



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0194FL-1 for School Board of Pinellas County

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's vision to improve the academic performance of all students will target five low-achieving schools designated with a school grade of D and F. The research cited from ACT 2012 and the framework of the Harlem Children Zone supports the focus on middle school students as the key grade level that would foster success in high school. There was not much discussion about the scope or components of the Harlem Children Zone initiative but since it was used in the pilot in Fairmount Park Elementary school with 133 of its students, positive results did emerge. Since the pilot did serve students in the grade range that were administered the state assessment, prekindergarten to grade five, the applicant was able to see success in assessments scores as evident with the charts attached in the proposal showing improvement in reading and writing state assessment scores 2012 and 2013 administrations for third grade, prekindergarten and kindergarten results in school readiness indicators, reduction in discipline referrals, and an increased attendance of parents in school meetings.</p> <p>These successes were significant but the pilot was not implemented school-wide and there was not any discussion as to why not but the improvements were not enough to move the school from receiving a school grade below C. The vision to expand the successes of the pilot to the entire school, Fairmount Park and others with a focus on middle school students could move this school to an acceptable rating. The research supporting that successful middle school students have greater success in completing high school therefore the applicant selected five schools to participate in this proposal that include three elementary schools that would prepare students to be successful in its feeder middle schools as they meet new adopted college-and-career standards as well as state standards.</p> <p>The professional development using the Leading Educational Achievement and Diversity (LEAD Modules) focuses on culturally sensitive which may be a positive step for the applicant in changing the mindset of teachers in how the education students in low-achieving schools. The model guides and support skills, strategies, and flexibility that have been proven for staff to provide quality services to students as evident by the results of the pilot.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A strategy utilized in a turn-around school model is revamping/hiring staff beginning with the school leader. This strategy was used in the pilot by revamping with the human resource department the hiring of classroom teachers and providing targeted professional development to prepare teachers to deliver quality personalized learning to students in low-achieving schools supported by the academic success in the pilot. The schools selected for the proposal were chosen based upon having at least 75% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch, 50% or more of the students who are African American, and schools that had a school grade of D or F. Between the five schools, there would be over 3,500 students served in grades prekindergarten to eight focusing on reading and math improvement and closing the achievement gap.</p> <p>Using the 50% or more African American students enrolled in a school as a criteria is not a criteria for selection identified by the notice and may not have been necessary in this case since the schools selected to be served by the applicant meet all the other eligibility criteria. All students will be served from these five schools.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal will fold the successes to student achievement into a personalized learning environment for all students which</p> | | |

have been identified as what worked for example were attention to learning styles, smaller teacher-student ratio, technology access, various instructional delivery methods, and programs that developed skills/knowledge of teachers and parents.

In scaling up the proposal comprehensive needs assessments of neighborhoods assisted in the school selection for wrap around community services build the support they needed from community partners of the success of the pilot. With successes and increased support as evident of partnerships the proposal would be scaled to middle and high schools school-wide.

The proposal is scaling from the pilot that was implemented in one school to five schools yet the scaled-up model chart indicates children age 0-3 three will be served during the grant period as it phases-in components into all five schools and middle and high schools served post-grant which is confusing since two middles will be served in the proposal.

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

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7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Since none of the performance measures were compared to state results such as state assessment results for the five schools for grades tested (3-8), graduation rates, and college enrollment rates it is difficult to determine if the schools meet or below state standards in any of these areas. The assessment results project a steady increase per the data provided in the charts but may not be enough to change the school rating by the end of the grant period without comparisons to state targets. The graduation rates for all subgroups is above 50% prior to the projections but since the project serves up to middle school during the grant period extreme tracking of students would be needed to have a positive effect on graduation rates that would occur for this population after the grant ends and such discussion was not included. The achievement gap does not appear to be significantly effected with the projections for the subgroups from the charts provided the African American students who are the majority population and appear to be performing well below all the other subgroups.

Turning around low-achieving schools will in essence close the achievement gap and build effective teachers and principals since the expansion will implement a data system that will integrate with its current local student information system and provide student data to classroom teachers to better address learning deficiencies before they become the final results allowing student and school improvement.

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

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 10 |

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has had some success with improving overall graduation rates from 2009 to 2013 taking four low-performing high schools to an acceptable rating through implementation of the School Improvement Grant Model supporting a successful track record in this area. The model was specific in what had to take and the applicant was aware that support from the community was key and one of the action steps.

The Fairmount Park Elementary School Initiative appears to have continued to be implemented from 2009 to 2013 with success in increasing state assessment scores for elementary students on a small scale but more significant is the decrease in discipline referrals which has kept students in the classroom with the teacher to continue to receive instruction with their class instead of in an alternative setting. The increases in state assessment scores were not enough for the school to receive an acceptable rating which could be interpreted as adequate yearly achievement was not sufficient or other indicators used for school ratings did not improve as well.

The applicant is in a Race-to-the-Top state with components in its technology plan that would provide the technology and infrastructure needed to support the site licenses included in this proposal to put in place a Webex system allowing easy access for all internal stakeholders to access student progress data. Parent and students have already been register to have secure login information that will promote personalized learning. This system would provide teachers will quick analysis of interim assessments and connections to goals and progress which is an effective strategy to support realtime use of student data in instruction which from the needs assessment of the applicant was a great concern that would now be addressed.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a report that showed total salaries for instructional staff by category not actual for each personnel for example in the report in figure 7 teachers, substitute teachers, other instructional personnel are the categories but not actual salaries of staff are made available. The annual financial report is on the applicant's website which would be available for anyone to download and view. The website address was provided therefore stakeholders would be able to view funding sources and other expenditures via the internet but not in the area listed in the criterion.

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

From the information provided and that the applicant plans to submit waivers for to fully implement personalized learning for all students, total autonomy to do is is not evident. High school students must still attend a class for a certain amount of hours to receive credit for the class which does not affect the elementary and middle school students in the project but does effect the applicant's capability to implement district-wide. High schools are not being served in the project but does appear in some discussions relating to the project. Competency-based learning is allowed with elementary grade students since classes are not awarded credit towards graduation and seat time is not required as with high school courses. Credit recovery and virtual school programs are also allowable with secondary (middle school included) which this group would have the opportunity to utilize the virtual school for enrichment. Credit recovery applies to high school credit courses and the applicant did not provide a clear discussion if any such courses would apply to middle school students served in the proposal.

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

15

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant included its community businesses and support services in discussion when the plan was being made to expand the Fairmount Park Elementary School Initiative into five schools. The results of community needs assessments conducted by Pinellas County Health and Human Services Department in 2012 and the United Way in 2013 provided beneficial data as those needs identified are incorporated in the development of the proposal particularly regarding training for staff. The applicant did not clearly indicate or provide evidence that stakeholders reviewed the proposal, provided comments, have input on the components of the personalized learning plan beyond support for training for staff in cultural competencies.

The applicant included letters from the Mayor, city, school administrators of schools participating, and non-profit entities in support of the proposal and partnerships. There was not any discussion of teacher support or support from parents other than responding to questions only if they participated in any focus groups. The applicant did not discuss collective bargaining and did not provide support letters from teachers.

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

| | Available | Score |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 10 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

It would be difficult for parents to support student learning and goal setting if the parent does not have the information or skills needed to do so therefore the approach the applicant is taking to increase parent engagement through various opportunities would build support for student learning needed as the proposal is implemented since a training model/component would be included for parents. The parent academies that focus on parent needs for they would determine topics for training. The academies would need a topics that focus on the vision of the applicant to ensure that all topics would not be directed at personal needs/goals of the parents for that would take away from the purpose of the proposal. The role of the school counselor would change and staff would be included in professional development activities that support cultural competencies and college-and-career readiness of students which has been determined as a need by parents and community members to improve instruction and academics. The assignment of social workers to families that would assist them building a supportive learning environment at home is an excellent way to build the connection with home and school for the parent and the student. Home visits by the social worker are essential in building the learning

support for students and families and should be a part of the plan instead of merely as needed.

The plan to build an eighth grade survey to determine if students are college-and-career ready is a good plan that the applicant would have questions relating to academic, behavior, college knowledge, family support, and institutional indicators built with the support of one of its partner, the United Way of Tampa Bay. The results would be used to help build students personalized learning plans but it is unclear if only eighth graders would respond to the survey not all middle school students, when it would be conducted, and if administered more than once to review progress as student knowledge increases from implementing their plans.

The experience described with the sample student has many gaps to have the success desired such as parent permission to have an adult outside of the school to discuss her fourth graders career goals and parent presence during the discussion or if screening of the outside professionals would take place prior to any contact with a student.

The applicant did not provide a clear discussion as to how students would be exposed to diversity but the staff would receive training in educating high needs students and cultural competencies needed to effectively implement personalized learning to a large population of African American students.

The applicant's approach to personalized learning would have success in improving student outcomes as it takes steps to change the mindset of staff in working with high needs (however that may have been determined) students by focusing on effective use of summative, formative, and classroom assessment to drive learning of which staff will receive intensive training to be able to accomplish.

An early meeting of the parent and student with the educational team made up of the principal, teacher, counselor, and social worker designed to support them through the learning process is an adequate approach to having all the key stakeholders involved in the design of a personalized plan for the student to focus on the state common core standards which are designed to promote college-and-career readiness. The role of the social worker in the education of students is unclear since in an earlier section the social worker would assist families in setting up effective learning environments in the home and meet as needed. The role now appears to be one that is required to meet once per month and determine if the student has any social, mental, or physical attributes that inhibit learning on the part of the student but diagnostics were not discussed or how referrals if needed would occur.

