



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0013AR-1 for Texarkana Arkansas School District #7

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section is scored in the high range because it addresses each of the four core educational assurances and identifies how the classroom experience will be designed to meet the learning needs of all students. The vision clearly describes plans by the District to implement Project Young Engineer, which is based upon STEAM courses (science, engineering, mathematics, technology, and the arts) that allow teaching across disciplines, encourages collaborative processes among teachers and students, and builds capacity for college and career readiness for all students. Access to technology is identified as a need across the District and the plan presents a comprehensive process for implementation and increasing access for all students as they increase their academic success. The development of individualized student learning plans will be implemented within Project Young Engineer. The District has put data systems in place that will facilitate access to student learning data for use by teachers, students, and parents. The District will implement the evidence based evaluation system approved by the State of Arkansas when evaluating principals and teachers. Innovative processes are in place to recruit and retain teachers which include payment of stipends and tuition reimbursement.</p> <p>The six schools identified as program participants have been identified as schools in need of improvement with data supplied by the District supporting their inclusion.</p> <p>Project Young Engineer will focus on preparing students for graduation using curriculum aligned with college and career ready standards. Section C(1)v states that students will develop personalized learning plans with the understanding that students master skills at a different pace and require different approaches for overall success, such as purchase of a digital science intervention program and a focus on increasing literacy skills. The focus is to allow high performing students to move forward with the plan to increase student centered accountability, with the less motivated high needs students no longer fading into the background as a result of this student centered accountability. The classroom experience for students supports personalized learning environments as students use technology and the internet to develop their research, cognitive, problem solving, and communication skills with mentors both in the classroom and globally.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The description of the criteria used to identify participating schools in this RTTD project is clearly stated as those participating were selected based upon their persistently low achieving status, amount of high needs students including poverty rate, robust data system, demonstrated capacity for improvement based on the four core areas of RTTD, and assessment results. This information was utilized by the planning committee to select the schools that will be participants. Table A-2 lists schools that will participate in grant activities, and their demographic information. The identified list of targeted student sub-groups is provided (economically disadvantaged, LEP, and IEP status). The information supplied meets the requirements of A(2)(c), with numbers of total students, low income students, high needs students, and participating educators. The District RTTD plan of implementation stated in the vision describe a viable plan to increase individualized student learning, use of technology, and graduate students college and career ready.</p> <p>The information supplied meets the criteria for a high rating in this category because it clearly provides the documentation of the selection process.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p>		

This section scores in the high range, because there is an organized structure in place to use for the training of teachers, allowing for access to data by both teachers and students, and a plan is in place to foster cooperation of student learning from PreK-16. There is a focus on the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) which enables teachers to lead their own learning as well as work together to plan and guide student learning. PLC's are in use across all schools in the District providing an avenue to move programs from the RTTD plan more easily across the District. The District will continue to build upon university, science, and art partnerships with community partners in support of Project Young Engineer. Data systems that track student information and success will be upgraded to allow planning for students learning to become more focused. The data systems in place will also allow students access to information related to the STEAM program and their own personal student data. Professional development is planned in support of the plan goals and also as the District participates in the K-16 Arkansas venture to advance public schools and close achievement gaps. Not all points were awarded in this section because the plan is lacking a clear description about how the plan/District will identify and support students who are less highly motivated to become motivated and successful students, other than the implementation of personalized learning plans.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

This section is scored in the high range because it provided a clear description of expected student performance on summative assessments, which are based upon 2012 T ASD ESEA targets from the state of Arkansas. Table 1 defines goals for student growth with rationale, timeline, and responsible parties listed. Goal areas are further broken down by school site and grade level. Goals are listed for decreasing achievement gaps. Graduation rates are provided, along with expected growth from the baseline year of SY2012-13 through SY 2017-18. College enrollment rates are provided with expected growth rate from baseline in SY 2012-13 through SY 2017-18. There is some discrepancy between the final expected graduation rate for all students of 88% and the final college enrollment rate for all students of 90%. The final expected graduation rate for students lists the expected result of 100% for only the LEP and Hispanic groups. All other groups are expected to achieve between 84% - 92% at the plan's end in 2017-18. The goals, rationales, activities and timelines support the vision of the District RTTD plan and are reasonable and achievable for all students in the program. All points were not awarded because there was no presentation of interventions/accommodations for students who may not be meeting the benchmarks as listed within the key activities listed in Table A-1 and the discrepancies listed under graduation rates and college enrollment.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

