the major activities (e.g., Providing Teacher Quality Data-Driven instruction and High Academic Performance; Providing Positive School Climate and Increasing Learning Time) in which participants will be engaged is too general to be considered of high-quality with specific activities not being ascribed to specific entities and no timelines indicating how these activities will be sequenced. If this is all to be done at the beginning of the grant, it is likely that teachers will be overwhelmed at the amount of new learning that they will need to engage to be able to effectively use these new systems to engage students in mastering critical content. The trainings are all likely necessary to meet the vision of the plan, but the lack of specifics of sequencing make it impossible to determine to what extent teachers and other educators will be able to implement with fidelity.</p> <p>The applicant states that students will have access to high-quality instructional approaches and environments are based on research. To that end, they have identified 19 separate programs that are currently in place and that will be used for helping children achieve their goals. It is not clear, however, how these programs will be integrated to enable children to achieve their goals. There is a clear plan for engaging the use of tablets for engaging students in digital content through the cloud that will be developed; through the cloud, parents and students will be able to receive ongoing feedback. There is also an expectation that parents will commit to having their children attend monthly college bound workshops and expect 100% commitment from parents and students on this. Feedback will also be provided to stakeholders with monthly reports. There is no mention of how these reports will be shared with parents or of whom the particular RttT-D stakeholders consist.</p> <p>The applicant states that there will be accommodations for students to help ensure they are on track. Again, they have identified 28 separate strategies that are currently of will be in place and that will be used for helping children achieve their goals. It is not clear, however, how these programs will be integrated to enable children to achieve their goals. In addition, the plan is centered on the cloud to provide access to content. However, there is no statement or description of how students will be trained to use the hardware and software on the tablets</p> <p>in general, this lacks the specifics of a high-quality plan and leaves many unanswered questions as to how all of the practices will be integrated to serve parents, children and educators.</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>

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

The applicant provides some of the elements of a high-quality plan to improve instruction and build capacity within the district. The strengths of this plan lie in the potential of cloud technology to help students to meet college and career-ready standards. As the lynchpin of the proposal, though, there are several contradictory statements that are concerning for the ability of the applicant to use the hardware and cloud to meet the learning needs of students as they have identified them. First, the applicant states that the innovative technology "bypasses the need for internet requirements at home" for allowing students to access content. Yet, earlier, they stated that home-bound students could access content at a Wi-Fi hotspot as the area in which the grant will be implemented has access issues for many students and families. This calls into question the equitable access that children, especially those from low-income families, will have to the 24/7 promise of the application. Second, and as noted in C1, all mentions of training are focused on how the cloud delivery system will be able to deliver training but there is no mention of training on the devices for parents and students.

The applicant provides a series of activities in its plan for training teachers in the use of the technology for designing effective learning environments and a viable way of using a variety of information sources for improving teaching, including the evaluation system and classroom walkthroughs, with multiple opportunities for feedback for teachers. As in other areas of the grant, though, the activities are so numerous and the applicant does not provide a schedule for these trainings that will indicate how they will be phased in, that it is unclear how teachers will be able to prioritize the trainings and incorporate them into their teaching. While there are many strong aspects of how teaching and learning will be addressed in the plan, this lack of detail on the timeline prevents this plan from being of high-quality and the lack of attention to the accessibility makes it potentially unworkable for the students to have equitable access.

Finally, all of the activities appear to be limited to teachers and the master teachers. This criteria requires attention to the training provided for teacher leaders. While the master teachers will certainly fulfill this role, there is no mention of training for principals. This is a significant weakness in the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>

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

The applicant has some practices and policies that may facilitate personalized student learning. The central offices appears to be staffed sufficiently to oversee the implementation of the plan and handle the release of a federal grant from a district perspective; all three consortium members have a history of implementing grants that should ensure that the grant is implemented with fidelity. The applicant states that each school has sufficient autonomy over scheduling and staffing to meet the expectations of the grant. They also have the some experience with mastery learning model (Gateway Academy) as some assessments allow for gaining test-out course credit and having dual enrollment options. The cloud will also have curricular resources available for ELL students. It does appear that the district has the policies and practices in place that will facilitate personalized learning with the success of the cloud technology. The concern addressed previously of the potential for inequitable access to the technology, and the lack of explicitly addressing the contradictions about the internet-accessibility question, will potentially inhibit equal access to the PLE and will likely negatively impact the neediest learners the most. The lack of a specific timetable and description of how mastery learning will be implemented also is one aspect that prevents this from being a high-quality plan.