There are several areas the proposal expects students self-monitor using a tracking tool such as if they did not meet goal set, interventions needed to meet goals, any extended programs they participate in, and comments from teacher which is unlikely and unreasonable to have younger students who do not have the skill-set to do so and the plans would be created for students as early as second grade.

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

20

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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plan includes the ten modules from the pilot project called Creating innovative Classrooms for Optimal Learning that were successful professional development activities. Teachers would complete modules during the summer to not take them away from class which in this case would occur summer of 2014. It is unclear how the applicant would monitor that the new teaching strategies would be incorporated into teaching as required since they are still piloting the teacher evaluation system that provides the designation of highly effective and effective and did not provide any discussion as to how this would occur with the 324 teachers participating in the proposal.

The professional learning communities that would be created with grade level and subject area teachers would support teachers as they participate in trainings by being provided time to discuss, plan, and share with peers strategies and lesson plans. They would also be supported by reading and math coaches that would be assigned to their team which is excellent for coaches would be able to model lessons and provide immediate feedback as teachers provide instruction.

The role of the professional learning communities would also assist teachers with project-based learning activities that will ensure a focus on student interests and various ways to learn the same content and in meeting college-and-career standards which appear to be embedded in the common core standards.

Quality and appropriate assessments are the key to knowing if students have demonstrated mastery of lessons that will be developed by teams in the proposal and the applicant will ensure the appropriate assessment techniques would be available by contracting with Performance Matters to build and administer for use district-wide therefore the system would not be ready for use until the end of 2014 but the applicant did not indicate what processes would be utilized in the meantime.

Student data is currently available to all internal stakeholders via the internet and a secure login therefore parents may access student grades, attendance and discipline referrals and teachers have access to more detailed information that would be used to plan instruction and interventions as needed.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points) | 15 | 10 |
| (D)(1) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>The organizational chart provided supports the structure of central office staff with services and oversight to all schools by areas with area superintendents involvement in the finite components to ensure that all students, staff, and parents are served with supervision of an associate superintendent who then reports to the superintendent. Area leadership teams are in place to provide more hands on support to the project staff as they move through the implementation phases with curriculum, assessment, and classroom instruction.</p> <p>The school board belief and support of school decision-making structures has allowed Individual school leadership teams the flexibility and autonomy in how they implement personalized learning and programs that must be aligned with the districts strategic plan. The plan that each school develops provides leadership with reason, timeline, budget, how it will be monitored, and expected results which ensures that the central office teams area aware and continue to provide support that is also important to addressing the needs of the community.</p> <p>The applicant is supported by state statue in providing accelerated learning options for students that are part of the personalized learning plan. Of the five schools being served in the proposal three are elementary schools prekindergarten to grade five and the kindergarten to fifth graders may accelerate, demonstrate mastery of content through the Iowa Assessment Scale and instruments used to measure social and emotional readiness. Details of these instruments were not discussed to know the frequency of administer that would afford students multiple opportunities to master content especially the ones measuring social and emotional readiness. High school students are not being served during the grant period but they have the opportunity of early graduation upon meeting graduation requirements prior to eight semesters or four years. The applicant currently has in place by board policy for every student a Student Progression Plan that includes a district instructional assessment plan that would be merged into the personalized learning plan of each student served in the proposal. The applicant did not clearly show the distinguishing features of what is in place and the plan in the proposal or than only certain grade levels currently used the district instructional assessment plan since this proposal indicated that "each k-5 student shall have a Pinellas Instructional Assessment Plan folder."</p> <p>End of course (EOC) exams normally apply to courses for high school credit and the applicant did not indicate that middle school students would be eligible to take them therefore this is not a valid option of middle school students in the project to have multiple opportunities to master course content. The proposal will develop a system that will allow students multiple options to master content and include it in the students personalized learning plan.</p> <p>Even though that are 17,074 students within the district that have been identified as students with disabilities, the applicant did not clearly indicate the number that would be served in the targeted five schools or indicate state assessment data for them in the target goals. The applicant assures these students and those whose English is not the first language will receive whatever accommodations needed including bilingual assistants to work with teachers. The student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) would be implement as designed via the inclusion model.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 7 |

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not indicate that there were any other methods of accessing student information beyond logins to the storage system via the internet which does not provide alternative for families who do not or cannot afford access. The partnership with the local internet provide to make available low cost internet service to low-income families is not totally adequate since families may also not have resources to purchase and maintain a computer, laptop, tablet, or device needed. The added option of computer setups in libraries, community recreation centers, and local churches does provide parents, students, teachers, and community members other means of gaining access to performance information and school events. This is a positive move but the times of operation of these venues would need to be flexible and locations convenient for parents to access and that was not discussed. Although the applicant indicated that the new system would produce easily understandable reports, training would still be needed for parents and students and that was not discussed.

Technical assistance to students and parents outside of the school day would not be available and was not discussed to be offered by the applicant or supported by any partner. The state RTTT grant has or will provide the infrastructure and an interoperable data system for the applicant who will then integrate all personalized learning plans into it. This would be an effective way for teachers and principals to quickly build/revise instructional plans and monitor progress of students in the proposal. Parent and students would also have secure logins to this system but training would be needed in order for the information and data to be meaningful to them to be able to apply it effectively to achievement and goals. The district is providing computers for students and classroom broadband connections per its technology plan that enable to applicant to meet its goal of the 3:1 student computer ratio.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 7 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The data system to be developed and put in place for the project will be the key that enables the applicant to have regular feedback on the progress towards the goals of the proposal. The system needs to be developed but would have the components of the system that was used with the pilot instead of the same system which is the blueprint for the proposal. It is unclear that one the system is integrated with the district's local data system if a testing period would be needed or if it would be fully operational to serve all students, parents, and teachers in the expanded project therefore enabling timely reporting to move students and staff through the activities of the project effectively.</p> <p>Since the system will allow progress monitoring quarterly, professional development would be needed for classroom teachers to be able to utilize formative assessments and data analysis to its full potential for each student being served in the project. There are five schools being served, approximated 3,500 students with personalized plans that include interim and diagnostic/state assessments as appropriate with little discussion of time for teachers to process and utilize data to drive instructions.</p> <p>Sharing of data with external stakeholders was not adequately discussed beyond the state data that would be posted on the district's website for example there are partners involved with the project who would need frequent updates to determine their level of services to provide the students and their families.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has various means available and operational that provide information about the district to internal and external stakeholders but the website created by the Office of Strategic Communication, Educators Leading Change provide information about all educational reform initiatives implemented by the district that would include information regarding the efforts of this proposal. It is not clear if the site allows the district to gather input regarding any program posted that would support two-way communication and a more effective means of working with its various communities.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The cited research regarding indicators for student success in being college-and-career ready such as ACT, 2009 supports the applicant's selection of the performance indicators targeting middle school students that included academic measure focusing on reading and math state assessment scores and success on the Algebra End of Course exam as well as behavioral looking at suspensions/expulsions, and attendance.</p> <p>The proposal will serve approximately 1,326 middle school students with 148 students enrolled in Algebra I reflected in the performance measure #5 with project proficiency increasing approximately 10% point by end of the grant would be more meaningful if it were clear as to how many students took and completed the course and at what grade level it was completed.</p> <p>It is not clear how the services to newborns fit into the proposal and the applicant did not provide rationale for choosing this measure. An Ages and Stages Questionnaire would be administered to parents to respond regarding their child who is from 4 months old to five years to measure their yearly developmental progress in various categories such as communication, gross motor skills, problem solving, and personal –social skills since by the time the child is old enough to enter prekindergarten the grant would either be in its final year or have ended.</p> | | |

The applicant plans to integrate the pilot system into the district interoperable data system in every school in the district therefore providing a measure the high schools that will not be served by the grant and cost to the grant should not occur in the budget.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discussed a vague plan to evaluate the effectiveness of all the components of the proposal. The proposal itself is an expansion of a smaller pilot project that served 133 students where this proposal will provide similar and from the narrative more intensive services to over 3,500 students with projections of similar results to be monitored by system that would be fully implemented by year two of this four-year grant. There was little to no discussion regarding the teacher-leader evaluation system that would be used to evaluate staff as effective and highly effective.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 7 |

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

For the most part the amount requested is reasonable for the number of students and staff to be served with a clear breakdown by project. There is concern with the plan as a one time purchase ipads, kindles, and netbooks for student to use before and after school only with no use during class time and activities which appears to not be an efficient use of this resource. The applicant identified other funding sources that would support the project during the grant period and beyond such as United Way funding the consultant needed to create and administer the 8th grade survey of which the results would be used to measure college-and-career ready skills. The Juvenile Welfare Board funding supports after school activities for students that would support reenforcing classroom content and other services for families.

The applicant did not provide adequate detail in support of a program for children age 0 to 2 since 3 year olds may participate in prekindergarten programs. Funds have been allocated, \$40,000 over the life of the grant in the budget to provide services, Baby Talk and testing for children who are four months old who may not enter prekindergarten until the grants last year.

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

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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide a clear sustainability plan. Partnerships that appear in table 14 of external resources currently support the proposal with time and funding but there is not a discussion if this would continue after the grant such as the 8th grade survey created by United Way and to be administered annually by a consultant \$60,000. Title I appears to be the only federal funds identified to support salaries of personnel that the applicant will determine essential to the ongoing of the proposal but did not indicate the number of staff or salary ranges that would be covered. A lot of funds have been allocated to professional development for teachers and principals that another funding source was not identified to cover even though the trainer-of-trainer model would be used, staff turnover was not considered and refresher training for returning staff.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 6 |

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has various community and state partnerships that support parents and students in the proposal and district-wide with before and after school enrichment and summer camps that provide another method for students to demonstrate mastery of course content. The City of St. Petersburg provides \$300,000 in scholarships for eligible students which is an incentive for middle school students to complete high school and pursue college but does not align with the current proposal since high school students are being served.