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

This section is scored in the high range because of the focus on providing student achievement information to parents, community, and teachers. The record of increased academic achievement, increased graduation rates, and increased college enrollment demonstrates the ability of the District to achieve ambitious and significant reform as they go forward. The total points available were not awarded because student access to this information is not clearly described. The data provided in Table B-1 addresses only 3 years of information, not four.

The district has provided data supporting increased student academic growth and the closing of achievement gaps in all grade levels and populations which are attributed to the implementation of the magnet school programs focused on Project Young Engineer. This growth is shown specifically on Table B-1.

Table B-2 provides information that shows increases in graduation rates from 2009-10-2012-13. The percent of growth over the four year period is 29%

College enrollment has also shown growth. The growth rate between the 2011-12 school year of 9% increased to 29% in the 2012-13 school year. The plan addresses the need for a broader view of this growth with its intent to purchase a software program that will provide a historically view of providing eight years of data and provide a trend line for future evaluations.

Table B-3 shows increased academic achievement levels for both non-economically disadvantaged student math ACTAAP and economically student math ACTAAP proficiency rates.

Schools identified as "needs improvement" have developed appropriate school improvement plans as required. The plans

support the goals and implementation of the RTTD plan. The plans focus on standards alignment, robust leadership, high expectations, data-driven culture, and continuous improvement, which are key components of increasing student achievement and preparing college and career ready graduates..

Student performance data is provided to parents, staff, and community members with assistance as needed from Parent Coordinators. Professional Learning Communities teams have been instituted at all school sites to provide data and planning assistance by teachers to increase student achievement. Parents receive regular updates on student progress.

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

**5**

**5**

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

This section is scored in the high range. Salary information for all staff members is stated as available on the District website and through examination of District developed spreadsheet listing all required salary information for all school personnel. There is a clear statement about the accessibility of salary and expenditure data available broken down by school level in accordance with Arkansas state regulations. The data listing non-personal expenditures is also available through the District website and through examination of District developed spreadsheet listings expenditures.

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

**10**

**9**

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

This section is scored in the high range because of the following evidence: The District provided documentation demonstrating support of the RTTD program from the community and state was received in a timely manner. The Arkansas Department of Education approved ESEA Flexibility. There is a letter of support from the mayor and a copy of the letter sent to the Arkansas authority in charge of reviewing the project, as well as a letter from State Senator Jimmy Hickey. The District strategic plan (Appendix P) has been adopted and is in place with a focus on formation of a district leadership team, analyzing professional development needs, providing a supportive instructional environment with high expectations where all can learn, enabling cross campus collaboration times, ensuring curriculum is aligned to CCSS, fostering strong communication, and strengthening community partnerships as allowed by the ESEA Flexibility approval. Project Young Engineer is implemented with a focus on college and career ready standards designed to support personalized learning environments for all students. Appropriate student performance targets in math and literacy have been set with the focus upon cutting achievement gaps within the next six years. All schools have developed an Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) which is designed to build capacity for school improvement by focusing on assessment data, graduation rates, attendance rates, and other relevant achievement indicators for all students and all sub groups. Effective instruction and leadership is supported through the Arkansas Excellence and Support System (TESS) legislation and guidelines which is the teacher/principal evaluation tool based upon the Danielson model. The district has developed a staff evaluation system based upon these requirements using the Danielson model. The total number of points were not awarded because the Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ASCIP) allows more autonomy for higher achieving schools than low-achieving schools. Low-achieving schools must gain state approval for interventions and external partners.

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

**15**

**10**

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

This section is scored in the middle range because it does not clearly explain how all students, families, teachers and principals were engaged in development of this proposal. There was no information provided about what/how data in support of the RTTD plan goals was gathered or who determined what the RTTD plan goals are to be. There was a District committee composed of 1 administrator, 2 teachers, 2 parents, 4-6 students who conducted 8 meetings (held at approximately the same time) to discuss the relevancy of the use of technology in/out of the classroom. It is unclear where these meetings were held and no dates were provided. There was no information provided about how the committee was selected. It is unclear if there was representation on the committee from each of the six participating schools.

