



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0028FL-1 for Seminole County Public Schools

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>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indication that the reform vision is based upon the four core educational assurances is clearly evident. • Approaches for accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support are clearly articulated and credible. • The vision includes providing flexible, innovative learning experiences and personalized, focused learning that enable students to excel and accelerate their learning. • A description of what the classroom experience will be like for students is provided for most projects. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does not provide a clear description of what classroom experience specifically looks like for teachers in any project and for students in the capstone project. • Similarities and differences between programs of emphasis, career academies, and magnet schools including what programs are offered at what schools is absent. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant presents clear rationale for school selection and program criteria. • The applicant has provided a list of participating schools with numbers and percentages of high need and low income students which clearly support the proposed programs. • Recognition of a need for additional school options focused on STEM and the integration of the arts and technology by waiting lists for schools currently providing these curricular emphasis. • Recognition of access as an equity barrier for students. <p>No weaknesses noted</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of logic and change in conjunction with a detailed budget including rationale for ongoing expenditures is well researched, substantiated, and reasonable. All proposed programs and expenditures align with the district strategic plan which includes goals, activities, rationale, timelines, deliverables. • The proposal expands and accelerates reform initiatives already in process within the district. • Hiring of a ePathways director to oversee and direct all district reforms, regardless of the RTTT-D grant, indicates a system-wide commitment to ongoing, deep reforms. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific scale up activities and plans are inferred rather than specified. • Responsible parties are not specified however an assumption can be made that the ePathways director is responsible for the bulk of the activities identified in the reform plan. 		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p>		

- Exceptional alignment between vision, strategic plan, assessment proficiency and growth targets, gap reductions, graduation rates, and college enrollment figures are presented.
- All proposed tables reduce or eliminate sizable achievement gaps with meaningful, intentional targets that are both ambitious and achievable. These could serve as a model for future applicants.

No weaknesses noted

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	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of growth and closing of achievement gaps, particularly with black and white, and Hispanic and white students is evident. • Evidence of providing ambitious and significant reforms in persistently lowest-achieving schools is noted through the strong alignment of reform efforts with ambitious yet attainable goals. Additionally, recognition of achievement gaps and present goals, strategies, and steps to close and eliminate these gaps shows intentionality towards equity for all students. Furthermore, the promotion of a principal who brought significant turnaround in two low-achieving schools to the superintendent position and that has earned Unitary designation from the Department of Justice reveals an educational system that is serious about providing equitable student achievement opportunities for all of its students. • Significant evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the planning process of the reform initiative is evidenced by the implementation of measures brought forth in focus group meetings including early childhood access, use and application of technology in the classroom, and hands-on activities district-wide. • Multiple avenues for all stakeholders to access data including Discovery Education, BlackBoard, EdInsight, and Skyward are evidenced. These programs work together rather than working at odds with each other to inform instruction and services for all students. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of numbers and percentages of students within each subgroup would provide for an evaluation of closure rates at the example schools to be possible. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district provides access to all personnel salaries, at all levels through their website as required by the State of Florida • Evidence of school and district financial reports supports compliance with the state statute mandating transparency. <p>No weaknesses noted</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State statutes support innovation in education as evidenced by their receipt of a state RTTT grant and NCLB waivers. • Because this is a high achieving district, they have flexibility in some state statute implementation, including beginning school prior to the statutory start date, which they have utilized. <p>No weaknesses noted</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear evidence of stakeholder input in the development of the district reforms is provided through parent and student surveys, focus groups, and town hall meetings. • A clear attempt to involve all members of the community into the reform discussion is evidenced by the applicant distributing surveys and conducting focus groups at community centers within the target areas. 		

- Inclusion of early childhood learning opportunities and enhanced technology options to better prepare students for careers, into the application, were a direct result of parent concerns voiced in focus group sessions.
- A letter of support from the education association president is provided.

Weakness -

- Evidence of support from 70% of participating teachers is absent.
- Most letters of support are form letters limiting the assessment of the relationship between the organization and the applicant.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths

All Projects

- All project students are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of their academic interest.
- A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments are detailed.
- Creative, student-centered initiatives focused on most needy students are the basis for all projects.
- All projects are directly aligned with the district's vision, mission, strategic plan, and goals.
- Solid, cited research is the basis for all proposed projects.
- Engaging, research-supported, reflective instructional models serve as the basis for all proposed projects.
- All school based projects utilize interdisciplinary, standards-based curriculum that integrate the area of emphasis into the core academic areas.
- All projects include a high-quality plan including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible. Most timelines are detailed and supported with detailed narrative descriptions to support their project.

Engineering Project

- Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students by the proposed materials is supported through research from similar school implementation nationally.
- Engineering is not just an add on to a static learning environment. The applicant clearly describes how students will be immersed in an engineering culture through integrated, supportive classroom units that cross all curricular areas, particularly math and science. Additional supplemental materials for classroom use support this cross-curricular integration in developmentally appropriate ways. Additionally, an additional special is proposed for the elementary 'wheel' that extends students' engineering application through hands-on projects and curriculum developed by Lego. Lastly, the engineering environment is further extended into the after school program with unique, engaging options for students to select from as part of a 21st century learning grant implementation.
- A detailed, appropriate timeline is provided.

School of the Arts

- Research on lower socioeconomic students is provided as the basis for initially implementing arts magnet program. The applicant chose to stay the course with an arts-focused curriculum even though they have received "mixed results" indicating that the district and school administration are willing to do the hard work of refining what research has shown to be important to their target population, with their selected curriculum, rather than toss the previous investment aside and start over again.
- Research used to support the curriculum indicates it "provides differentiation for all learners".
- A detailed, appropriate timeline is provided.

School of Innovation Project

- The project seeks to provide a systematic entry point for student and new teachers into the school system.
- Inquiry-based, project-centered, technology rich curriculum at the elementary level, delivered by educational technology specialists, is an innovative and unique approach that warrants exploration.
- A timeline is provided.

Global Studies Project

- Real world connections are mentioned.
- Integration of experiences with students and professionals around the world via Skype.
- Thoughtful consideration of how a dual language program might be implemented is provided by the applicant including appropriate teacher certifications, an ideal 60/40 heritage language/2nd language instruction split, and scale up process

- beginning in kindergarden.
- A detailed, appropriate timeline is provided.

Capstone Experience Project

- Vertical articulation of Career Exploration Plan from middle school to elementary school students provides consistency for students.
- A detailed, appropriate timeline is provided.
- The applicant provides five objectives for the Career Exploration Plan.

Early Childhood Project

- The project is a direct result of focus group conversations with the target community
- The proposed project fills a gap in current options for parents and bridges a demonstrated need in the target community.
- Options for parents to check-out mobile devices to support their child at home are included in the application.
- Training for parents on how to use mobile devices is intentionally planned for by the applicant.
- The participatin incentive described is a quality use of grant funds as it provides clothing, shoes, school supplies, books, and other non-consumable items to support the child's transition to kindergarden.
- Early childhood teachers are paid on teacher scale increasing the likelihood of less turnover.
- Multiple parent participation workshops are directly aligned with project goals and are a direct output of focus group discussions.

Weaknesses

All Projects

- Students having access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning is not explicitly addressed.
- Mechanisms to provide training and support to students are inferred but not specified.
- Community partnerships are indicated in multiple projects yet letters of support to validate these partnerships are not provided in the appendix. For example, the Midway Elementary project identifies collaboration with professors yet no letter of support from an institute of higher education is provided. Pine Crest Elementary seeks to be a demonstration site for student as well as veteran teachers yet has no letter of support from an institute of higher education. Wicklow Elementary School seeks a collaborative partnership with their sister school in China and no letter, email, or fax indicating support is included.
- Ongoing and regular feedback for students is implied rather than detailed in all projects.
- How students will be supported to utilize resources to track their learning is inferred but not detailed in all projects.