The University of South Florida sponsors a project that provides a Baby Talk Academy supplied with curricula and activities for infants of teen parents enrolled in the applicant's school. This initiative is key to child development since it not only works with the parents and other adults active in the child's life but it ensures that quality daycares services are available for it works with the local daycare facilities in providing interventions to promote family literacy but this initiative was not adequately aligned with the proposal.

The Juvenile Welfare Board's collaboration with the applicant provided the invaluable framework used to implement the pilot initiative and is now being expanded with the proposal and able to track services provided to families and a prekindergarten program that prepares children for kindergarten.

Each partner uses its own staff in working with students and families so there is not a clear discussion of how applicant teachers and principals would participate such as the summer camp for thirty fourth and fifth graders sponsored by University of South Florida. Partners also will go beyond the student population identified in the proposal to provide services

The Concerned Organization for the Quality of Black Student Education and the Pinellas County Urban League will provide volunteers and mentors during the school day for students being served in the project that will support student achievement.

A good quality of desired outcomes for students and parent were provided by little to no discussion as how the partner would monitor progress or if the goal was met such as kindergarten to grade two students would develop life plans based upon their interest and also be academically ready to be proficient on the state assessment in reading and math since this would be a state assessment in third grade the data would be accessible by the public by grade but not by student.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

| | Available | Score |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The pilot project in Fairmount Park Elementary Schools is the framework and foundation guiding the proposal to enable the applicant to implement personalized learning from 133 students to over 3,500 with the support of partnerships, professional development for staff, parent support, and student involvement in their learning to develop plans to take a student from prekindergarten to grade 12. Since the teacher and principal evaluation systems that would provide staff with student data as it relates to classroom instruction will not be available for full implementation until the end of 2014, it is not clear how the applicant will pull from all the digital storage systems currently being utilized to provide timely, adequate, information that would allow the project to progress through checkpoints timely. The projects of increase for the subgroups for example in reading on the state assessment would make some progress towards closing the achievement gap but as with the pilot it may not be enough to move the school from an F to a C. Students would have the opportunities for accelerated learning through before school and after school enrichment as well as project-based projects that focus of student interest.

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|--------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 210 | 119 |
|--------------|------------|------------|



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0194FL-2 for School Board of Pinellas County

A. Vision (40 total points)

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| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
| (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant addresses each of the core educational assurance area. • With the outlined hiring process/retention plan, applicant indicates that they are using a framework developed by Dr. Martin Haberman, However, there is no indication to what extent this framework was used in the pilot program, or how the implementation has taken place. • Applicant has a good vision for recruitment and retention of faculty, however, no examples of how they have been adapting this over time or how successful the new efforts have been. • Applicant has identified six broad indicators that they are using for college readiness, with multiple metrics included in each indicator. These are primarily focused on middle school data that acts as a predictor of college readiness, based on a study by ACT. • Applicant has run a successful pilot program within a low-achieving school. The data for the subset of students demonstrated success and they are hoping to expand this pilot school-wide and into four additional schools. • While the classroom description included a variety of strategies to support personalized learning, the specifics were unclear. Narrative speaks to a need for differentiation, however, no evidence of specific individualized learning plans and how those will be embedded was present. They have a solid plan based on best practices, the specificity is a little unclear in the personalized classroom experience description. | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant has provided a process for how schools will be selected. They are scaling up a pilot project to include the whole school, and adding four additional schools. These schools were selected because they have 75% or higher student population living in poverty, high % of African American students, and schools that have consistently been labeled as low achieving. • Applicant has provided complete data for each of the participating schools including total number of students, total number of high needs students and total number of participating educators. • Schools include three elementary and two middle, with the intention of sharing what is learned through the project with other schools and districts and to track the students into high school. • As written, the applicant has a thorough approach for selecting the schools and students who will be participating in this project. | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 4 |
| (A)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has provided a plan that outlines goals, timeline, activities and responsible parties - but only in an outline. There is little depth to each of the outcome goals and activities and it is unclear from the presented plan who will specifically support the different activities. • The applicant indicates that the program will be scaled to other low-achieving schools, however there is little specific information to support how this might happen. • Applicant has included a well defined scale-up process and described how they worked to move from a pilot project in a single school to a five school project and a broad timeline of yearly implementation. Additional details are necessary to make this a high-quality plan. | | |
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 3 |
| (A)(4) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has collected baseline academic data for the five target schools and has projected increases in academic proficiency for each subgroup. There is no detail of how these percentages were selected and for some sub-groups, the post-grant goal is still quite low with aggregate target for FCAT reading for African American students being just under 60%, that is still allowing 40% of their largest demographic to fail. It is unclear if these goals are based on the data collected from the pilot program or if they are newly generated. • The data presented in Table 6 detailing the decreasing achievement gap data does not match the projected FCAT scores as presented in the previous data. The reading proficiency aggregate target for 2017-2018 is listed as 59.7% | | |

for African American students, and in the decreasing achievement gap chart it is projected for the same time period, same test and same demographic to be 67.8%. It is unclear why these two projects do not match and it seems that the projections are not being thoughtfully considered.

- The high school graduation rates as presented, along with the college enrollment rates and projections present increases by demographic. However, it is unclear if the baseline data is based on the aggregate of the five target schools, or if the baseline is a whole district baseline.
- The projected graduation rate for African American students post grant is only 75%, as this is their largest demographic this number is too low to demonstrate significant student learning that can be shared across the district.
- Applicant did not include any state comparison figures, to demonstrate that the goals were equal to or exceed state ESEA targets.

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

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 5 |
| (B)(1) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEA describes persistent issues with student achievement, noting that there have been some increases, but they have not been maintained. They do not provide an explanation for why the 2013 data is lower than 2012 - although they mention that it was a district-wide issue. Explanation is necessary to understand if it was a testing issue, or a teaching issue. • Applicant has included graduation data for classes 2010-2013. There is nominal growth in graduation rate (10% over four years), College Going Rate (5% over four years), College Credit Earning Rate (3% over five years) and percent of 9th grade students who eventually earn at least one year of college credit (9% over four years). This demonstrates some evidence of ability to improve. • Applicant cited four failing schools that entered school improvement in 2009 and demonstrates that their state ratings increased from an F to a C in most cases. However, there is very little student data or demographic data to demonstrate academic growth for these four schools or graduation rates for these four schools. It is assumed that the state grades take into account some student performance indicators, however, they are not explicitly defined in the application to demonstrate significant reforms in the lowest-achieving schools. • The applicant includes data from the pilot projects, however, the way it is presented makes it difficult to discern how much growth actually occurred in the pilot program as compared to whole school growth. There is little narrative to support what is being represented in the graphs. • The applicant intends to streamline technology systems and introduce a new user interface to make data easy to access, however, this is in process and no timeline was associated with this new system. The narrative does not speak specifically to how students and parents will access this data or how it will be used to improve instruction. | | |
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| (B)(2) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has included that the required data by school level is available and has included a sample report that demonstrates all necessary data is included in the referenced report. Applicant has also indicated that the Pinellas Report is available on the school district website. However, they did not indicate if the included school-level report is available at the same location or how it might need to be specifically accessed. • The sample report shows that data is available for individual school, district and state on one report. Including total revenue, as well as expenses for instructional and non instructional staff and materials. The data is also available as a total cost as well as in a per/student expenditure breakdown and comparison. | | |
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 3 |
| (B)(3) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has cited a new Florida Statute that requires schools to provide a variety of learning options, to allow students to progress at their own pace and to access enrichment as needed. The applicant believes this statute will provide significant autonomy as aligned with the proposal. The applicant links this autonomy with the ability to allow | | |

- for blended and virtual opportunities, but has not specifically aligned how this statute supports their specific project.
- Applicant indicates that they are thinking about requesting waivers to allow students to earn course credit based on mastery vs. seat time. It is unclear how much autonomy the new statute (ACCEL) will actually provide since the district is indicating a potential need for waivers.
 - Applicant states that they believe they have autonomy, but have not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that autonomy exists to successfully implement the personalized learning environment.

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

15

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant indicates that they utilized stakeholder feedback data from the 2009-2010 school year, as well as more current data collected by United Way and Pinellas County Health and Human Services. It is evident that the applicant utilized this data to support the decisions they were making, however much of it was outdated and it is unclear what current data included.
- They mention holding interviews and focus groups, but provide no detail of how many were held or how many people attended so there is insufficient evidence that stakeholders had meaningful input into the design and revision of this project.
- There is no evidence of teacher approval of the project, or documentation of whether the district is part of a collective bargaining agreement. Teacher support is not addressed in this section and it does not appear that teachers played a meaningful role in the development.
- There are several letters of support. All participating schools provided a letter of support, as well as a couple from businesses and other community partners. There were no letters of support from parents or parent organizations, or institutions of higher education.
- There is no evidence that student input was sought for the development of this project.