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

The applicant has some aspects of a high-quality plan to ensure that the infrastructure is available to support implementation. The general plan and the expressed intent of having each student have access to an electronic device will ensure that students and their parents have access to content and resources. Teachers will also have access to these tools and will provide initial support for students and their parents. The plan also includes a tech support helpline for users experiencing difficulties. The plan also shows how evidence flows from the school to users and back again through their interoperable data systems. Regardless, there appear to be contradictory information as to access about users who may not have access or may have access only by going to the school or to a Wi-Fi hotspot. The applicant places responsibility for using the cloud system on parents to ensure that they are working with their children to reach goals, yet the applicant also states that it is only after a child has been suspended or failing to meet expectations that any formal meeting will occur. There are two problems with this aspect of the plan: 1) the applicant appears to be counting on the cloud to have some of the initial interaction between school and home; and 2) the timing of the meeting seems too late for being

proactive in ensuring that the PLE is working appropriately in the child's best interest.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan that, if implemented as proposed, will complement and advance their current practices and infrastructure for managing their continuous improvement process. The district provides compelling evidence (Continuous Improvement Response System and Process) that they have experience and expertise in managing continuous improvement. They propose to engage with an external evaluator and to run rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental research studies with control groups during the life of the study. They provide a high-quality plan that identifies the data sources, briefly describes the research activities and provides timelines for their process. The evaluation plan specifies a mixed methodological approach to measuring short-, medium-, and long-term goals and identifies the timeframes during which data will be gathered and/or shared. Multiple techniques, including focus groups, surveys of participants, and classroom observations are proposed. Ongoing meetings with stakeholders will enable adjustments based upon both internal and external data. They also specify a plan for how the continuous improvement process will identify low-performing educators and provide them with rigorous corrective growth plans</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district provides a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. They clearly identify multiple ways of successfully engaging in ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. The Dream Team has representatives from each district (e.g., mayors of all 3 cities, superintendents of all 3 districts, students, parents, local business leaders, educational consultants, etc.) and will have quarterly meetings to discuss implementation and concerns. Multiple forums for feedback include email, cloud forums, cloud suggestion box, newsletters with a feedback envelope enclosed, etc., will provide access to internal and external users in ways that they are most comfortable. The applicant will provide periodic surveys to engage stakeholders in evaluating movement toward accomplishing goals. The Continuous Improvement Response System and Process (CIRSP) identifies specific dates and data sources that will enhance the ongoing communication and they cite the use of the CIRSP as being their vehicle for continuously improving their implementation of grant activities. They also cite specific strategies to engage families that include first language publications, monthly parental involvement meetings, and staff trained in cultural diversity to enhance interactions.</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 applicant provides descriptions for each of the performance measures as to their rationale for choosing them, how they will provide rigorous, timely and formative feedback, and how they can use that feedback to drive improvement. They also propose ambitious and achievable goals in several of the areas, especially as they relate to students being in schools with highly-effective teachers and principals with many of their students expected to be in classrooms and schools where more than 90% of educators are deemed highly effective. For other schools, there is a goal of increasing by a factor of 3 the percentages of students who are taught by highly effective educators, so that some schools will see increases from 20% to 65% and more of students taught by highly effective educators. There are some concerns about the timing of their goals, however, as the applicant identifies their baseline year as 2011-12 and targets begin in 2013-14, a year during which there will be limited time to engage the grant; no data are provided for 2012-13. Since the PLE is dependent upon students having access to a tablet and that the cloud structure was to provide 24/7 learning opportunities, the goal of having only 75% of students with 24/7 access in year one and never proposing to reach 100% (post-grant the applicant states they will have 97% goal) of students with access creates an equitability problem that will inhibit, likely for the most needy, students' abilities to engage in PLE. In other cases (e.g., Met Standards on state tests in 7th grade), the annual goals of 2-3% increases over previous years' performances are insufficient to be considered ambitious, especially in addressing the needs of at risk students at the three different intermediate schools who, postgrant will only be shooting for 52, 52, and 30% passage of all tests by those students.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