School of Innovation

- The timeline proposed for the School of Innovation is disconnected from the narrative. For example, five activities are focused on a digital science curriculum that is not discussed in the narrative. Other activities centered around technology are identified in the timeline and are not mentioned in the narrative.

Global Studies

- Detail of how writing will be integrated into the foreign language curriculum is not provided. Because writing is the last part of any language to be acquired, this omission is relevant and pertinent.
- Proposed \$5000 annual expenditure for a World Language Festival is excessive given the description provided in the narrative.

Capstone Experience Project

- Because the Career Exploration Plan for 5th grade students has not been written, nor is the middle school plan provided, it is difficult to asses the quality of the anticipated curriculum and instructional activities. Furthermore, it is not clear how this project impacts or interacts with elective wheel choices or regular classroom instruction at the four participating schools or the thirty-two non-participating schools in the district.

Overall, the plans provided are sufficient to communicate a district culture of systemic growth and reform. Specific attention to the integration of the Capstone Experience into existing programs in participating schools as well as all elementary schools will increase the likelihood of the program supporting each of the specific reform projects outlined.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths

- The applicant is proposing to provide differentiated, personalized instruction for their students by creating or refreshing instructional programs focused on STEAM at the elementary level. This includes integrating seven different projects into one initiative. Each project has its own high-quality plan including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible. Most timelines are detailed and supported with detailed narrative descriptions to support their project.
- All project plans align and build upon the district's RTTT state plan with "nurturing highly effective teachers and leaders who are accountable for student performance" as their "benchmark of success" without duplicating programs or services.
- Each plan includes description of how students will be engaged in their learning. Students will be assessed at the district level using common formative assessments already in place as a result of the state RTTT funds.
- The narrative indicates all educators have previously been provided training of assessment and using assessment to inform instruction through previous RTTT state funds. Coaches are in place to support the implementation of these practices into the new initiative.
- Teacher and leader professional development is differentiated to the school's area of emphasis. In addition, key professional development will be provided to all educators.
- Teacher and leader evaluation models that focus on student learning are included in the appendix. All staff have previously been trained on their respective evaluation models.
- District goals close gaps through differentiated targets rather than all groups increasing proficiency at the same rate/year.
- Professional development is ongoing and supported by coaching follow up to assure differentiated implementation into teacher's practices for all projects. Job-embedded professional development is described for most projects.
- Well thought out professional development plans for each project are included.
- District level content support staff are included in the project trainings and implementation.
- Both internal and external presenters are planned building the capacity of educators to sustain the initiatives once funding for outside consultants ceases.
- Paraprofessionals are specifically included in the Early Childhood professional development plan.
- Specific professional development for school leaders is included in Midway Elementary and Pine Crest Elementary School's professional development plans.

Weaknesses

- Paraprofessionals are specifically included in the Early Childhood professional development only.
- Clear indication of school leadership participation in professional development within Hamilton and Wicklow Elementary School and the Capstone Experience for Career Exploration plans is not provided.
- Description of how feedback from the current teacher and principal evaluation systems supports changes in practice are not provided.
- Detailed narrative of how the applicant plans to increase the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective and effective teachers and principals is not provided.

Pine Crest Elementary Project

- The professional development plan indicates training will take place during non-duty time. Specific detail regarding how the applicant will ensure all staff participates in this training is not provided.
- The majority of the professional development occurs in year one which significantly decreases the likelihood of teachers implementing each piece fully because of the condensed timeframe.
- Items listed in the program pacing found on table 5 are not detailed in the professional development plan located in table 16. For example, table 5 indicates K-4th grade students will be introduced to "Little Steps to Big Careers". Narrative description of this opportunity and professional development for K-4th grade teachers is absent.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	14

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths

- Goals, activities, rationale, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties are clearly described throughout the narrative in section D1 as well as in the detailed plans in section C1.
- The Educational Support Team and Instructional Support Team provide a "team-based, problem-solving approach" to increased school effectiveness.

- The application describes loose/tight leadership by the senior district leadership to provide scaffolded support to administrators through six week check-in meetings with superintendent and monthly meetings with the executive director and each building principal to discuss initiative progress. Each of the four participant schools also receive 4 week visits and classroom walkthroughs by the superintendent and deputy superintendent to monitor and support their specific needs.
- Added a district level support position specifically for ePathways implementation.
- Autonomy for each school principal in all areas of building management is already a practice within the district.
- Current infrastructure and policy is in place to encourage a variety of instructional models, pascings, and credit options. Additionally, Student Progression Plans and Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) enable students to accelerate learning at the elementary level.
- Students at all levels can demonstrate mastery through examination and/or portfolio evaluation.
- Evidence provided through the district strategic plan narrative indicate the district recognizes that funding allocations indicate what is important. By making the decision to give lowest achieving schools resources, etc for accelerating student achievement, their practice matches their plan.

Weaknesses

- Description of a specific, district-wide program for supporting English Language Learners at all participating schools is not provided. The described program is exclusively at 1 participating school.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths

- The applicant provides interoperable data systems.
- The applicant describes a variety of software programs and data systems that provide parents and students opportunity to export information in an open data format.

Weaknesses

- Inclusion or reference to a specific plan to assure participating parents and students have access to the content and tools described in the proposal is absent.
- Very general district information is given when the applicant is asked to provide specifics for participating schools. For example, when describing the web-based portal, the applicant describes how "36,193 families [are] registered through the Skyward parent portal". They go on to indicate that "thousands of families across the district receive regular updates on student progress through this tool" but neglect to detail how the families who are not registered, perhaps because they do not have internet access, will be able to utilize this tool. This is particularly relevant considering the very high level of children receiving a free or reduced price lunch at the four participating schools.
- No policy or practice to ensure all parents have access outside of school to support all aspects of proposal, particularly those that are technology dependent, is evident.
- The narrative includes no technical support for students and parents.
- Open data format is only accessible to parents and students with computer and internet access.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths

- The applicant intends to integrate feedback and information opportunities into existing advisory committees that include a parent representative and community representation.
- The applicant will create a committee of internal stakeholders, facilitated by the ePathways director and specific to RTTT implementation. Committee members will in turn create subcommittees to gather input and feedback from a wider participation base and report back to the implementation committee.
- The described continuous improvement process includes a continuous improvement mode and mid-year and annual reporting.
- The Strategic Plan provides general targets and goals that are aligned to the proposed projects.

Weaknesses

- A specific continuous improvement plan including goals, activities, timelines, rationale, deliverables, and responsible

persons while inferred, is not provided. Additionally, how these projects will be accounted for in each school's improvement plan as well as the district improvement plan is not evident.

- The application lacks specific narrative to detail how the applicant will monitor and measure at the grade level and student level and provide ongoing, formative data to impact daily instruction.
- The specific data to be used for ongoing and formal program analysis is not provided.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths

- Narrative regarding strategies for communicating and engaging internal and external stakeholders is included throughout the narrative.

Weaknesses

- A high-quality plan for communication and engagement is not provided. The applicant indicates that the steering committee will "develop and ePathways communication and implementation plan".
- Specific narrative describing the intentional communication with target communities who may not have computer access is not included. As a communication plan has not yet been created, consideration of how to inform this specific stakeholder group is warranted.

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

Strengths

- The rationale for selecting performance measures is presented and appropriate.
- A process for how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the application are in evidence for each performance measure.
- Detail for how the applicant will review and improve each measure over time to determine if it is sufficient to gauge implementation progress is included.
- Each performance measure provides an incremental closing of all achievement gaps by 2017 in alignment with the district's overall goals.

Weaknesses

- The process and rationale for the creation of the tables to inform the number and percentage of effective and highly effective teachers and principals is confusing and counterintuitive, particularly since the participating students are elementary students who generally have one teacher for all core academic area instruction. Extensive narrative description is needed to clearly describe how the numbers were generated and why columns D, E, G, H, J, K, M, N, P, Q, S, and T are blank.

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

Strengths

- The applicant describes plans to conduct short-term, intermediate, and long-term evaluations of both qualitative and quantitative processes of program effectiveness by an outside evaluator.
- An inclusive, comprehensive continuous improvement process is described throughout the narrative.