The District is a non-collective bargaining District. There were surveys provided demonstrating (Appendix K) that the proposal stated showed broad support from the teachers, but it was unclear if 70% of participating teachers were in support. There were a number of letters of support from teachers included in the supporting documents, however the letters were identical and it was unclear what method was used to gather them from the teachers who provided them.

There were a number of letters of support from key stakeholders, including the mayor, parents, and community partners included.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>

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

There is a clearly outlined comprehensive plan that provides structure to the learning experience of students in all grades. Personal learning will be implemented for all students, based upon data available about individual student learning needs. Student learning goals will be monitored for success through the use of formative assessments (projects, performances, portfolios) and summative data based upon required assessments from the State. College and career ready standards have been adopted by both the State and District and will provide the focus for student learning success. Student exposure to diversity will come through the use of technology - real time discussions with students teachers from across the world as the technology is implemented in the classroom and students explore their interests. Students will keep individual data notebooks with learning goals developed by students, parents, and teachers. The data notebooks will empower students to plan for their own learning success and to meet college and career ready goals and performance on assessments.

The plan will allow students to structure their learning to achieve their goals by: providing opportunities for them to compare information from different sources before completing assignments, draw their own conclusions based on analysis of numbers, facts or relevant information, solve complex problems, provide feedback to each other as they work on projects, use a variety of methods to demonstrate mastery (posters, blogs, videos, or presentations). The options that are allowed will provide a variety of means for students to understand how what they are learning is attached to attaining the goals of their learning plan.

Students will be involved in deep learning experiences in their areas of academic interest as they demonstrate their learning by doing. Project based learning, that may incorporate technology as one tool, will deepen their understanding. The STEAM framework also supports learning in depth and demonstrating that learning in a variety of ways, both in school or through community partnership opportunities.

There is a comprehensive plan to provide feedback on student learning to teachers, parents, and the student that is user friendly and accessible at school sites and on line. The District has high expectations for all students. The ELL teachers and SPED teachers are included in planning and staff development activities. Lessons for students with IEPs are presented with appropriate accommodations. The District has a variety of appropriate interventions available for all students who may need them, such as: after school tutoring, summer school, night school, and District charter school.

Table C-2 provides the information required in support of a high quality plan as required, listing: goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The information found within Table C-2 clarifies and describes the goals for Project Young Engineer. Goals included are: creating a personalized learning environment; providing individual customized learning opportunities; implementation of the Common Core and STEAM; and identification of professional development needs to implement the plan as written. These activities are in support of implementing a plan in support of the four core educational assurances as required.

Parent facilitators assist in training parents in the use of data systems at the school sites. Students receive training in school as needed.

This section scores in the high range because as described above, it is focused on providing access to academic success for all students. Not all points were given because, interventions that may take place during school time were not clearly described, other than IEP accommodations. The statement is made that teachers can adapt the reading level for individual students to "alleviate reading frustration (such as ELL or special education students) or to challenge more advanced readers. This statement does not indicate that the changes in vocabulary are to increase understanding/learning for students having difficulty in the same way it indicates that it will challenge more advanced students.

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

<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

This plan supports growth in the implementation and use of Professional Learning Communities, with each site having teams in place. The train-the-trainer model is used to increase understanding and responsibility for the planning of

teaching and learning by the PLCs. Professional development activities specific to meet the requirements of the RTTD plan are included and many will take place using this model within the PLCs. The information provided meets the requirements of a high quality plan, because the District is focused on increasing the number of highly effective and effective teachers through the implementation of multiple means. This will be accomplished through professional development opportunities tied to PLCs, the evaluation system, and a system in place to recruit and retain teachers in hard to fill areas (science, math, and special education).

Approximately 50 professional development opportunities are offered annually in a variety of formats that use the principal, a mentor, a facilitator, or PLC teams as the mode of delivery. Any specific providers are still to be determined and based upon award of the RTTD grant.