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

| | Available | Score |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 5 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The plan that the district has put forth is lacking significant details to ensure improved student learning. The applicant has not provided sufficient detail of how curriculum and instruction will change in order to provide a personalized learning environment for each student. Applicant has provided some identified activities including developing a plan for college readiness standards for middle school students, but does not provide a timeline or the person(s) who are responsible for implementing.
- Applicant included an anecdote about a student linking their post-high school career choice to some in-classroom activities, however, they do not describe the structures and systems that will make this type of personalized learning available to all students. Nor do they provide a timeline for developing an individual learning plan process
- Applicant indicates that students and families will meet with administrators, teacher, counselor/social worker to begin the learning process. However, not specific tool is indicated for structuring individual learning plans, or how those plans will be translated into modified academic instruction beyond ability-level grouping. This process also seems time consuming since the school administrator will need to meet with each family, and the applicant has not indicated a timeline or process for making sure these initial learning meetings happen in a timely fashion.
- Applicant mentions doing initial home visits as part of the parent engagement plan. Again, no timeline for these visits was included. They have developed an Intake Assessment Questionnaire that appears to be assessing the home environment for what the school has determined is the 'right' environment. The assessment feels like something done to parents and not with them, and does not appear to be including any cultural elements to help navigate this process. As written, this process may be offensive to parents and make them feel like they are being judged by the school rather than being invited to be a partner with the school. The intake assessment also does not seem to indicate an opportunity for parents to talk about the strengths of their child as it might relate to learning, or to assess how parents and students might be able to access technology (computer and internet accessibility).
- Applicant has provided a template for a student tracking tool that is to be used by students to follow an instructional lesson. This is not an independent learning plan. As written, there is no indication of how this tool will be taught, how support will be scaffolded, or how high needs students will be supported. It is trying to make students responsible for tracking lessons, however, it appears more like a checklist of the elements of the lesson and does

not seem student friendly, particularly for middle grade students.

- The applicant has indicated that they will provide social workers to support students and families and are attempting to assign each social worker with 50 families. This seems like an unrealistic goal and there is no description of how they formulated this ratio. Currently they have identified 3600 students as part of the project. If they assign students to social workers, that is 72 social workers needed. Even accounting for multiple kids per family, this feels like not enough adults to provide meaningful support - specifically since they have not provided their rationale for this element.
- Applicant indicates that students and parents/guardians will understand how what they are learning is related to college and career readiness, but they do not indicate how this will happen, when it will happen or where it will happen. Applicant indicates a plan for cultural diversity training, with a logic model. However, not specifics were included, so it is unclear if this has been developed for middle grade students, or if it has yet to be developed. This section talks about outcomes and what students will be able to do, but it does not provide any specific identification of activities that will lead to these skills.
- While some activities have been included, and some responsibilities have been identified, there is no overall plan with specific goals, activities, timeline, deliverable and identification of who will be responsible for implementing each element.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has identified some strategies for how they will recruit and hire teachers, but have failed to provide specific timelines, goals and activities for much of their teaching and learning plan.
- Applicant indicates that a total of 324 teachers will be recruited, hired, and trained using the Haberman assessment. However, it is assumed that there are currently teachers at each of these schools and there is no indication of if teachers not meeting the requirements will be reassigned, or how that might be addressed. The applicant has also failed to articulate the aspects of the Haberman assessment that they believe will lead to improved teaching and learning or to tie it to the pilot project.
- Applicant has identified 10 teacher training modules that all teachers within the project will need to be trained on. Most of these 10 modules focus on aspects of differentiating learning for students as well as utilizing technology, assessments and cultural sensitivity training. The 10 modules will be primarily given to teachers during the summer, however, there is no indication of how the teachers will be assessed to determine which modules they have mastered, what mastery looks like, or how it will tie specifically to instruction. As written, the teaching and learning activities are focused on differentiating instruction, not providing a personalized learning plan with multiple ways for students to demonstrate mastery.
- The district has a data system that stores student data and assessment, with reports that allow teachers to examine student progress.
- Applicant indicates that parents will be able to access the districts web sites and some community resources, but there is little information about how parents will be supported in understanding the technology tools available or how to read and understand student data. Again, there are activities identified, but no key goals or specific timeline for supporting parents.
- As written, this plan lacks key goals, activities, timeline, deliverables and identification of responsibility. The district has not formulated a comprehensive plan for how this project will be implemented to support a change in teaching and learning.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant included a central office organizational chart, but it did not indicate which area superintendent would be overseeing the schools in this project, or if there were multiple areas represented. The org chart did not indicate how the project staff for this implementation would be included or who they would report to.
- Applicant indicates that they will support school administrators with site-based management techniques. If the school leadership wants to make a change, there is a process they can follow to request permission from the district. It is unclear how long the process takes, who makes the final approval, or what activities require this documentation.

It is unclear how much autonomy school leaders will really have or what the extent of the process will be for them to make decisions.

- Applicant mentions that school leaders have the ability to extend the learning day and year, but does not explain the process or if approval is required to make these types of schedule changes.
- Applicant indicates that the schools involved in this project will have the opportunity to work with district project staff to develop a detailed scope of work for how the model will be implemented at their site. This is an area that should have been done, at least to some extent, prior to submitting the project proposal. It is unclear how this process will happen or when it will happen.
- In terms of allowing students the opportunity to progress based on a demonstration of mastery, the applicant has not included any evidence that there is a process in place for elementary or middle school students. They have included the information of the process at the high school/credit-earning level, but have not specifically identified how this will take place at the project schools or if there is sufficient autonomy from the state/district to do this.
- For students with learning disabilities and English learners, the applicant has provided a description of the process for their district, however, they have not specifically linked how they will support these two groups of learners within the new project. They mention developing equitable access for these students, but there is no indication that this is well thought of.
- The district has included some activities, and identified some areas where a person responsible is identified. However, in large part there is no high quality plan including key goals, activities, timelines or deliverables indicating how the district is utilizing existing policies or how they might amend/develop policies to support this type of learning environment.

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

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant indicates that they currently have a district technology plan that requires a 3:1 student to computer ratio, however, they have not provided specific details for the schools identified for this plan to insure that students will have access. The narrative indicates that each program will have access to a mobile lab of 30 computers, however, they have indicated a student group of approximately 3600 students that will be served by this program and there is no indication of the number, type and quality of technology that students will have access to, or how it will help them with their learning.
- The narrative includes a plan to provide technology opportunities for all students and parents by 2016. However, it is not defined what 'opportunities' means, who will insure that it happens, etc. This is not a plan, but a goal.
- Applicant indicates a partnership with Bright House Cable has been established to provide low-cost internet access (\$10/month) for low-income families. However, there is no indication of how many families will need this service, or if they will have access to computers. The district says that students will be able to checkout computers if needed, but has not indicated how many computers are available for this service or the process for allocation.
- The applicant has described their information systems, but have not provided any information of how students and parents are able to export their data, or how parents will be trained on the use of these systems.
- The district indicates that it has a schools interoperability framework compliant database and has provided some details of how this database links human resources, student information and budget data.
- While the district has identified some activities, this does not count as a high-quality plan and is significantly lacking details. There are few key goals, activities, timelines, deliverables to insure that district infrastructure will support the project implementation as described in the narrative.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has provided insufficient evidence of a high quality plan. They have identified the role of an external evaluator, the role of the project manager in oversight of compliance, the role of the manager in terms of convening a team for evaluation. They have also identified some activities. However, this is not a comprehensive plan and it is not evident how these various elements will align to provide an environment conducive to continuous improvement. There are no timelines or deliverables identified, and the process for looking at collected data is vague and does not include specific ways that the district will make mid-course adjustments based on data collected.

- There is no indication of how data will be shared internally or externally, or any indication that the district has even thought about this process.
- There is no specific linkage to the project specific goals, other than the line that says they will will discuss and select measurable indicators relevant to the project.