Weaknesses

- While a continuous improvement process is described, a continuous improvement plan including goals, activities, rationale, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties is not provided. Description of how these continuous improvement processes will inform participating school and district improvement plans is not clearly evident.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget allocations are very reasonable and sufficient to support the proposal. The early childhood budget is exemplary and thoughtful including transportation for parents to trainings, social worker support, and bus transportation of students to the program. Personnel costs for teachers on special assignment and school administrators working during the summer at the extra duty rate rather than the daily rate of pay, indicating an intentional decision to keep costs reasonable while still compensating educators for their valuable work. Each budget line indicates if it is an ongoing cost, one-time investment, or program operating expense. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External foundation support and other funding streams used to support the project such as computers and office equipment for new personnel are not identified. The guidance counselor identified in the Hamilton proposal is not described in the project narrative. Conference travel to the ACTFL National Conference and FFLA State Conference specifically identified in the Wicklow Elementary Project plan is not budgeted. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant already has approval by voters to levy 1 additional mil estimated to generate \$24 million annually. The expenses moving forward are reasonable and appropriate to sustain reform initiatives and are 7.8% of the original requested grant allotment indicating an intentional and thoughtful analysis of necessary one time, short time, and ongoing expenditures. The applicant has an extensive past history of sustaining previously funded grants. The applicant indicates ongoing costs will be sustained as they align with already established district priorities. The early childhood initiative will be sustained through a combination of local and Title I funds. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan lacks specific detail regarding activities and responsible parties. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on a successful, existing, and sustainable program that provides individual, group, and family counseling with a well known and notable partner. Bringing prevention services to elementary students in the most needy schools. Fully integrates services of on-site mental health counselors, classroom behavioral specialists and behavior interventionists. Provides 12 month, weekly services noting that clients will already be enrolled in summer school programs for at-risk students. The applicant provides reasonable tracking procedures considering the highly confidential nature of the proposed program. Annual professional development for teachers and parents is mentioned. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not clear how data will be used to target resources to improve results or how results will be improved over time. Narrative regarding how the proposed projects will expand to non-targeted schools is not evident. Rationale for including binge drinking, marijuana, perscription, and other drug use, criminal behavior, and smoking performance measures with a kindergarden through grade 5 student population is not provided. Descriptions of staff capacity building, while mentioned and time allocated for it, is unclear. For example, tools and supports to support teachers' abilities to assess needs and assets, identify the needs and assets aligned to performance measures, 		

decision-making infrastructure for both parents and teachers are not detailed by the applicant leaving an impression that this prevention program is not completely integrated into the regular classroom and school culture. Specifics as to how this will be addressed are not provided.

- Baseline data is absent.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Seminole County Public Schools has presented a solid, well considered and researched project for providing equitable educational opportunities for their most needy elementary students. Throughout the proposal, project plans are aligned to the district strategic plan, goals and targets reduce and close achievement gaps, and diligent, intentional consideration has been communicated to reforming the educational experience for each participating student. In many cases, the evidence provided can serve as a model for other applicants to follow as they consider how to communicate to reviewers who are not part of their system or state, why their proposals will positively impact students under their sphere of influence. Seminole County Public Schools is to be especially commended for the clear inclusion of all stakeholders into the application process and intentionally seeking out constituents whose voices might not otherwise be heard through focus groups held within the target communities.</p>		

Total	210	163
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0028FL-2 for Seminole County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS has embraced and clearly set into motion initiatives that support the core educational assurance areas of 1) Standards and assessments for college and career-readiness; 2) data to inform instruction; and 4) turning around lowest-achieving schools. What is less clear is core assurance area 3) highly effective teachers and administrators. The proposal references increases in the number of effective and highly effective teachers and administrators and draws upon the state RTTT grant, but does not clearly articulate how the process will inform or be utilized in this grant.</p> <p>The proposal allows students to engage in learning that will prepare each for their own pathway with career exploration as the motivator for meaningful experiences. Additionally, the program requires a capstone experience for all 5th graders across the district.</p> <p>The proposal did not describe what the experience will be like at the classroom level, i.e., personalized learning experience, aside from school-based themes. The proposal does discuss the use of an interdisciplinary, student-centered, career-focused approach.</p> <p>This proposal does represent a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, but its lack of clarity in core assurance area 3 and lack of description at the classroom level results in a rating at the low end of the high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS selected the four lowest-performing schools within the district and all students at Grade 5 for inclusion. These schools and the 5th grade students individually and collectively meet the inclusion criteria. The proposal includes a table identifying the required student demographics and educator participants for each of the target schools and district wide 5th grade.</p> <p>By including the target schools, those most in need of reform, to address both academic proficiency and score disparity there is increased likelihood that high-quality implementation will occur. The reform plan is focused on educating students in poverty with a focus on personalized learning through choice and technology both of which are in evidence in the proposal.</p> <p>This component of the proposal fully meets the requirements earning a maximum score.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is minimal evidence of a high-quality plan that describes how the reform proposal will be scaled and translated into meaningful reform. The logic-model included in the proposal describes the plan via the ePathways program, but it appears that it is exclusive to the target schools. The plan does not discuss how the work at these target schools will influence district-wide reform with the exception of the capstone project.</p> <p>This results in a mid level score.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The SCPS proposal includes summative proficiency and growth through the use of the FCAT 2.0. The district also included an appropriate methodology for assessing both proficiency and growth. Proficiency includes a level 3, 4, or 5 on the assessment. Growth is determined by meeting one of 3 categories, 1) improvement in achievement level, 2) maintaining an achievement level, or 3) demonstration of more than 1 year's growth while remaining in a below proficient category.</p> <p>SCPS, through this proposal, will attempt to eliminate proficiency deficiencies in nearly all subgroups. While definitely ambitious, it may not be achievable for all groups. Significant gaps exist for most groups and the district has proposed a 4-7 point gain in most instances each year. While ambitious, it may not be achievable.</p> <p>SCPS has committed to a decrease in all achievement gaps and described why it may appear that for specific years there is no decrease in the gap (due to rounding procedures). The existing gaps are relatively small (3-12 points) with the exception of Students with Disabilities (17 points), and by choosing to attempt to close 1-2 points per year and eliminating most completely is certainly ambitious achievable.</p> <p>SCPS has identified graduation rates and set ambitious and achievable goals for increasing. The district already has a relatively high overall graduation rate, so it is possible with specific interventions that the rate can and should be increased for the specific subgroups.</p> <p>SCPS has what appear to be especially high college enrollment rates and has set ambitious and achievable goals for increasing those rates. It is interesting to note that the district has exceptionally high college enrollment rates, but lagging proficiency rates. It is unclear how college enrollment has been determined other than the ratio of college-enrolled and graduating cohort.</p> <p>The proposal did not include postsecondary degree attainment as a student outcome.</p> <p>The proposal included the required goals for improved student outcomes, both proficiency and gaps. There are ambitious yet achievable annual goals overall and by subgroup for nearly all categories. It appears that some of the goals may be unattainable for some specific groups however.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SCPS has been designated an Academically High Performing district by FL DOE for 6 consecutive years and based on FCAT scores ranked 1st in the 17th largest districts for reading and math proficiency. From 2003 – 2011 SCPS has had an increase in all subgroups of students in both math and reading proficiency. While there was a slight decrease in the percentage of proficient students in 2012-2013, this appears to be the result of more rigorous standards and higher cut scores for proficiency status. Since 2011, all subgroup gaps decreased with the exception of the multi-racial subgroup. Additionally, the graduation rate gap also decreased. Over the past four years, college enrollment has increased by 13 percentage points at public in-state colleges.</p> <p>SCPS identified two schools (Millennium Middle School and Seminole High School) as substantially low-performing, high minority, and high poverty schools. Data suggests both schools were turned around. The principal of the schools at the time is now the district superintendent. What is not clear is how the schools were turned around.</p> <p>SCPS makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents through two primary portals. Utilizing both Skyward and EdInsight, teachers and parents have access to relevant data both in detail and in a high-level dashboard view.</p> <p>SCPS has demonstrated a clear record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity. What is unclear, is the method by which two specific schools were "turned around" aside from the administrator in charge, who is now the district superintendent. This section rates in the high end of the high range.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SCPS utilizes state Public Records and Government-in-the-Sunshine laws to comply with transparency requirements. The district has school financial reports which include each of the required criteria, however, the public must make an open records request to the district HR office in order to access the information. There is a high level of transparency, though it appears there is an additional barrier to access for external stakeholders who may not be aware of the request requirement or process. This section rates in the high range.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>There is sufficient evidence that the LEA has both the conditions and sufficient autonomy under State, legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environment. The District has been designated as an Academically High Performing School District and as a result is able to waive some state law. Additionally, the Florida legislature incentivizes school districts and teachers for offering more choices to students. This section receives the maximum number of points.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Over the course of two years SCPS has developed a steering committee, held focus groups, meetings, and delivered surveys to solicit feedback and inform each of their stakeholders (students, parents, faculty, staff, administrators, and external business/community members). Agendas and sign in sheets were presented as evidence. Letters of support from key stakeholders were included in the application. This provides sufficient evidence of stakeholder engagement and feedback in the process.</p> <p>It is not clear if and how teachers were engaged in the process. The proposal does not include a signature of the President of the Local Teacher Union or Association nor a rationale for why the signature is not applicable. It is not clear if 70% of the teachers from participating schools support the proposal. This leads to a conclusion that teachers were not a meaningful part of the development of the proposal.</p> <p>There appears to be wide-ranging support for the proposal, but the lack of clarity and evidence related to teacher representation results in a score at the mid level range.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The plan developed by SCPS represents a high quality approach to improve learning and teaching in their most challenging elementary schools. The creation of four themed schools and a district-wide career capstone experience and Pre-K program address components C.1.a.i-v. The development of themed schools and the capstone project assists students in making specific academic choices. These choices result in deep learning experiences tied to college and career standards.</p> <p>While there appears to be a high quality curricular approach, several individual components are less well articulated. It is apparent that there are a variety of high quality instructional approaches and environments as well as high quality content (including digital content aligned with College and Career-Ready graduation requirements) it is not clear how the individual student is directed or monitors his/her progress. The district will utilize existing software systems to monitor growth (Skyward & EdInsight) but it is not clear how effective this strategy has been nor how it will be modified for the new themes. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to understand how personalized learning recommendations based on current knowledge and skills will be made as well as any accommodations or high quality strategies for high-need students.</p> <p>The proposal does not address mechanisms to provide training and support to students to ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources to manage their learning.</p> <p>While this appears to be a high quality plan for improving teaching and learning, it is not clear how this will result in personalized approach. The proposal is not clear in how the individual student will track (and be responsible for) their own progress nor how they will be trained to do so. This results in a score in the mid range.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS has planned for both enhanced professional development for educators in the target schools as well as modified, continued use of professional learning teams. This should assist in supporting the effective implementation of improved learning environments and adaptation of content and instruction to provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks. What is not clear in the plan is how educators will be supported in the measurement of student progress toward meeting college and career-ready requirements. A plan was not presented to use data for the acceleration of student progress or improvement of educator practice. Additionally, the proposal does not address how SCPS will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback from the evaluation systems.</p> <p>SCPS has identified specific programs in each of the target schools along with professional development plans and specific curricula. Assuming these are high quality learning resources, a credible plan is in place to ensure educators have actionable information to respond to student needs and interests. An evaluation plan is proposed for each of the target schools to determine the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.</p> <p>The SCPS proposal identifies the role of the leadership teams in carrying out the plan, it does not however, present how individuals will be trained. Specifically, the proposal does not include information regarding how the evaluation systems will be used to assess and improve educator effectiveness and school culture and climate nor how training, systems, and practices to improve school progress toward increasing student performance or closing achievement gaps.</p> <p>The SCPS proposal does not identify a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.</p> <p>While this proposal does not seem to present a high quality plan for the improvement of teaching and learning, it does not include enough specificity in how</p>		