There is a student data tracking system in place to be used in planning student learning and success. Data notebooks are present and used by all stakeholders, including students, to plan for personalized learning environments. Individual student progress reports are in place. Math and science software is designed to provide immediate intervention as needed, however there is no complete description of what this is.

Implementation of a digital tool to track teacher effectiveness will be embedded into the District evaluation tool. This allows increased availability of data gathered in both formative and summative evaluation activities.

Professional development in how to use and plan instruction using technology is planned for all teachers. The train-the-trainer model will be used to train teachers in the college and career ready standards. There will be one additional instructional facilitator added with grant funds to assist teachers at each school site. The Young Engineer Director will monitor the instructional facilitators.

Each teacher will receive a classroom set of tablets and training in their use from grant funds. This is an integral part of the implementation of Individualized Student Learning plans. The PLCs are assisting in development of protocols for informal classroom observations.

The District plans to increase the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals through payment of signing bonuses in the areas of math, science, and special education. The District will also reimburse teachers and principals for advanced college course work, national certification, and attending professional development on their own time in partnership with the Arkansas Leadership Academy.

Appendix B provides specific evaluation information for superintendent, principals, and teachers. The District has adopted the Danielson model for evaluation for all appropriate staff.

This section is scored in the high range because it states clearly and comprehensively its plan to increase learning for all students, to increase information to parents and teachers, and to provide a structured professional development plan based upon data. The total points were not awarded because there was not clear information about how math/science interventions will take place.

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

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

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

This section scores in the high range because it provides an organized structure to monitor progress of the RTTD plan from the District office to the schools and parent/student levels.

The District office has organized itself to work closely as a team in support of the RTTD plan. Staff includes: superintendent, assistant superintendent of elementary education, assistant superintendent of secondary education, and business manager. They all work with the Coordinator of Testing and Student Services to provide support to the schools who have committed to Project Young Engineer (PYE). The PYE Director will ensure all grant objectives are being met, appropriate data is collected, and schools have appropriate STEAM resources to successfully meet student needs. The STEAM Instructional Facilitator will support classroom improvement by developing teaching strategies, modeling lessons, providing professional development. The Instructional Technology Facilitator provides technical assistance as needed. The PYE/STEAM secretary/technician provides spreadsheets, budget information, and other duties. The Technology Information Specialists will support instruction, administrative technology and assist in daily operations. Job descriptions are provided in Appendix M.

School leadership is provided autonomy and flexibility over school schedules, calendars, hiring, firing, staffing models,

school improvement, and budgets. ACSIPS(school improvement plans) are developed at each site with support from the District. (Appendix F). The plans are available to all stakeholders for review at the site and on the District website. School Leadership teams work on the ACSIPS, and also may assist in technology planning meetings, interviews of new staff, Title I meetings, budget planning meetings, calendar and scheduling meetings.

All students are given the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. Data notebooks, and work with STEAM mentors provide many opportunities to demonstrate progress based on individual personalized learning plans. Local partnerships provide the opportunity to earn dual credit.

Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways. The STEAM framework and PBL allow for student-directed learning and many ways to demonstrate such learning, i.e. portfolios, work with mentors, Innovation Portal, technology models, and accommodations for students with disabilities. Students can make up failed credits by attending Night Credit Recovery, summer school, transfer to Washington Academy Charter School, and PYE assistance with after school tutoring.

Students with disabilities or ELL students work with ESL Coordinators and Director of Special Services to ensure their learning plan is developed to provide access and adaptability to their individualized learning plan. Remediation programs are available on various software programs. The curriculum specialists, and ELL and Special Education staff work with classroom teachers during PLC time to assist planning for success for these students.

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

**10**

**9**

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

This section scores in the high range because it provided access to data to all stakeholders in a variety of methods (student/teacher/parent conferences, online, and print reports). Data systems to track student academic achievement levels are in place. Student learning is tracked in individual portfolios as well as through the data system. Job descriptions for responsible school personnel are included in Appendix M.