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

5

1

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has provided the beginning of a communication plan. They have identified existing communication channels, both internally and externally, that can be utilized to share information about the work that is happening. However, they have not specifically developed a plan with goals, activities, timelines and deliverables as it relates to this specific project implementation.
- There is not indication that the applicant has determine how to utilize these communication strategies as part of their continuous improvement plan, as most of the existing options are for sharing information with people not soliciting feedback and not used as an evaluation instrument.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has identified 14 performance measures for their project.
- For the highly effective teacher/principal performance measure, the baseline data is 4% indicating that approximately 4% of students have access to a highly effective teacher/principal. The end of grant goal is only 20%, leaving 80% of students without access to a highly effective teacher/principal. This is a low goal and does not indicate a level that will drastically improve student learning. The performance measure for effective is more ambitious, moving from 30% to 75%.
- For the grades 4-8 FCAT Reading performance measure as an indicator of college readiness, the baseline for all students is 31% and the post grant goal is only 52%. As one of the key areas for the grant, this is not ambitious growth. Additionally, the target for African-American students is only 33% and the target for White students is 90%. This is not an ambitious goal, nor is it designed to decrease the achievement gap, particularly since the majority of identified students for this project are African-American this is not a strong performance measure and goal. Similar data exists for the Math performance measure as well, indicating a unambitious performance measure.
- Measure # 7 focuses on suspensions as one of the behavior indicators. The applicant has projected a decrease by 41% across sub-groups. However, it does not appear that they are paying particular attention to the disproportionate suspension rates for African American Students vs. White students. As a central core of the project includes cultural awareness, this performance indicator does not appear to be taking into account existing data, and looking at the gap between students of colors and white students, or analyzing how this percentage works compared to their district demographic data. A decrease in suspensions is positive, however, it needs to be evaluated differently in terms of this particular project.
- Performance measure #9 is a parent/family engagement measure using a survey response rate as the indicator. Currently the average return rate is 20%, and the goal is only 40%. Because the project as documented includes a high-touch for parents (home visits, meetings with parents to establish learning goals), a 40% return rate goal is low and not ambitious.
- Performance measure #12 indicates that project schools will increase at least one school grade level per year moving from F & D as baseline to all As by the end of the project. There is not enough information provided about this school grade level assessment, how it is determined, etc. to determine if this is an appropriate measure for this project.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has developed a logic model that outlines their thinking for evaluating the effectiveness of their funded activities. This logic model includes goals and activities and a broad timeline. There is no indication of who will be responsible for each of the activities and identified 'outputs'.
- The plan, as written, is not comprehensive and needs additional details to finalize the metrics to assess each of the outputs as identified.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|----------|
| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
| (F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has not provided sufficient detail linking project expenditures to specific activities. Within their budget, they reference portions of the application by page number and section, but do not provide specific links about how those activities are represented in the proposed budget. Some of the proposed budget items are not sufficiently represented in the plan. Applicant indicates approximately \$231 thousand for extended learning that is not specifically referenced in the project plan. • Applicant indicates that the total budget for the project over four years is just under \$19 Million dollars, with approximately \$9.3 million coming from non-grant funds. • One time costs include technology - \$100 thousand for iPads, technology for grants coordinator, laptops for social workers, computers for other grant personnel. • The personnel costs identified do not align with the project as written. Narrative indicates that there will be one social worker for every 50 families. However, the budget only allocates a total of two social workers per school - 10 social workers total, for approximately 3600 students. This budget expenditure does not match the project as written. • Since the narrative describing the project indicated that schools would develop a plan for implementation, it seems this budget may or may not align depending on the plans that schools develop. | | |
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 2 |
| (F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has not provided a high-quality plan for sustainability. In Table 14, they identify their external resource partners and the dollars committed for the four-years of the grant, but have not provided sufficient information of long-term commitment from these partners to indicate if the funding they are providing will remain consistent. In the same table, the internal resource section is significantly lacking detail and it is unclear if they have identified the cost to main the project, as written, in original five schools, or that they have a full scale up plan for the new schools they plan to add. • Applicant has identified reallocating some Title I and II funds to support scale up, but there is insufficient detail to insure that the capacity they claim to build during the initial four years will actually sustain this scale up. • There are no elements associated with a high quality plan including a lack of key goals, activities, timelines, deliverable or who will be responsible to insure the ongoing financial sustainability of the project. | | |

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|----------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 3 |
| Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has identified a number of public/private partners that are doing work aligned with their project application. A few of the partners are embedded in the funding formula for the grant, providing financial resources. • The Juvenile Welfare Board was a member of the pilot project and supported early learning initiatives, out of school time initiative as well as family counseling system of care support. The intent of this partnership is to provide linkages to services for families in need. While they were a member of the pilot program, there is no description of the success of that pilot, what was learned, and how they will continue services in a scaled-up model. This partnership, along with the City of St. Petersburg, supports an afterschool program called the RÇclub. The outline of this program appears as a solid academic support program. Again, no evidence of effectiveness to date, or how they will support a significant scale-up. • All of the project schools are located in the City of St. Petersburg, and the city has been identified as a partner along with the Pinellas Education Foundation. They will work to implement a 'Baby Talk Academy' with the support of the University of South Florida, this is part of a pre-literacy program. They are also indicate that this partnership will be providing a summer program for thirty 4th & 5th grade students. There is no specific connection between this | | |

work and the work of the school, and a program for 30 students is not a significant impact in a targeted population of almost 3600 students.

- Applicant has identified a project called the iClass 21st Century Community Learning Center. There appears to be significant overlap with this project and the outlined school-based project. This center will do in-school support, home visits and provide wrap around services delivered by social works and intervention specialists, connecting families to health and wellness services. It is unclear if the social workers identified in the CPP are the same as the social works identified in the project proposal, or if these are additional people.
- There is a lot of alignment/overlap between the CPP population level desired results and the performance measure indicators from earlier in the application. They have included desired results for the entire population including ages 0-high school, and parent and community groups.
- Applicant has established performance measures and targets for each of the identified goals. It is unclear if they are estimating supporting the entire community, or just the community served by the five project schools. They have a goal of offering extended learning programs to 90% of their identified population. If this is community-wide, or even if it is just five schools, that is a large capacity issue and they have not provided sufficient detail to talk about scale up of the services.
- The applicant has provided a lot of narrative about the partners and what the partnerships might do. They have not provided enough information about how they will track the selected indicators or how that data collection will be used to provide improvement opportunities or to support scale-up. They also do not specifically address the needs of English learners or students with disabilities, but have provided several partnerships focusing on wrap-around family support services.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

| | Available | Score |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | | Not Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has addressed how they will build on the four core educational assurance areas. They have identified a number of strategies for improving teacher hiring and retention, improving professional development. They have identified the need to develop college- and career-ready standards for elementary and middle school students, as well as developing opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery based on competency, but none of this work has been described comprehensively.
- They identify performance targets that show an increase in academic achievement and an increase in access to the most effective educators, however, these performance targets are not ambitious.
- As written, the project proposal focuses on differentiation strategies and cultural awareness education for both teachers and students. There is little info on how the project will create personalized learning opportunities for students that move beyond differentiation.

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Total | 210 | 73 |
|--------------|------------|-----------|



Race to the Top - District Technical Review Form

Application #0194FL-4 for School Board of Pinellas County

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
|--|-----------|-------|

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>The applicant provided a vision and rationale for the long-range project, building on a small pilot project that will be extended into other schools into the district with RTT-D funding. The strength of this vision is that the project plan will target a focused group of high-need students and their schools, which currently serve an underachieving group of African American students. Five target schools are proposed to be served, and all are within a 2-7 mile community which houses high concentrations of poor families. The project, called Schools of Promise, aligns its goals with the core assurance areas of this grant notice.</p> | | |
| <p>The applicant addresses the core assurance areas in this section, indicating that its program will concentrate on improving teacher effectiveness, putting integrated data systems on line, and upgrading the teaching program to focus ensuring that all students achieve on college- and career- ready standards.</p> | | |
| <p>The applicant's vision has some strong components, including the intent to concentrate resources in a cluster of schools and to build on a several-year pilot tryout. The weakness of this section is that the applicant does not make a strong case as to why a small pilot, serving only 133 elementary school students, should be considered the foundation of a five-school implementation of a pre-K through middle-school program. The power of the model is particularly questionable because, in nearly five years, the pilot school was still receiving a failing grade in the State's evaluation system.</p> | | |
| <p>No external evaluation evidence was presented to make a case for the program's potential. Although the applicant stated that the model for the program was the Harlem Children's Zone, no information demonstrated how the pilot effort replicated that very successful model.</p> | | |
| <p>The applicant also claims that "the key to the project design" is that it will use data systems and tools to track high school and college readiness. However, there is no explanation of how an elementary- and middle-school project will "track" high school outcomes.</p> | | |
| <p>Another area that is unclear is that the applicant referenced the use of the Haberman model to screen potential new teachers, but there is no indication of how the Haberman strategy was used in the pilot and, based on the failing grade the school received, it appears that the hiring strategy was not as effective as it should have been.</p> | | |
| <p>The applicant also does not describe what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments.</p> | | |
| <p>For these reasons, the applicant's discussion of its three-component model is weakened the absence of good evidence for the vision's potential. The discussion does not articulate a clear and credible approach to the RTT-D's goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support.</p> | | |

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
|--|-----------|----------|

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|--|--|--|
| (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: | | |
| <p>The applicant presents a foundational data-based rationale for selecting its targeted schools. It provides appropriate information to explain the needs analysis that was completed to select the five potential program sites. The applicant's plan focuses on serving the highest-risk students in district schools that have persistently received the lowest possible State-wide evaluation scores.</p> | | |
| <p>This section satisfactorily explains the rationale for clustering the proposed program within a group of schools in the same feeder-school district. Surprisingly, however, according to the data provided, the proposed program will serve a relatively small percentage of the district's lowest income population. Although the applicant provides the basic information required to meet this criterion, it does not explain why more of the school district's lowest income students will not be served by this effort.</p> | | |
| <p>The applicant indicates that the program will provide services for students and teachers, and instructional innovations and family supports in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade classes in three elementary schools and in two sixth through eighth grade schools. Mathematics and ELA are the subject matter foci of this project. Since this is such a small program, serving such a narrow band of students, it is surprising that only ELA and mathematics will receive content focus. There should be plenty of opportunity in a project of this small size to offer a much more comprehensive program that will truly prepare young people to be ready for a college- and career-ready high school program.</p> | | |
| <p>The applicant indicates that it conducted a "comprehensive needs assessment" of one of the target schools. There is no explanation as to why only this school benefited from such a needs analysis and no explanation of how the lessons learned from this analysis will be used in the proposed Schools of Promise project. Most worrisome, the proposed project will</p> | | |

serve only a few of the needs identified and reported in this analysis (e.g., help parents help kids at home), but it does not address the highest priority items requested (e.g., more social service support to parents; more youth sports, mentoring and tutoring, after-school programming, crime watch, nutrition and basic family assistance with buying clothing, shoes, and basic utilities, etc.).

Finally, the applicant does not include in its data any information about the number or percent of special education or English Learners in the five participating schools. Without this analysis, the project will be ill-prepared to offer services to this significant subgroup of needy students.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan presented includes evidence that a systematic pre-planning process was undertaken and a strategy and scale-up plan has been defined that followed best practices approaches for such planning. The scale up of the original model for this program envisions moving from one school to five schools and eventually (post-grant) into 8 middle schools and 3 feeder high schools. The strength of this change strategy is that it scales up from early grades to high school grades, enabling the students and the systems to development and matures in sequence.