the personalized component will be carried out. There is a lack of clarity in individuals student acceleration, teacher and administrator effectiveness, and training for education personnel. This results in a score in the mid range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SCPS utilizes a leadership team approach to provide support and services to all participating schools. There is sufficient flexibility and autonomy at the school level to meet the needs of students and educators. Students are given the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery through web based credit recovery (secondary) and via portfolio (elementary). Resources and instructional practices are adapted and accessible to all students through the use of an Educational Plan Team.</p> <p>The proposal provides limited evidence as to how students at the elementary level can demonstrate mastery.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Students in SCPS have access to resources at schools and at home. For those who are unable to access materials at home, the proposal includes a provision to extend media center hours to accommodate. Technical support is received in-person, by telephone, or via email for the family portal (Skyward). Skyward provides view-only access for parents, but data can be exported into open data formats by teachers, who can share the data with parents/students. The district does utilize an additional, interoperable system for electronic assessment, data analytics, and instructional improvement (EdInsight).</p> <p>SCPS has the appropriate infrastructure and provides support in a variety of ways, however the lack ability on the part of parents/students to utilize the data results in a score at the high level of the high range.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SCPS has developed a continuous improvement process to ensure program level progress monitoring and continuous improvement. The district will utilize two existing advisory groups, the Educational Support Team and the Instructional Support team, as well as a newly developed implementation committee. The ePathways director will provide regular updates to the committees and release a bi-annual evaluation report while monitoring program goals and objectives. The district has also committed to releasing interim and final evaluation reports for public record.</p> <p>The proposal includes a continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback and results in a maximum score.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The ePathways director will provide regular updates to the committees and release a bi-annual evaluation report while monitoring program goals and objectives. The district has also committed to releasing interim and final evaluation reports for public record. The district also has the ability to conduct "push notifications" to registered parents through their system-wide parent portal. This results in a maximum score.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>SCPS has proposed a total of 21 performance measures, across 13 different assessment instruments, that include both cognitive and non-cognitive factors. Each measure includes a rationale, the manner in which it provides formative information, and how it will be reviewed and improved over time. There is an appropriate rationale for each of the measures. Rigor is based on the ability of students to meet or exceed standards and the pre-post assessments is timely and can be used both formatively and summatively.</p> <p>These measures include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The numbers of effective and highly effective teachers (All) 2. Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Assessment (PK) 3. Observational Assessment for Kindergarten Readiness (K) 4. Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (K) 5. Reading Assessments aligned to Florida College and Career Ready Standards (3-5) 6. Math Assessments aligned to Florida College and Career Ready Standards (3-5) 7. FCAT (3-5) 8. Completion of world languages course and score proficient or above on end-of-course assessment (All) 		