The District will provide tablets to all PYE students to support their individualized project-based learning activities, as well as the software required for the activities. There will be stipends for 12 math and science teachers to provide 2 hours of after school tutoring, 3 days a week for 33 weeks/year. Students and parents can access online learning used in the schools in the areas of math, science, and reading at home. All stakeholders have access both inside and outside of the school days to remediation and higher level math and science courses. Students can participate and communicate with a wide variety of community members through the PASS program. Provision for access to information/data outside of school hours are also available to students and parents on certain evenings when libraries and computer labs are kept open beyond the school day. The data provided does not clearly state how many days or what the hours of availability are which impact access to student information and learning tools by both students and parents who may not have computer access in their homes regardless of income level, for this reason not all points were awarded.

Additional technical support staff have been hired to assist all stakeholders in the use of technology and its use as a learning tool. This staff works closely with the PYE Director. The STEAM Instructional Facilitator and the Technology Coordinator work closely with teachers to provide a wide selection of training assistance. A parent coordinator establishes a schedule of parent involvement activities and provides appropriate training to parents.

Student data is shared through access to Individualized Student Learning Plans, through the District website, and at parent meetings. Training for parents on how to use the technology is available.

The technology programs used to assess and track student data follow guidelines as required. Parents are able to see longitudinal data on individual students and students lead parent/teacher conferences to discuss assessment data. Teachers and principals plan learning growth with individual students. The District has purchased a student data tracking system to provide data to stakeholders and online resources that can be reached 24/7 by both students and teachers.

The District has purchased systems that are classified as "interoperable data systems" as required. The data can be used across several platforms for varied purposes. The student data tracking system and MyData Button system will be utilized so that students and parents can create and track individual learning profiles based on their entire educational career. This data can then be imported into other district electronic learning systems.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section is scored in the high range because it demonstrates a clear understanding and process for tracking continuous improvement and providing appropriate feedback on progress in achieving plan goals. The rationale for the plan is supported by discussion of the State requirements pertaining to planning and development of school improvement plans. A theory on continuous improvement from John Wooden forms the basis for guiding questions used in the development of the RTTD plan. Teachers and facilitators will use a Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships checklist first, along with a SCALE walk-through template to analyze weekly the implementation of the effectiveness of implementation of CCSS goals and grant goals. Table E-1 lists specific grant investment, monitoring/measuring/sharing questions and activities, and responsible parties addressing the following: professional development tied to the teacher/principal evaluation instrument and training required to implement the STEAM pedagogy across all content areas, technology and how to use various formats and how to use it as a teaching learning tool and access for all stakeholders, staff and how the teacher recruitment/retention program has led to increasing numbers of highly effective and effective teachers, and student interventions tied to what students are learning and what learning gaps need to be addressed. There is an organized structure of monthly meetings with the leadership advisory team, which includes representation from all stakeholders to assess progress and needs.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section scores in the high range because a clearly stated, organized system of monthly meetings to review RTTD implementation progress has been put in place at the District level. The meetings have representatives from principals, district office, Board members, community partners, and parents and are for the purpose of evaluating the progress of the RTTD plan based upon available data. PLC meetings take place weekly at the school sites to monitor student success and plan instruction. In addition to meetings, communication from the District to stakeholders can be found on the District website, Facebook, and newsletters sent home with students. There are parent STEAM nights twice a year. Appendix P describes the stakeholder/parent meetings. The District strategic plan has provisions for forming an advisory committee to strengthen community partnerships. The processes that have been included in the RTTD include all stakeholders and have been designed to provide open communication in multiple ways about the plan and its implementation and how it is positively impacting student learning at all levels, adult learning, and creating a culture of excellence.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section is scored in the middle range because there is discrepancy between the number of highly effective and effective teacher data provided in (E)(3)Performance Measure a). The plan presentation includes required components listed under the Performance Measure tables and graphs, which include teacher and student data, as well as performance measures and how each will be measured. (Table E-3). The rationale for the selection of each performance measure is clearly stated and supported by data and research on factors impacting learning. The performance measures will hold students and teachers accountable for success. The PYE will oversee the progress and communicate to stakeholders. PLC meetings will also be used to analyze data and make necessary adjustment to the plan. The Project Director, as well as STEAM facilitators, and Technology facilitators will assist in training staff, compiling data, and sharing regularly with stakeholders. There will use made of academic measures as well as discipline, attendance, and behavior records to track success of plan implementation. The gathering and analyzing of data will be ongoing and will utilize a logic model that evaluation is not a static process. (Appendix R). The data that is gathered will be reviewed by the stakeholders twice a year to ensure fidelity of implementation. The processes implemented in the plan to provide ongoing interpretation of the data and implementing changes and adjustments to the RTTD plan, as well as individual student learning plans is inclusive and provides the resources necessary for successful implementation.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This section scores in the high range because it concisely outlines a continuous process for evaluating the effectiveness of the RTTD plan. The responsibility for this evaluation rests with the PYE Director, with support from the Federal Programs</p>		