These features, do not represent a high-quality plan for implementation, however. There are significant oversights and holes in the planning of this proposed project. The narrative is not clear if this is a plan for implementation - meaning scaling-up from the small pilot of one school to five new schools, or if it is suggesting a post program-scale up. Among the other things that are not clear in this section are:

- It is not clear what are the parameters of the plan for each school's program, e.g., the "Baby Talk" program (called "Baby Balk sic in the figure) proposes to serve new borns to kindergarten children, but there is no explanation of where the 0 - 3-year old program fits in the larger K- 8 program
- The applicant implies that the K through 8th grade program will "scale-up" into high school, but the continuity between the base program and the scale-up is not clear.
- The "management plan" in the Appendix is difficult to understand. There are four broad categories of activities proposed, but these categories do not align with the project's three goals (teacher effectiveness, integrated data system, and standards-based instruction). The "responsible person" column refers not to persons but to positions; and it not clear when the proposed project will begin.
- The "activities" column refers to categories of program components not activities, and does not provide date-specific timelines, benchmarks, or milestones when activities will begin or end.
- Figure 3, the "Scaling up process," is confusing to read. It is not clear if this is an implementation framework or a framework to move from the four-year RTT-D grant into the post-grant phase. The figure suggests a circular set of interlocking activities, but the tasks are not laid out in the figure to represent a cyclical process.

These many confusions cause this section to fail to meet the criteria of a high-quality plan, as defined in the RTT-D grant notice.

| | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 7 |
|--|-----------|----------|

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The project goals for student outcomes are presented in easy-to-read and to interpret charts. The applicant has defined a straightforward set of basic measures and defined its methodology for setting targets (50 percent increase in percent proficient in five years), which is a potentially achievable target. Performance goals, including academic gains, closing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment targets are specified overall and for all subgroups. Data sources are defined and will be accessible for monitoring and analysis.

There are also a number of problems with this list of outcomes. Most seriously, the outcomes presented in this list do not address goals for the SoP pre-K program, which was introduced in the previous section. Since the applicant is only seeking funds to conduct the program in five schools, the performance outcomes should be aligned with the performance baselines in those five schools.

While the goals may be achievable they are not ambitious. One would expect more than 60 percent of the African American students to achieve the project's goals after a four-year exposure to the program's opportunities.

It is not clear what the data sources are for establishing some of the baselines, particularly the college enrollment numbers. Since only 5-7 schools from one community will participate in this project, the performance goals should be

specific to these schools. More information is needed about the source of information for the charts and methodology for determining student outcomes projections (e.g., data includes percentages of college enrollment but it is not clear where these baselines are derived from and how baseline graduation rates were figured for five pre-K through 8th grade schools). The projections for achievement among subgroups move little beyond the approximate 50 percent starting point of achievement, which is the program's baseline.

Two other concerns arise from a review of this section.

1. The figures in the charts include goals for several very small subgroups of fewer than 30 students. It is typically the policy of States to limit reporting of outcome evidence for groups that are smaller than 30 students. No explanation explains the rationale for changing that policy in these charts.
2. The charts do not include evidence of the growth patterns expected based on State-determined targets for the proposed program schools.

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

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|----------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 5 |
| <p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents only very general evidence to demonstrate how learning has advanced in the school district over the past four years. Its charts, graphs, and raw student data indicate improvements in achievement indicators for high school students, but not for the schools and grades that will be included in the proposed program. The applicant reports evidence of actions taken to upgrade four high schools which were declared low performing in 2009.</p> <p>Most of the evidence in this section addresses the ways that the proposed grant-funded program will change how the applicant reports on student learning, achievement gap closing, reform goals accomplished, and strategies that will make student performance data available to students, educators and parents. But the applicant offers no evidence of the track record of improvements for the district's elementary students, although the proposed RTT-D grant will fund an elementary- and middle-grades focused project.</p> <p>This section is designed as a data section, but the applicant makes generalizations in the narrative that is often unsystematic or unrelated to the project goals. The broad generalizations made are not confirmed with data-based evidence about what or how improvements have occurred in the past, how stable or continuing they are, and what is being done by the district to sustain progress.</p> <p>The information provided does not make a convincing case that the pilot program on which this proposal is designed has a "clear track record of success."</p> | | |
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
| <p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section includes ambitious goals and strong promises of data transparency. The evidence presented provides some of the required indicators from early efforts to put this system on line.</p> <p>According to the narrative, the district is an active user of technology-based data. However, the evidence presented to meet this criterion and the data provided (Figure 7) are difficult to read and interpret. As a result, the data are not as easily understood or transparent as it might be. The applicant also does not provide required evidence that demonstrates the availability of school-level data in the required categories, e.g., the personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification, or actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff and/or non-personnel expenditures.</p> <p>It would have been helpful to have a clearer visual of the data that the district provides to the public with an easily understood explanation of what the data categories in the sample charts refer to. As presented, the Transparency Report is not as self-explanatory as it should be to be truly transparent, as required in this notice.</p> | | |
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 5 |

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that Florida is an early state reform state with many state policies to promote local reforms and flexibility. It further indicates that the SEA has established policies that support the four core assurances of this NIA and has encouraged the LEAs to be proactive in aligning their own programs with the SEA policy changes. The applicant states that district has sought and received policy waivers to date, and expects to be able to obtain support for its proposed program changes.

The applicant claims that the SEA provides sufficient autonomy to implement its planned reform components, including required school reporting of mid-term promotions, subject matter accumulation, and availability of virtual instruction in high school subjects. However, the applicant does not specify applicable flexibilities that the State makes available within the elementary, preschool, or middle grades, where this proposed project will be implemented. It also does not anticipate what specific waivers it expects to seek to achieve the goals of this project.

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

15

3

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant very broadly describes instances of including families, community members, teachers, and principals in various needs assessment meetings to assess perspectives of community and thought leader representatives. The applicant does not, however, provide firm evidence about how wide an outreach effort this was. In particular, there is inadequate information about how many participants from key constituency groups actually participated in the application development, what kind of feedback they offered, and how the application was improved by their feedback. While the teacher association representative was reported to be involved, there is no evidence about how many teachers or school leaders contributed to the thinking about the proposal.

Surprisingly, there is no direct evidence indicating how the district's collective bargaining units were represented in the grant development process. Although there were a few letters of support from some potential partners and regional government representatives, there were no support letters from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education. Although the principals of the five participating schools submitted endorsements of the proposal, no individual teachers from these schools indicated how they were involved or submitted letters of support for the grant.

It is a matter of some irony that the applicant's summary of the findings from the stake holder meetings demonstrates that the contributors to these meetings sought entirely different kinds of support programming than this grant will fund. The applicant's summary of these community meetings itemizes a list of "what needs to change and how to do it" and "what helps" and "what hinders" the neighborhoods in which the prospective schools are located. None of the items contributors requested suggested technology for managing student data, enhancements in teacher's teaching practices, or career and college ready standards, which are the cornerpieces of this proposal.

Although the applicant provides evidence of outreach to stake holders and letters of support, the evidence suggests that (1) teachers' voices were not reflected in grant development, (2) stake holders did not review or provide feedback in the grant development process, and, (3) significantly the application seeks funding for programs which were not apparently requested by those stakeholders who were invited to contribute to application planning and development.

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

| | Available | Score |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 5 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes engaging families as partners in its commitment to personalizing teaching and learning. The district's plan is to teach students to create "personalized life plans" through which they "map learning progressions" based on their interests and personal goals. Parent support, including assigning social workers to families and conducting home planning visits to "assess" the home environment, are among the new initiatives proposed to create a "wrap around intervention" in which teachers use technology-driven assessments to motivate students. Through additional support staff and social workers parents will receive tips and ideas about how to helping their students be more successful in school. The applicant acknowledges that engaging parents in new, more supportive ways requires strong parent education, cultural

sensitivity, and schools and teachers that are approachable and available as partners in supporting students learning, but it does not show how these qualities will be strengthened in participating schools.

The applicant's approach to personalizing teaching and learning seeks to increase students' and teachers' sensitivity to cultural differences and to use assessment-based technology to build motivation, resilience, and preference competence. The proposed program roughly outlines slightly different approaches for reaching middle school and high school students, but it does not address strategies for reaching early and late elementary age students. It seeks to encourage middle schoolers to think more proactively about college and career readiness; it is silent on promoting students' thinking about college- and career-ready requirements for elementary-age children. The program anticipates that teachers will use various kinds of data and more proactive teaching to more fully invest students with ever greater responsibility for guiding their own learning.

The weakness of this vision is in the absence of critical details, or planned procedures and protocols to guide implementation and teaching practice. The expectation is to serve students at all grade levels, but the applicant does not detail how the vision adjusts to different grades, readiness levels, prior experiences, and different levels of risk or needs for support. The applicant's plan does not include a step-by-step process for facing the predictable challenges of connecting Common Core expectations and student-directed learning. There is a long research-based literature that demonstrates the many potential downfalls of trying to balance responsive teaching, students' need for clear direction, closely supervised one-on-one personalized guidance, and students' initiative-driven learning. The applicant has not shows how a test- and technology-based managements system contributes to student-directed learning or how student choices about their own learning will align with the expectation that they will "choose" to learn Common Core standards.