- 9. ACTFL Assessment (All)
 - 10. Student Climate Survey – Career Interest (All Students & Parents/Guardians)
 - 11. Student Climate Survey – Personalized Learning (All Students & Parents/Guardians)
 - 12. Technology Integration Matrix (All)
 - 13. Social motional Learning Assessment (All)
- This component of the proposal meets the requirement and receives a maximum score.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS has proposed a high-quality approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The district will use an external evaluator to gauge the extent to which goals, objectives, and outcomes are met and will include a review of both qualitative and quantitative data. At each evaluation interval the Educational Support Team will review the summary to guide progress and will share results with internal and external stakeholders for feedback. This results in the maximum points.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS provided sufficient overall and project-level budget summaries which account for all total requested funds. The budget summaries account for all funds including RTTT, District, and external sources. The summaries include both on-time investments and those that will be incurred during and after the grant period. The requested funds are reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed reform initiative resulting in maximum points..</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS has committed to sustaining the reform effort post-grant though the use of state and local funds including Title I and Title II-A. The district places this commitment at roughly \$1.3 million. The sustainability budget does not tie specific federal, state, or local funds to the estimated commitment. Additionally, the proposal does not describe how an evaluation of effectiveness will be used to inform future investments. The proposal does not include a three-year budget. The district has shown a track record of being able to sustain grant funded programs through the development of both their magnet schools program and High School Transition Program, but this is not enough evidence of a high-quality plan to sustain this specific initiative.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<p>SCPS has identified a coherent and sustainable partnership with the Center for Drug Free Living. The partnership delivers the New Horizons Program to secondary students in the district. SCPS intends to now deliver this program to the target schools.</p> <p>The program will include 10 population-level desired results within three categories 1. Educational, 2) Personal Health, 3) Community/Educational/Personal Health. It is clear how the academic indicators will be measured but less clear how the personal health and community measures will be addressed.</p> <p>The program utilizes individual counselors (1:10 group, and 1:1 individual ratios) along with a self and other referral process. An appropriate evaluation process will be conducted with both mid-year and formal evaluation at the close of each year, however is not clear how the model will be scaled over time beyond participating students.</p> <p>The partnership integrates education and other services though the use of both individual and group counseling as well as in-service training for educators.</p> <p>SCPS will utilize a Behavior Interventionist to assist in the identification of at-risk behaviors among the high need population. The interventionist will work with counselors and district staff to ensure the academic indicators for each individual are monitored and assessment of the applicant's progress. It is unclear the process that will be used to implement and evaluate supports, engage parents and families.</p> <p>SCPS has identified ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the population.</p> <p>While the proposal includes a coherent and sustainable partnership with a track record of success, it is not entirely clear how the program will be expanded to the elementary level and further scaled to non-target schools. It is also not clear how the assessments will be conducted for non-educational factors. This results in a score in the high mid-level range.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
The SCPS proposal meets the Absolute Priority 1, it includes a means to address how it will address the core educational assurance areas and will significantly improve teaching and learning.		

Total	210	166
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0028FL-3 for Seminole County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- a) Overall, the Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) RTT-D vision set forth in this proposal does not fully address how the RTT-D vision builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. For example, the applicant's RTT-D goals are as follows: 1) graduation, 2) high standards and student achievement, and 3) innovation for college, careers and citizenship, technology and social skills. Expected outcomes for each goal are 1) efficient/effective infrastructure to offer students a variety of instructional environments to achieve mastery, 2) focus on equality between high and low performing schools' accessibility to innovative learning, and 3) equity and diversity in current initiatives. To decrease the achievement gap and address inequities between schools, the SCPS RTT-D targets four low performing schools and three additional District program. Personalized learning in SCPS is described as 24/7/365 accessible for all students. However, the applicant does not explain how the reform vision will lead to not only accelerating learning in the four lowest performing schools but deepening student learning in all of SCPS.
- b) The applicant presents a clear description of the approach that will accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, and increase equity, as the Education Pathways (e-Pathways) model. For example, the Seminole School District has at the core of its' vision e-Pathways, a reform initiative that allows students to choose the learning pathway that best complements their learning style, personal interests and academic strength. Education Pathways will accelerate approaches to teaching and learning to improve student achievement, close the achievement gap between subgroups, and increase the number of students prepared for college and career graduation. This district-wide reform model provides schools the flexibility to accommodate students through a variety of choice programs that include magnet schools, virtual options for full- time kindergarten-12 and part-time virtual course work for grades 6-12. There are 9 magnet schools and 23 CAPE academies (Career Academies). The applicant does not provide a clear description of CAPE or information on how the themes were selected for the magnet schools. Other academic options presented include digital learning k-5 and a virtual 6-12 academy in SCPS.
- c) The applicant presents a general overview of the classroom experience as being a K-12 continuum focused on personalized interest-based learning in engineering education, information technology, world languages, and the arts. For example, the global studies theme will be supported by the installation of a learning lab; and classrooms will receive webcams to allow students to participate in virtual learning. A detailed description is located in section C2.

Overall, the applicant describes approaches but does not provide comprehensive information on how to accomplish the vision described in this proposal. All of the four core assurance areas were not discussed in the RTT-D vision proposal. More specifically, a process for adopting standards and assessments that prepare participating students and non-participating students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in a global economy. The applicant recognizes that college is important but is not the sole outcome of high school graduation, however the RTT-D reforms are not clearly defined to ensure that all students are college-and career- ready regardless of their path after high school. The score for this section is 7.

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

- a) Overall, the applicant provides data to demonstrate the extent to which the RTT-D reforms will support implementation at the district and school level. For example, the applicant provided a thorough description of the selection process. The four participating schools are the lowest performing elementary schools in the Seminole Public School District, as designated by the State school grade of "D" (on an A-F scale) for each school. Students demonstrating proficiency on state assessments are as follows: 2012-13, 45% in reading and 47% in math. There was also a disparity among the subgroups in reading and math.
- b) Demographics for each school are: a) Hamilton Elementary, 78.5% minority, free/reduced lunch(FRL) 80.8%; Midway Elementary, FRL 76.9, minority 74.3; Pine Crest Elementary, FRL 87.8, minority 66.8; and Wicklow Elementary, 80.6 % FRL and 64.8 minority. The student population at the elementary level is 46.9 % minority representing: 15% Black or African American, 23.2% Hispanic/Latino, 4.4% Asian and 4.3 other ethnicity.
- c) The RTT-D proposal will impact 7,467 participating students and 476 participating teachers. Data for the number of participating students from low-income families and high-need students are also illustrated in table A2.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant presents approaches for RTT-D scale up but does not translate them into meaningful reforms to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. For example,

- The reform plan will build upon instructional best practices and research, with a focus on personalized learning through student choice and technology integration.
- The proposed theory of change focuses on shifting the paradigm of teaching and learning in all classrooms and co-curricular experiences;
- The applicant will execute programs at participating schools that will ultimately result in outcomes that improve student learning while closing the achievement gap;
- The applicant described a process to implement a career exploration initiative to ensure equitable access to innovative approaches in instruction for every fifth grade students in the SPS. The SPS logic model is located in appendix XXII.

The applicant does not discuss how any of the preceding initiatives will be expanded beyond the four participating schools to accelerate learning for all LEA students. The logic model or theory of change illustrates the ePathways plan for the four participating elementary schools. A diagram delineating the goals, activities and outcomes. However, the applicant does not provide information on how these reform changes can and will be scaled up to improve learning outcomes for all students in Seminole Public Schools.

Furthermore, the applicant does not describe how data will be evaluated. Lastly, the four participating schools will have the opportunity to accelerate student learning and close the achievement gap but information on a district- level scale up is not presented.

Based on insufficient evidence in A3 that do not describe a high-quality plan and how it would be scaled up, translated into meaningful reform, and district-wide change the score for this section is 5.

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

a, b) The applicant described a numerical method for determining the annual target goals for decreasing the achievement gap. The applicant's vision is to reduce the non-proficiency in White students by 50% while closing the achievement gap in the Black, Hispanic, Native American, Multi-Racial, and Free Reduced Lunch subgroups to zero by 2017-18 school year.