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

As previously described, the applicant proposes to use the CIRSP team and process to evaluate the effectiveness of investments. They provide a high-quality plan that identifies the data sources, briefly describes the research activities and provides timelines for their process to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the grant activities. The evaluation plan specifies a mixed methodological approach to measuring short-, medium-, and long-term goals and identifies the timeframes during which data will be gathered and/or shared. Multiple techniques, including focus groups, surveys of participants, and classroom observations are proposed. Ongoing meetings with stakeholders will enable adjustments based upon both internal and external data. This includes empowering principals and the grant coordinator with the authority to remove educators who are not able to meet expectations and feedback loops provided by the evaluation system.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

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

The applicant identifies in-kind contributions that, if fully realized, will amount to approximately 1/3 of the grant requested. The variety of federal, state and local contributions will allow for the potential of sustaining beyond the grant period some of the important activities. The experience of the consortium members in leveraging other funds and grants (e.g., Reading First for Early Learning, TTIPS, Vision 2020, etc.) supports confidence in their abilities to manage the grant funds and make thoughtful investments while maintaining a focus on priorities. They provide a strong rationale for the reasonableness of costs (\$426/student with family participation \$213/student) when compared to the successful TRIO program costs of \$2475/student. There are aspects of the budget, however, that appear not to meet reasonable expectations. For example, the personnel costs, including fringe benefits are flat funded from the RttT funds throughout the 4-year period, as are training stipends. This does not take into account the usual and reasonable expectation of personnel receiving step increases. Even if that is negotiated out as a function of the grant, it is unreasonable to expect that fringe benefits will remain flat for the entire time. Training stipends also may fluctuate by contract with teachers, though the lack of union may make that point moot.

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

<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has a plan that has some elements of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project. They provide a budget and some potential streams of funding that may be accessible post-grant. They do have several letters of support from local businesses, for example, that state that they fully support the application. In their table, they propose that different-sized businesses will provide monthly support based upon size. Nowhere in the letters of support do these figures appear to be committed at this time. That said, the applicant does have a strong record of seeking and securing community support and external funding. They have also identified many partners to participate in future funding. These make some of their projections more likely to be attained. Their post-grant budget, however, has the same issue as their grant budget. That is, there is a plan for flat funding beyond the grant. This does not appear to take into account the normal cost of living increases that are part of yearly life. For example, the expectation that the college trips will be able to be flat-financed does not take into account increases in rates for hotels, gas increases for transportation, etc.

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant proposes a comprehensive approach to integrating community resources and align these efforts to help students and families be successful in meeting college- and career-ready goals. They cite numerous organizations that have potential impact on youth, including local Boys and Girls Clubs, colleges and universities, and community recreation and gathering centers, like local libraries and parks. They cite the successful implementation itself as being one that will have other sectors of the state looking at them as a model and that that will be one way in which these successes will

scale up. Scale up will also occur as one of their goals is to ensure that LEAs would be hubs for early childhood social and emotional well-being; the success would be measured by having an ADC Community School at all sites in the consortium. They provide a plan for integrating education for both children and families that has multiple activities throughout the year; these include educational activities, like language classes, as well as parties and celebrations that will encourage families to connect with the schools. They further propose to use their needs assessment as a way of determining the precise needs of the students, staff and community and to be certain that goals of the grant and these other activities are aligned. The only weakness of this plan is the lack of ambitious and achievable goals by performance measure. They identify desired results for the outcome but do not provide specific performance measures (with the exception of the community service learning project) as to how these results will be attained.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addressed the core assurance areas by:

- adopting college- and career-ready standards in their plan within a personalized learning management system
- building upon currently-available data systems to improve the potential for students to enhance the current mastery context in which they have been freed from seat time requirements
- developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals by establishing a master teacher ladder
- addressing the needs of learners by setting achievable goals designed to improve learning for all students and close achievement gaps for high-need students through the systemic implementation of the personalized learning environment

In addition, the plan to provide a personalized learning environment through a cloud system has the potential to significantly improve learning for students as they strive to meet college- and career-ready standards by meeting their individual needs more effectively. The proposal provides a clear plan for improving educators' effectiveness and, since it is a district-wide initiative, this will expand student access to effective educators. This could decrease achievement gaps as proposed and increase graduation rates if implemented with fidelity.

All that said, the confusing and sometimes contradictory information about the cloud, its roll-out, and the equitable access issue make it unclear that the applicant will be able to provide an equitable personalized learning environment for all children within the grant duration.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>125</b>
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