The proposed system fails to plan how it will turn theory to practice. The proposed approach to teaching, especially high-need students, fails to address the following criterion within this element:

- does not explain how teachers will change their teaching at all grade levels so that students are pursuing learning that is linked to college- and career-ready standards;
- does not explain how teachers will instill in students mastery of critical academic content and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity or problem solving;
- does not spell out examples of what it means for teachers to personalize instructional content and skill development;
- does not create a vivid description of how pre-K through eighth grade classrooms function as increasingly supportive and personalized systems when they adapt the proposed technologies;
- does not provide working examples of how the technology-based assessments will enable teachers to strengthen students' engagement throughout the grade levels; and
- does not detail the mechanisms that are in place for ensuring that students understand how to use the new technology tools to track and manage their own learning.

In brief, the applicant describes many laudable components of personalized learning environments, but there are few specifics about to help teachers change how they actually "personalize" their classrooms and learn to teach to students' interests and need levels. The vision is that teaching and learning processes will change, and instructional content will become more "personalized" and more rigorous, while they are also more responsive to students' entry skill levels.

Finally, the applicant does not detail how the proposed planning and collaboration process will ensure that teachers recognize their responsibilities for skillfully instructing students, especially struggling learners, special education and EL students, in ways that all students experience tangible skill development and knowledge building in an appropriately scaffolded way.

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

20

5

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to engage professional teams to (1) train teachers to use personalized learning strategies to met student's academic needs; (2) to integrate Common Core Standards into their use of on-line data systems and content-based instruction; and (3) to help teachers learn to use multi-modality teaching processes (e.g., discussion and collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio, manipulatives). Although these strategies are new to the district, they are long-established best teaching practices and the applicant does not make a solid case for how it will inspire teachers to adapt practices that have been long available but they have chosen not to use to date.

A challenge raised by the narrative is the district's assumption that installing new data platforms, which have not been tested widely in the district, will provide the remedy is it seeking. The ideas are proposed with enthusiastic advocacy, but there is an underlying misconception in the application which assumes that computerized testing systems have the capacity for diagnosing and assessing students learning needs where teachers have previously failed. The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence about how these proposed systems have succeeded in similar contexts in the past.

Moreover, no evidence demonstrates the technical reliability of the formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments that are embedded into the technology. Furthermore, this section includes many unexamined assumptions and very limited detail about how teachers will be trained and how the system will function at different grade levels, pre-K through grade 8, in different subjects, and in different kinds of schools.

The applicant has not included a high-quality plan, as defined in this notice, that convincingly demonstrates that it will deepen and broaden the skills of teachers who are serving the district's most high-risk students in hard-to- staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education).

The applicant offers the broadest possible promise of an ongoing peer evaluation system and an "expedite[d]" formal teacher evaluation system that incorporates "new" professional practice expectations and student growth measures. Details of how this critical evaluation system will roll out for both school leaders and classroom teachers are missing from the proposed plan. Evidence is not included to indicate how the training, policies, tools, data, and resources will include (i) Information from the district's teacher evaluation system and (2) training and evaluation practices that continuously measure and improve student, school, and districtwide progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

Another concern with this proposed system is that there is no evidence showing where and with what kinds of students the systems' methods and training have previously succeeded. Moreover, the proposed technology-driven assessment vision disregards the additional time teachers and educational support professionals will need to make maximum use of the new assessment systems. The narrative assumes that the technology and the training will be sensitive enough to fully personalize the teaching and leading in new ways, but it does not provide practical examples or evidence of how these systems have worked effectively system-wide in other locations. No reference is made to any rigorous evaluations that affirm the workability of the model beyond the three-year pilot trial with 133 early elementary students in one school within the district.

Finally, it is not evident what specific training strategies will be used, who the trainers are, and what evidence confirms the knowledge and skill of the trainers and training model. It is not clear what training schedules will be implemented and what feedback loops will verify that educators are developing the know-how to use the newly available tools, data, and resources on schedule. Learning to accelerate student learning is more than a computer-based test report. It means teachers using high-quality instructional content at all grades and in all courses system-wide. No plan is offered that shows the kind of staged- or phased-in implementation that would give different schools and different communities the time they need to come up to speed with all the proposed new systems.

Absent these many key features, the plan does not meet high-quality the standard defined by this criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points) | 15 | 5 |

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed organizing structure and program oversight strategy indicates the district's readiness to support school-level flexibility. The initiative will be conducted by a project director who will coordinate the administrative work of overseeing the program activities within schools. Support staff members will increase services to reading and math coaches, teacher assistants, social workers, and extended learning instructions. The district's site-based management supports school-level flexibility that allows school managers to apply for internal waivers and flexibilities, which enables them to adapt programs to meet school-level needs. Specific school-level plans and program modifications will be determined once the grant is received; proposed modifications were not suggested.

The application states that current LEA administrative practices and traditions support innovation at the school level, but examples are limited. The broad description summarizes briefly how school leadership teams in the program schools will be supported by a supplementary administrative central office personnel. Job descriptions are provided for line staff, but not for the project's top managers, so the management structure does not make clear how the project's three major components will be managed from central office into classrooms.

No examples of proposed rules or policy changes are offered to show how the proposed personalized learning system will be implemented. In particular, it is not clear how the system will create more opportunities for adaptable credit earning and alternative mastery routes; it is not clear how more time will be created for teachers to participate in the extra professional learning and to shoulder new responsibilities for assessment and curriculum restructuring; and it is not clear how families will have access to information that will help them support their students in learning to use these new

systems. Another concern is that the applicant does not address how it is establishing its new system so that it honors personal privacy of students and families while installing data exchanges that many different professionals will be able to access.

Although the applicant discusses its plans to address special education and English language learning needs, it does not suggest specific policies or procedures that might need adjustment to implement the proposed personalized learning system so that it serves special education or EL students. Also missing from this discussion are examples of supportive policies and procedures or infrastructure adjustments that will ensure all students, especially students in low-income families, will have access to internet and to computers within their homes or in their immediate neighborhoods.

Absent the specific examples of the new policies and procedures, the applicant does not meet the requirement of having devised a high-quality implementation plan that will support project implementation so the project ensures that every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) has the support and resources needed, when and where they are needed.

| | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
|---|-----------|----------|

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents an idealized vision of an optimal use of digital resources, but it does not provide external verification of the system's potential effectiveness. While an attractive picture is painted, there is little attention to the practicalities of implementing the interacting systems, including the details of how the system will continue to train teachers, leaders, trainers, students and families during each implementation phase.

The idea of "anytime/anywhere" access to learning resources, assessments, and assignment tools does not address the practical challenges involved with motivating students to learn how to access and use the new learning systems. The assumption that students, parents, or teachers will be seeking to engage in school on a 24/7 schedule neglects to confront the practical barriers of differential interest in and comfort with computers, available discretionary time, web access, or maintenance of modern computer systems. Computer systems that make possible 24/7 log-on feasibility can be created, but the applicant does not address how it will help all participants, from students to parents, to teachers and administrators to accept the inevitable steep learning curve that many "non-computer people" will have when they try to learn to use put technology to good use on an everyday basis. The applicant makes no mention of how its leaders will work with people who do not consider themselves "computer savvy" and so disengage rather engage in the necessary learning that will make the proposed tools serve their promise.

The applicant recognizes the need to serve low-performing and low-income students but nothing in the text addresses how the project anticipates bringing these hard-to-reach students into the system and keeping them productively and actively engaged in on-line learning.

The applicant makes a broad statement in this section regarding the plans to ensure all students and their families have broadband internet access at home and at school. The details provided do not flush out how that will happen, do not address how parents will be inspired to come to meetings to learn to use broad band internet access effectively. The project's ambitious statements represent unsubstantiated promises and expectations about what might happen as the systems are introduced.

The applicant discusses the interoperability of the several data bases within the school district and states that their integrated systems already pull data from multiple data sources within the school district and from the State- level MIS. Surprisingly, however, the narrative does not address the issues involved with ensuring privacy and security of interoperable data bases, a critical concern of any system that will be sharing educational records along with in-school and out-of-school professionals and social service personnel.

The high hopes for this program are not supported with the detail needed to explain how the project's key goals will be accomplished within the five target schools and, ultimately, scaled up districtwide.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 5 |

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes only a very general plan for implementing an upgraded version of the data and reporting systems

it proposes. Although the applicant assures the reader that the system, *Performance Matters*, will meet all of the varied needs and requirements detailed in this notice, the evidence for that certainty is unstated. A major concern is that the applicant fails to describe the evidence showing that the proposed new systems have been trial tested and proven with some objective certainty; and the applicant does not show that vendors have demonstrated, research-based evidence of their successes in high-poverty, low achieving schools.

Absent from this section are specifics that provide for timely and regular progress feedback or any details about how the applicant will measure implementation and outcomes, collect or analyze data, and share information internally and externally on the roll-out successes and challenges that the project encounters.

The big picture vision presented is a start, but it is absolutely necessary for the project team to have anticipated the details involved with the many phases of implementation, the sets of activities, the specific time lines, and the key personnel (beyond the project director and the data manager) who will actually manage the implementation and the training in five pre-K through grade 8 schools. For these reasons, this section does not meet the requirements of a high-quality plan.

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a host of communication strategies it will use to keep the community informed, stating a commitment to transparency and consistent communication to internal and external stakeholders.

An Office of Strategic Partnerships is planned and this office will be tasked with the responsibility for developing and sustaining relationships among families, the district, schools, and the community. This Office team will host a Parent Advocacy Program that seeks to engage parent participation; and they will organize Community Advisory Boards and promote mentoring and volunteer opportunities.