Although, the applicant describes the Asian, Multi-Racial and Native American subgroups as decreasing the achievement gap in reading proficiency on State Standardized Assessments with the comparison group (White students), the data in Table A4 (a) 1: Student Performance on Summative Assessments, District-Wide illustrates an increase in the percentage of Asian students reading at a proficiency level and a decrease in Native American and Multi-Racial students reading proficiency compared to White students. For example, during the SY 2012-13, the baseline data for proficiency in reading was: White students, 78%; Asian students, 86 %; Native Americans was 69%; and Multi-Racial students was 72%. However, Black, Hispanic, ELL and SWD have not decreased the achievement gap over the time period. The applicant's vision for decreasing the achievement gap among all subgroups is not thoroughly explained in this section.

c) The proposed RTT-D graduation rate for SCPS is achievable at 90%, however it does not demonstrate an ambitious goal to ensure that all participating students, especially high-needs, lowest performing, ELL, and SWD are able to graduate on time and tracked toward college-and career- ready standards and college-and career-ready requirements. Furthermore, the applicant does not thoroughly describe how each students' personalized learning environment will be monitored and designed to maintain college-and career ready standards and improve academic performance.

d) Although, data in Table A (d) 1: College Enrollment Rate, District-Wide is presented in this section, the applicant does not provide a narrative that thoroughly explains the rationale for determining the annual target goals for participating subgroups or why the district SY 2017-18 (Post-Grant) goal is only 94%. It is also unclear how the applicant will accelerate learning to ensure that the college enrollment rates for Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, ED, ELL, and SWD subgroups meet or exceed the district goal of 94%. Furthermore, based on the data in Table A (d)1, the annual rate for participating White and Asian students is not ambitious and should be increased to represent a post- grant college enrollment rate of 100%. Also, the applicant does not include Native American students because the population is fewer than 10, however these students are depicted in Table A (a) 1: Student Performance on Summative Assessments, District-Wide. The applicant does not provide an explanation for Native American Students.

e) Every student in the SCPS will participate in reform initiatives that focus on their interest and prepare them to graduate with their age appropriate cohort on time. Students will be prepared for post academic work and job related success. The SCPS will provide all participating student with the necessary innovative resources for college, careers and citizenship in the 21st century, however a process for accomplishing this for each subgroup was not thoroughly described.

Overall, the annual goals described in this section are achievable but not ambitious to prepare all participating subgroups to graduate on time and tracked toward college-and career-ready standards and college-and career-ready requirements. More specifically, the applicant does not thoroughly describe a plan for improving student learning and performance, and increasing equity for participating SWD, ELL, Black and Hispanic subgroups. The proposed targets for college enrollment for the SCPS could be higher. The applicant's score is 7.

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:

a) Overall, the applicant provides evidence demonstrating successes but not to the extent of a four year track record of advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. For example, the statements below summarize a few of the SCPS successes:

- College enrollment has shown a 13% increase within four year;
- Millennium Middle School and Seminole High School both low performing schools, high minority and high poverty have turned around. A description of three additional schools that turned around was presented in this section. Low performing schools demonstrated improvement in reading proficiency form 2011;
- Tables reflecting student proficiency levels; and
- Data on subgroups from each school that turned around.

The overall increase for college enrollment in SCPS is 13 %. Although, data for the school year 2011-12 is optional as noted in Table A4(d) 1: College Enrollment Rate, District wide , it is unclear whether the applicant has successfully demonstrated growth for each subgroup over a four year period. Also, the applicant does not thoroughly discuss strategies to increase college enrollment for participating subgroups.

Furthermore, the applicant describes schools that have turned around but does not include a clear record of other district-wide successes. The applicant presents in Table A4(b) 1: Targets for Decreasing Achievement Gap among Subgroups, District-wide and a method for determining the targets. However, the applicant does not thoroughly discuss how the targets for each subgroup will be met to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps. In addition, reading proficiency on State assessments for SWD, ELL, Black, Economically Disadvantaged and Multi-Racial subgroups have not decreased the achievement gap over the period of time. The applicant also noted that Asian students outperformed White students on the State Standardized Assessment in Reading.

In addition, the applicant presented only two years of graduation data. However, the applicant did note the achievement gap between White and Black student subgroups and White and Hispanic student subgroups decreased, with both Black and Hispanic subgroup graduation rates having increased.

b) Although, the Seminole District has been designated an Academically High Performing district by the State of Florida and the performance data is high as measured by the state and national averages, the applicant does not thoroughly discuss a track record for the participating schools. Furthermore, the applicant does not describe the effect of past or present reform initiatives at the participating schools. However, the applicant does present evidence to support the selection of the four lowest performing schools identified in the RTT-D proposal. Performance data and measures are located in section E.

c) Applicant makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents. Multiple software programs provide support in a format that is useful and relevant. For example, the Skyward program operates the main student information system. Parent participation is tracked in Skyward. They are able to view student data. Parents and students have access to BlackBoard. Teachers and administrators are able to export student performance data on multiple assessments over time.

The applicant presented information that described some successes. However, the evidence presented was not extensive enough to demonstrate a clear track record over four years. Furthermore, the applicant did not discuss the impact of previous reforms in the participating schools. However, the Seminole District did improve schools that were persistently identified academically low performing. A variety of strategies, such as the implementation of magnet theme programs, and the re-visioning of school operations and curriculum were critical to previous reform processes. Based on the evidence provided the applicant's score for this section is 10 .

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

a) Overall, the applicant presents a description of how school-level expenditures from State and local funds are made available to the public. To demonstrate a high level of transparency in the Seminole Public Schools processes, practices, school level expenditures administration, personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditure the district Office of Finance and Budget oversees the dissemination of financial reports Expenditures related to instructional support administration.

b, c, d) Although, the public can make a public records request to the district's Department of Human Resources to obtain salary information for any of the systems employees, including instructional staff and administrators; personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures are not accessible at the school level.

Based on the evidence in criteria b-d, the applicant does not demonstrate a high-level transparency process. Therefore, the score for this section is 2.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated that there are no legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers to deter the full implementation of the RTT-D grant proposal. For example, the Florida Legislature willingly embraces school reform. Florida's statutes and State Board of Education regulations are regularly updated to provide school districts flexibility in implementing options for students. Other statutes permit school districts to fund and operate innovation schools, online courses, establish public evening schools, and enter into agreements.

Supported by state statutes and regulations that encourage and support innovation and the accommodations of students' learning styles and interest; the applicant will be able to successfully implement the RTT-D reforms. Therefore, the score for this section is 10.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	6
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant described a process for stakeholder engagement that existed prior to the submission of the RTT-D proposal. For example, stakeholder engagement focused on the RTT-D plan and the district-wide expansion of e-Pathways. Outreach initiatives included surveys, Leadership Conference in August 2012 for all district and school administrators, focus groups parents and citizens from the participating schools communities, and town hall meetings that included teachers, guidance counselors, business partners, and the general public.

Not discussed in this section was a process for obtaining input from teachers and students from the four participating schools identified in the RTT-D proposal. Information gleaned from public meetings was documented, accessed and incorporated in the RTT-D where appropriate.

One major concern of community members was the role of the community and families in education. Members emphasized that a cultural change was needed in the neighborhoods and education starts at home. Other areas of concern expressed were early childhood education and engaging parents.

b) The applicant provided letters of support from the following key stakeholders: parent organizations, collective bargaining groups, mayors, community-

based organization, etc. However, there were no letters of support from higher education institutions.

Although, the applicant describes a process for engaging stakeholders, evidence demonstrating meaningful engagement throughout the development of the process and meaningful support for the proposal by participating students and teachers was not discussed. Furthermore, the applicant does not describe the demographics of the parents who participated in surveys, meetings and focus groups. A process to include parents who are not involved was not discussed. The applicant's score in this section is 6.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Although, the applicant presented ePathway as the reform model to engage participating students in learning with a focus on literacy infused within science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM), the RTT-D plan does not thoroughly describe a high- quality approach to teaching and learning that will continuously demonstrate how students will identify their interests and develop a personalized learning environment that is linked to college- and career-ready standards and career-ready graduation requirements. Furthermore, the CCSS and the Next Generation State Standards, and the ePathways initiative will provide students with personalized support to accomplish individual goals. However, it is unclear how students will be directed, supported and monitored as they develop their personalized learning environment and manage their learning.

In addition, teachers, principals, parents and students will be able to access achievement data, results from continuous progress monitoring, and formal assessments to track student growth. On-going feedback will provide a network of support to guide students in a path toward college. However, the applicant does not thoroughly explain what the network of support will look like for participating students and a process for ensuring that feedback is continuously monitored, tracked and updated to ensure progress toward mastery.