Coordinator. The required elements meeting the needs of a high quality plan are in place because all stakeholders are involved, technology needs are addressed with provisions for training parents in how to use and interpret data, the ACSIP outlines how schools map and spend funds to increase student achievement, and District and school level staff are in place to facilitate and monitor plan implementation for all. Leadership meetings lead by principals will also monitor expenditures and professional development using checklists to ensure effectiveness of the grant. Parent councils will meet monthly to make sure dollars are being spend appropriately. Technology staff will work with teachers, facilitators, and principals to be sure technology is implemented in the ways planned. The PYE and STEAM and Technology Facilitators will work together to be sure that necessary materials are present in the classrooms. Annual year end meetings will be held with stakeholders to evaluate progress, plan professional development, and make adjustments in plan as needed. Each of these steps will rely upon data indicating the success of the RTTD implementation. Should there be indications that changes and adjustments need to be made at the district, site, or classroom level the responsible parties have the authority to do so.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>This section scores in the high range because it clearly lists funding sources as required and supports the goals of the plan as stated. Local, state, and federal funds are specifically listed with amounts identified in all budget categories. The budget delineates which will be a one-time purchase and what costs will be on-going. A short description of how the RTTD plan will be sustained at the end of the grant timeline is presented. The budget as presented supports the goals and expenditures discussed within the budget narratives for each project found in the RTTD plan because it clearly lists the staffing needs with responsibilities for plan implementation, travel is listed for the purpose of training staff to improve use of online reports and use of student data that will then be used in professional development activities for the entire District, equipment purchases are identified as one-time purchases to be used in support of individualized student learning environments at the school sites, supplies are listed in support of technology and instructional materials, contractual services are presented and describe the use of learning data, student information, and intervention software in math and science.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>This section is scored in the high range because it clearly describes the District plan for sustaining the project goals after it ends. To ensure continuity of the plan the District will practice flexibility in the use of local, state, and federal funds available to the District. They will enlist assistance from local business partnerships in support of the plan goals. The Educational Foundation will continue to support STEAM projects in classrooms through donations and matching business grants with individual teachers. There is strong community support evidenced by the letters of support from the mayor and local business partnerships.</p> <p>Table F-1 presents planning for continuance beginning in the SY2017-18 and beyond, what the budget assumptions may look like, what the funding sources are, and who is responsible. A listing of strategies in addition to financial support is also provided which includes a continued focus on college and career ready preparation as well as vocational programs, support and interaction with local colleges, an ongoing technology plan that is inclusive of all, increased community partnerships, and continuing to increase STEAM participation which all support continuing the elements a high quality plan. There is clear evidence that the District has thought and planned for the future and how to keep the RTTD projects in place to support student success. The total points were not awarded because there was no listing of any process using an external evaluator to evaluate the plan implementation and progress.</p>		