All these are useful actions and components of a plan but the plan does not specify timelines and benchmarks for implementing activities, and roles/responsibilities of leaders who will be implementing the proposed program elements.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A set of goal-based performance indicators are provided following the requirements in the RTT-D grant notice. However, the applicant has not offered an explanatory narrative that makes clear how the performance measures it proposes are aligned with the proposed project's component parts and there is no clear evidence of the validity of the measures proposed. Performance expectations can and should be explicitly measureable, using formally validated measurement instruments to provide easily interpreted, continuous progress reporting potential.

The applicant provides fragmented information which does not make the case for (1) why specific measures were selected, or (2) how each measure provides rigorous, timely, and formative information tailored to the proposed plan. No statement indicates how the applicant plans to review and improve the measures overtime if they are insufficient to gage implementation progress.

The narrative does not define the rationale for using each proposed performance measure, provide explicit information showing the names of and validation criteria for the measures of each stated goal, and it does not provide evidence about how data will be analyzed and reported by subgroups.

Although between 12 and 14 performance targets are indicated, the stated outcomes are not consistently aligned with the specific grade levels and age groups included in the proposed project. For example, although the project is designed to serve pre-K through middle school young people, the performance targets measure high school course taking performance, ACT/SAT scores, and graduation rates. The proposed performance measures are also not directly aligned to the project logic model (Figure 8). Finally, the proposal includes a pre-Kindergarten program component, for which no performance measures are proposed.

These missing pieces keep the plan from meeting the high-quality expectations stipulated in this criterion.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a logic model as the foundation of a planned evaluation and it proposes also to conduct a cost

assessment of the project, comparing the cost value of the Schools of Promise program with "traditional interventions." The logic model connects the project's core goals with inputs, activities, and outputs, and states short-term, medium-term and long term outcomes.

Overall, this evaluation idea is sound, however, the project outcomes are not consistently measureable by specific quantifiable outcomes, e.g., the goal of turning around the district's lowest achieving schools is measured by having system reforms "fully integrated districtwide into select schools." The applicant does not define what "fully integrated" means. Similarly, the goal of implementing college- and career-ready standards and assessments is to be measured by vaguely stated "positive outcomes for 70 percent of students," and "positive outcomes" are also not operationally defined.

The evaluation design is not accompanied by a specific plan for conducting a rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of the RTT-D- funded activities. The originally stated core components, professional development, technology-based assessment and learning, and teacher evaluation systems are not specified as targets of an externally-conducted evaluation, which would constitute the most reliable method of assessing the program's implementation and impact.

Finally, no evaluator is designated to take responsibility for the evaluation and no resources are budgeted to support the evaluation. Without either a defined evaluator or a clear outcome-based evaluation plan, the central requirements of this criterion have not been satisfactorily addressed.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 5 |

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The comprehensive budget tables in Section XI (Budget Subparts 1 - 5) are not aligned with proposed "Program Components & Timelines" presented in Figure 4 or with the Program Delivery Model, Figure 1. The budget includes four projects: academic support, competitive preference, data systems and accountability, and professional development, but these four parts do not align with the Program Delivery Model, which has the following five components: Academic excellence & extended learning; school readiness; social services and community integration, professional development, and parent and family engagement and enrichment.

While approximate budget figures are provided within each of the four budget-defined sub-projects, the absence of alignment with the program's narrative makes it difficult to assess whether the budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the project. Moreover, the budget does not make clear what funding streams will support the project beyond the RTT-D grant period. The project-specific components also do not appear to align with the substance of the applicant's program vision as presented in earlier sections for the following reasons:

- The four budget components do not make clear how decisions were made about funding from RTT-D grant money any other sources. For example, the academic component will use \$3.4 million of grants funding and \$4.0 million from "other sources," but these sources are not named.
- The "Data Systems and Accountability" is budgeted at approximately \$731,000 over four years out of RTT-D funding. Although this is a centerpiece of the program that is designed to "personalize" learning, the grant narrative indicates that it's "program analyst" --the main professional assigned to this program - will only be funded for two years. A clerk is proposed for four years, but no overall technology manager is earmarked to oversee the critical technology element.
- Investments in computer hardware, software, and trainers to teacher teachers, administrators, students and families to use the system are spread out among the four funded projects, so it is not evident how key hardware and software are funded to support the proposed personalized data systems and it is not clear how to assess if enough professional development is funded.
- The Competitive Preference Priority is funded at over \$10 million over the life of the grant, significantly dwarfing the \$ 7 million investment in the "academic" component of the project, which is also central to the applicant narrative and its program design.
- There is no clear evidence about what the funding streams are within the "other funds" categories for any of the project components. No rationale is given for various investment priorities and there is no systematic, cross-component explanation of how the applicant determined what funds will be drawn from various supports including State, LEA, and other Federal funds, or funds from external foundations.

- No budget information anticipates funding at the end of the grant period.

There is no systematic summary of one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs, and the budget narrative does not provide adequate evidence to demonstrate how key investments will be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

Finally, the rationale for funding some positions and activities is perplexing. To name a few examples: (1) it is not clear who manages the overall project, although there is a "grants coordinator" funded at a mid-level management level; (2) there is project "data analyst" funded for two years and a "data clerk" funded for the life of the grant, but no technology manager is funded; (3) STRIVE, the assessment system for personalizing assessments occurs as a one-time investment, although this is a four-year program component; (4) the Haberman training and screening investment is also minimal after year one.

Together, these confusions within the budget section significantly weaken this component of the application.

| | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 2 |
|---|-----------|----------|

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists miscellaneous investments that it projects will be available from partners to sustain its successful components over time. Table 15 presents a skeletal projected budget for the project's scale up for the four years following the end of the grant period.

The information provided does not constitute a high-quality plan for assuring project sustainability, however. The section is missing evidence of projected direct financial supports from State or local governments and community partner supporters. Table 14 summarizes potential internal and external fiscal resources, but it does not indicate how the applicant reached these projections. No evidence indicates how the applicant has evaluated the effectiveness of past investments and used that data to inform future investments.

The narrative also fails to specify how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes, and it does not explain critical assumptions such as the number of staff members that will be needed annually; salary increases; and costs of sustaining the capacity that is built during the grant period.

A footnote indicates that there is no anticipated funding needed to continue staff developers or additional data systems. These assumptions fly in the face of the experience of school districts and innovators, however. To sustain effective innovations, especially when technology is involved, requires considerable continuing direct costs, including costs of: updating materials and resources, ongoing training for current and new staff, replacing - perhaps even expanding - staff due to attrition, and technology maintenance and required upgrades to keep systems current with changing technology advances.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 5 |

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Competitive Preference Priority anticipates a wide expanse of support programs designed to offer a "continuum of solutions" aligned to reforms in teaching and learning. The applicant indicates that the CPP expands on existing collaborative public and private partnerships that currently work within schools. It indicates a consortium of partners that will continue to provide supportive services throughout the project period. This section offers many examples of varied programs that have been offered and will continue in the future. The limitation of the description is that so many varied services are offered with out clear integration or clear evidence of how they will work within one or another of the five participating project schools. Moreover, while the support systems are designed to serve students from 0 through early college, the RTT-D grant is designed to focus only on the elementary and middle-school years. These services are worthy, but how they support and sustain the proposed RTT-D initiative is hard to sort out. For example, among the identified problems are the following:

- The BabyTalk academy is not aligned with college and career readiness goals; and
- The St. Petersburg College Incentive program, while worthy, is also not aligned with the population that is being served during the grant period.
- It is not clear how proposed services for students, including those with social-emotional, and behavioral needs, will be focused on targeted children and their families;
- The applicant's decision-making process and infrastructure for selecting, implementing, and evaluating supports is not clearly results-oriented;
- While programs are proposed to serve different groups of students, it is not clear how the district will build the capacity of staff to enable them to assess the needs and assets of participating students
- The applicant has not indicated specific strategies for engaging parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions and improving results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs.
- The applicant has offered a limited and incomplete description of how it plans to scale its supplementary service model.

The applicant identifies population-level desired results that align with and support the broader RTT-D proposal, however, performance measures and outcomes are not grounded in solid baselines. Furthermore necessary information about measurement instruments are insufficient to ensure that measures will be reliable and valid assessments of outcomes. It is also not clear how the proposed data systems will improve results for participating students in special populations including immigrants, non-English speaking families and children with special education needs.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

| | Available | Score |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant has met the key criteria for Absolute Priority 1 in a project which conceptualizes a plan to move from a 133-student first grade pilot program to a project that serves 3500 students from birth through eighth grades. The central objective of the project is to overhaul the district's student data and assessment systems and to personalize its assessment and instructional practices; to improve its teacher recruitment, training, and retention practices; and to immerse students in problem-centered, constructivist learning that prepares them to be college- and career- ready when they matriculate into high school.

While the proposal offers an ambitious vision, the on-the-ground plans that will ensure the project achieves its proposed personalized learning goals, is not persuasive. The applicant fails to make a case for how it will put in place its data-driven assessment system and how that system will actually change teaching practices. As written, the implementation and roll-out plans do not provide an adequate pilot of the complex system. Thus, there is no assurance that the proposed elements will unfold as expected, and the proposed evaluation and monitoring strategies are not rigorous enough to adequately support analyses that will lead to mid-course corrections.

The emphasis on the data dimension of the proposal makes many untested assumptions about how a data-based, assessment-based system will change how teachers will personalize teaching and how students will learn more effectively in school. There is no systematic evidence to show how the planned program enhancements will decrease achievement gaps across student groups or increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

Finally, the adequacy of various budget elements are difficult to assess with confidence because the budget framework does not fully align with the project's logic models and program designs.

Thus, while the applicant has technically met the criteria of this Absolute Priority, a number of critical planning and implementation areas are weak.

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| Total | 210 | 81 |
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