Listed below are the accommodations, resources and individualized instruction for participating high-needs students. However, the applicant does not provide a thorough description of the following: training for participating students and teachers, a mechanism for supporting and evaluating training, assessment instruments and data that will be used to determine participating students progress toward mastery of college- and career ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. For example, the applicant does not describe how participating students will be monitored and evaluated as they engage in personalizing their learning through project and inquiry based strategies. Also, a description of the type of coaching supports for participating high-needs students to ensure that they graduate on time and are on track toward college- and career was not discussed in this section.

- Students will be engaged in their own learning through project and inquiry based strategies;
- Teachers will provide support by coaching students on how to take responsibility for learning;
- Learning will be differentiated based on student data; and
- College-career readiness and a pathway towards graduation.

Based on the evidence presented in this section the applicant's score is 10.

ED Messages

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) Although, the applicant describes professional development and training that will ensure that participating educators are equipped to implement personalized instructional strategies to accelerate learning, meet the needs of all students and measure student progress toward college and career graduation requirements, administrators and paraprofessionals were not included in the trainings.

The SCPS will increase curriculum support specific to science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM) content areas and integration to support literacy growth in each participating school. However, the applicant does not describe how supports will be consistent across all participating schools.

Teachers have access to tools, data, high quality learning resources, assessment, technology, graduation requirements and content-specific training. The applicant does not discuss the systems in place to monitor and ensure that access to tools, data and training will continuously increase student performance at all participating schools. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide a thorough description of how the teacher and principal evaluation system, feedback or individual and collective effectiveness, as well as recommendations, supports and interventions will be consistent across all participating schools. teacher and principal evaluation systems are located in appendix XXII.

b) Every teacher will have access to high quality curricular resources and uses interim, formative assessments to monitor student progress toward college and career graduation requirements. Students and teachers are able to access tools and resources such as technology, student performance data and

curricular content. Teachers at each participating school will be provided professional development opportunities in project and inquiry based approaches to classroom instruction, content and curricular support. The applicant does not discuss how participating administrators or paraprofessionals will access the needed resources.

c,d) The applicant has described the methods and ongoing supports that will exist in each participating school. Professional development will occur over extended periods of time and focus on pedagogy that accelerates student learning. The applicant does not provide details on whether professional development will occur afterschool or during the school day. Newly hired teacher specialists for each school will work closely with teachers, principals, and students to implement the RTT-D reforms.

The applicant described a process for ensuring that every participating student has a highly effective teacher and principal to guide them in completing college to career graduation requirements. However, the applicant does not discuss the professional development trainings that will ensure that principals and paraprofessionals have access and know how to use the tools, data and resources to support and accelerate student learning.

Based on the evidence provided in this section the applicant does not present a high quality RTT-D plan that engages and monitors all participating educators to be able to improve instruction and lead participating students toward college- and career. Therefore, the applicant's score is 10.

ED Messages

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	15
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>a,b) The applicant described a governance structure model that will provide continuous systemic improve in the Seminole County Public Schools. Two leadership teams meet weekly to discuss priority issues. For example, the district-wide Instructional Support Team focus for 2012-14 is to ensure that all "C" and "D" schools,by state designation receive the human, financial and material supports needed to accelerate student achievement. The applicant described in section B, their ability to have autonomy to implement a comprehensive school reform plan. Barrier to implementation the RTT-D does not exist on the district level. The applicant provides evidence to support autonomy for each school to successfully fulfill the RTT-D reform initiatives.</p> <p>Internal supports provided by the Seminole County Public Schools central administration to support participating schools with the implementation of personalized learning environments are: RTT-D Project Director and instructional accountant, elementary performance data analyst. The superintendent will continue to meet every six weeks with all principals to discuss major priorities and initiatives.</p> <p>c, d, e) To address opportunities for students to progress and earn credit on demonstrated mastery, the Seminole County Public Schools has a detailed process for acceleration. For example, the Student Progression Plan has thorough guidelines on acceleration in elementary grades. At the secondary level pathways exist for students to accelerate in content areas and all high schools have web-based credit recovery. The Seminole School District also permits students to earn credit by exam. Students scoring on Level 1 on a 3rd grade Reading FCAT are subject to retention. Retention can be waived and a student portfolio demonstrating mastery of the 3rd grade standards can be used. Also, a retained student can be promoted mid-year.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant presents detailed descriptions of options for acceleration and remediation that allow students to earn credit through mastery of standards, regardless of grade level assigned. Also, a fair and equitable remediation process exists that focuses solely on student mastery. Therefore, the score for this section is 15.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>a) Although, the applicant presented a range of learning resources and systems that are available, a thorough description of policies to ensure that all participating teachers, students and parents have equal access to necessary content, tools and other learning resources was not discussed. Furthermore,the applicant does not describe an evaluation process to ensure that all participating parents, educators, students, and other stakeholders, as appropriate have ongoing access to resources and systems.</p> <p>b) The applicant provides a description of technical support to participating parents, students and teachers but does not discuss the current level of supports at the participating schools. For example a site Educational Technology Facilitator (ETF) is on some at some schools. It is unclear whether a ETF is at a participating school.</p> <p>Although, students have access to computers, digital content, laptops/tablets, after school academic support, access to student data via Skyward, online resources that are accessible at home, digital ebooks, the applicant does not discuss policies, if any that ensure equal access for all students. As a part of the ePathways program, some schools have extended media center hours to accommodate students who do not have internet access at home.</p> <p>Although, parents can receive support directly at their child's school, a process for engaging individuals who are not involved in their child's education was not discussed. Also, students are able to receive technical assistance from participating support staff, classroom teacher, ETF/network specialist. However, the applicant does not describe the professional development that participating teachers and support staff would receive to ensure that they are able to provide technical support to students.</p> <p>c) The applicant provided information on the Skyward student data system that contains performance and other data. The parent portal is presented in a view-only access and teachers can export information. However, the applicant does not discuss how external stakeholders, when appropriate, will access</p>		

data.

d) Overall, the applicant describes the current systems that are in place in the Seminole School District as Skyward, iOperations, Discovery Education, People Soft and Edlsight, however it is unclear whether all of the systems are interoperable. For example, Skyward which interfaces with the district's progress monitoring system and supplies student and staff information to Discovery Education system. District operational functions, including human resources and finance are managed by People Software.

The extent to which the applicant has presented a high- quality plan that will support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provides all participating educators and student with the level of support and resources they need was not evident in the RTT-D proposal. More specifically, the applicant does not describe policies or procedures for the following areas: equal access for participating educators and students to resources, a process to evaluate access to systems, deliverables, resources at each participating school. Based on the evidence presented the applicant's score is 6.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has demonstrated a detailed approach to implement a continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals. To ensure ongoing communication and feedback the applicant has established a system that includes the hiring of an ePathways Director who will be responsible for providing updates to the IST and EST teams. The ePathways Director will work collaboratively with the Project Director. Project staff will organize work sessions with advisory groups to assist in facilitating participation and feedback from those impacted by the RTT-D grant.</p> <p>A diagram illustrating the SCPS Continuous Improvement Model was presented. To ensure a rigorous continuous improvement process the SCPS will utilize five committees, to provide oversight and direction in the implementation of the ePathways plan. The ePathways Steering Committee will also be responsible for communication initiatives, marketing, and receiving information from educators, parents, business leaders and community members regarding ePathways.</p> <p>Program goals and objectives will be monitored with a focus on student achievement. A formal program analysis will be conducted in June and January. This represents a mid-year formative and end of year summative assessments. To ensure information is disseminated in a timely manner to all stakeholders, evaluation data will be presented at all meetings. All information, such as RTT-D project goals, activities, outcomes will be posted on the district website. Interim and final evaluation reports will be accessible to the public.</p> <p>The applicant has developed a reasonable plan to ensure implementation of a continuous improvement process that involves stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating the reform process. However, a system for monitoring the work of each committee to determine effectiveness and eliminate duplicating tasks was not addressed. The score for this section is 11.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Overall, the applicant's plan does not describe a high-quality approach to continuously improve the RTT-D process. Although, a process for ensuring ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders is demonstrated in the formation of committees comprised of community members, business leaders, educators, parents and higher education representatives to monitor and oversee the implementation of the RTT-D proposal; a thorough description of what the communication and engagement process would look like and responsible parties was not discussed. The score for this section is 2.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's rationale for selecting the proposed performance measures was based on the ePathways goals and an alignment to district initiatives, as well as College and Career Ready Standards. Although, the applicant presents goals, performance measures and rationales, a description of how each measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information regarding the success or concern of RTT-D reforms was not thoroughly presented in the plan. For example, Performance Measure 2 (a): The number and percentage of participating students who complete a world language course at the elementary level who score proficient or above on an end-of-course assessment provided by the instructor. To measure rigor the teachers will have the opportunity to measure student performance on foreign language performance measures on a regular basis. The applicant does not describe how the teachers will assess students.</p> <p>The rationale and process for highly qualified teachers and highly qualified principals was confusing. For example, The applicant provided data to support the rationale for selecting performance measures for each grade band and subgroup. Performance measures illustrated on the charts in the RTT-D proposal in section E3 identify baseline and target measure, free/reduced lunch, student subgroups, percentage of highly effective teachers and principals. However, based on the targeted measures the questions arises whether the outcome will be met. For example, data illustrated in tables 156 and 157 are confusing. There is also no data in the columns D and H.</p> <p>The Seminole County District proposed two measure categories as: proficiency on standardized assessments and population-specific target. Proficiency on standardized assessments serve as the academic lead indicator of the success of the reform initiative.</p> <p>The following goals provide the framework for the RTT-D proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCPS will prepare and support all PreK through students to graduate with their age appropriate cohort. • SCPS will prepare all students for academic and job related success in the 21st century. 		

- **Number and percentage of participating educators' classrooms that integrate instructional technology at a level of "Authentic Infusion" on the Technology Integration Matrix.**

The performance measures presented by the applicant are achievable but not ambitious, however the extent to which they are rigorous, timely and formative information to lead the success and concerns regarding the RTT-D reforms was not apparent in the plan. Based on the evidence in this section the applicant's score is 4.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Although, the applicant describes an evaluation process to monitor the ongoing implementation of the RTT-D funds, an explanation of how the activities would be undertaken and the deliverables were not thoroughly discussed. For example, the evaluation measures include state/district standardized assessment scores, surveys and pre/post assessments; and assessment outcomes that will guide the progress of the reform initiatives and professional development. However, it is unclear who will be responsible for implementing the evaluation process. Furthermore, the applicant does not thoroughly describe or provide examples of how the results will guide the RTT-D progress and be used to improve learning and teaching, personalize strategies and provide supports for students.

The ePathway Director, in coordination with the school-based Program Facilitators will manage the evaluation process. An external evaluator will have access to quantitative performance data. The external evaluator will also support school site visits, focus groups with guidance staff, teachers, school and district administrators, support staff, parents, members of the community and businesses to determine impact of the RTT-D proposal. However, a clear description of how the ePathway Director and external evaluator will collaborate to rigorously evaluate RTT-D funded activities was not addressed. Also, a timeline was not presented.

Based on the evidence in this section the applicant has not presented a high-quality plan that will continuously improve the progress of the RTT-D reform initiatives, such as: a thorough explanation of responsible parties to implement activities, deliverables, timeline, and activities to be undertaken. Therefore, the applicant's score is 3.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant identified all funds that will support the RTT-D project. A comprehensive budget narrative for each school and program describing one-time, short-term and on-going investments was presented.

b) The personnel category for each school includes professional staff that is critical to the implementation of the reform initiatives. Budget allocations for teachers to participate in open houses, orientation sessions are questionable. Because this budget item appears to be a teachers professional responsibility and should not require funds the applicant may not be able to support this line item after the funding cycle. Another questionable budget item is the supplies for VPK program, such as shoes, car seats, and clothes for 4 year old students. It is unclear whether this is a one time budget item. Also, the applicant has not provided evidence to show that these items are allowable in the RTT-D budget.

c) The applicant provided a clear description of all internal and external funds as illustrated in the charts in this section.

Based on the evidence submitted in this section and the budgetary questions posed, the applicants' score is 7.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented an ambitious and achievable RTT-D reform proposal. The ePathways reform model is comprehensive and will drive the acceleration of student learning and implementation of personalized learning environments in the four lowest performing schools in the Seminole School District. The RTT-D funds along with state, federal and local support will provide a high level of personalized learning supports to accelerate student performance in the participating schools. However, the applicant does not describe in this section how the effectiveness of past investments and use of data to inform future investments will be evaluated.

The applicant described potential financial support beyond the grant period. However, this is not guaranteed. Therefore, the RTT-D reform budget presented in this section does not thoroughly demonstrate a high-quality plan that will ensure continuation of deliverables, activities, key goals and sustainability of personnel beyond the grant cycle. The general fund budget may not be able to sustain an enormous personnel line. The applicant's score is 7.

ED Messages

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<p>1-5) Although, the applicant has described the Center for Drug Free Living as the partnership to augment school resources by providing additional student and family support that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students the proposed plan does not address all of the criteria in the Competitive Preference Priority session. Overall, the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence in a few areas, such as : tracking the selected indicator that measure each result, use of the data to target resources, developing a scale -up model, assessing the needs and assets of participating students, and proposing ambitious yet achievable goals. Additional examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has an on-going partnership with the Center for Drug Free Living that delivers the New Horizon Program to secondary and selected elementary students. The program is designed to promote healthy development and academic success among students.To scale up the program the SCPS district will provide services to the participating elementary schools identified in the RTT-D proposal. However, the applicant does not discuss how the program could ultimately be expanded district-wide. The applicant does not thoroughly explain how the partnership will build capacity of staff in participating schools. <p>Students will have access to individual, family or group counseling which focus on anger management, school behavior problems, illegal behavior, family problems and/or substance abuse. The program is a 10 month weekly in school intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A graph illustrating data on elementary students in the district who participated in the program in 2012-13 was presented. The program performance measures were: use of alcohol, drugs, criminal behavior, school attendance, academic achievement, knowledge of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and school suspension. According to the data presented, the elementary students ranged from grade 1 to 5. A few of the measures used to evaluate the success of the program are unrealistic for elementary students. The applicant further added that all participants experienced a reduced use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. As an analysis of elementary student participation, this information is confusing and misleading. • The applicant also presented a table that described social/emotional competencies, outcomes, activities, deliverables, and timelines for the New Horizon Programs for the participating schools. However, the table does not thoroughly describe an evaluation process. For example, deliverable evidenced by report of family or individual session logs and participants. The applicant does not explain how the data from the logs provide an analysis of the program. Furthermore, The applicant does not describe alternative evaluation methods that would demonstrate the success of the program for participating students and families. <p>Overall, based on the evidence above the applicant has not demonstrated a high-quality Competitive Preference Priority Plan, more specifically in the area of deliverables, measurable goals, evaluation process for tracking outcomes, activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities. Therefore, the score for this section 6.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant presented a comprehensive RTT-D proposal. The expansion of ePathways model will take current reform initiatives to the next level, thus deepening student learning and creating personalized learning environments for all students in the lowest performing schools. Evidence submitted in each section of the RTTD proposal support reform initiatives and demonstrate a commitment by Seminole County School District to decrease the achievement gaps among subgroups and align resources to sustain college and career ready standards for all students.</p> <p>The applicants' RTT-D plan addresses the core educational assurance areas by focusing on maintaining and supporting highly effective principals and teachers, educator evaluations, autonomy at the school level, policies, student centered calendar, demonstration classrooms, process for ineffective teachers, parent involvement. Educators, students and parents will have access to performance data. Professional development for teachers will include technology,content specific individualized instruction for all students and subgroups, and differentiated instruction for SWD and ELL. Charts, tables and graphs provided comprehensive data to justify the RTTD reforms.</p>		

Total	210	138
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