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

This section scores in the high range because it clearly outlines District, school, and community partnerships that are inclusive of all students and parents in working to support student academic success by providing support in developing positive parenting skills, reducing inappropriate behavior in students, and developing good citizens. The program addresses core priorities because it is addressing ways to identify and provide assistance to students who are underperforming in the classroom because of risky behaviors. The partnership is between the SW Arkansas Prevention Taskforce and the Texarkana Police Department and focuses on collaborating to build students who are contributing citizens and reducing risky behavior which impacts their success as students. The goals are written to address all students and are behavioral, building community support, and educational. There is also a goal for all parents and focuses on the area of family support for healthy parenting skill development. Table X-1 clearly identifies the population that will be included, what type of result is desired, and a goal statement of how success will be identified. The data component of this plan is strong and will use data collected by the District as well as data collected by the TAPD. The joint mentor plan is reasonable and will demonstrate communication between the school and its partner by involving staff from the TAPD as well as the school counselor, parent, and student. Success will be tracked quarterly with specific performance measures that have been developed jointly with all stakeholders (Table X-2 and X-3). Table X-4 provides detail of identified risk factors, researched based rationale, prevention activities, responsible parties, and a timeline. Students and parents will be invited to participate in open PYE Advisory Committee meetings, volunteer as peer mentors or leaders, and provide feedback about the program through surveys.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The RTTD plan presented has met the requirements of Absolute Priority 1. The District has developed and organized and achievable plan that focuses on increasing student academic success in a variety of ways. The plan was developed with input and support from all stakeholders: District, Board, principals, teachers, parents, students, and community partners. The plan will focus developing and increasing student learning through the use of personalized learning environments that will address student learning needs in a variety of ways, including project based learning, on line learning, alternative school settings, and advanced academic areas all tied to achievement of college and career ready standards. This is to be accomplished with a clearly defined used of technology to support student learning in a variety of modes, flexible use of time in support of increasing success in math, literacy, science, and the arts. Students will design personalized learning plans that include classroom learning activities, on line learning programs and intervention programs. The Young Engineer Project is both feasible and achievable. Data systems are in place to track both student success and also identify learning gaps that need to be addressed. Training in the use of data to plan instruction and monitor student achievement is planned for principals, teachers, parents, and students. There are also plans in place that will allow access to technology both in school classrooms and labs during school hours and additional outside of school hours for students and parents. The plan is based on student achieving college and career ready goals adopted by both the State and District, assessment will take place both formally and informally with the goal being increased graduation rates and college enrollment numbers. Processes are in place to evaluate District administration and teachers using the Danielson model. Information gained from both formative and summative teacher evaluations will be used in planning for professional development activities. The District has reasonable plan in place to increase teacher retention and assist in teacher recruitment in high needs areas through payment of tuition for those pursuing higher level degrees, national board certification, or other approved training and to pay recruitment incentives for teachers in the areas of science, math, and special education. The implementation of technology as an integral piece for individual student learning is evident. The plan to provide staff development for teachers in how to use the technology and to use technology as a tool to teach is included. The organizational structure to implement, monitor, and adjust as necessary is evident by regularly schedule meetings for District committees, PLC meetings at school sites, parent advisory committee meetings, and regular evaluation and revision of student learning plans.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>189</b>
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0013AR-2 for Texarkana Arkansas School District #7

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

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

The applicant, Texarkana Arkansas School District # 7(TASD) provides a clear and comprehensive vision to launch Project Young Engineer(PYE) by integrating science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics(STEM) within all aspects of its vision.

Currently, the school district utilizes data systems to measure student growth and inform future best practices. Teachers also use student data during PLC meetings to guide instruction. The school district has programs in place to support and develop student teachers, current teachers, and principals.

The school district plans to build upon the four educational assurances by implementing the following initiatives:

1. The district desires to create online assessments and digital lessons that are accessible to all.
2. TASDs enhanced learning management system (StudentGPS) is designed to track student performance, attendance, and discipline. Opportunities to develop leaders within the school system have been clearly stated. The district plans to train staff members through The Learning Institute, train the trainer models and through implementation of Charlotte Danielson’s evaluation framework to align teacher and principal appraisals with student assessment.
3. Competitive ideas to retain student teachers, business professionals and mentors to select their school district instead of venturing to neighboring states to pursue the teaching field are effective. The district supports staff members who attend outside professional development, obtain advanced degrees and national board certifications.
4. There is a plan to turn around the six schools included in the grant application by increasing low achievement in STEAM areas.

TASD is committed to ensure the following:

- Every student is prepared for success in the 21st century through design of rigorous classroom instruction.
- Every teacher is highly qualified and trained in best practices and the delivery of a world class curriculum.
- Collaboration between all stakeholders (educators, parents, and community members) is utilized to ensure student success.

The vision for PYE to provide enhanced student learning opportunities, personalized learning environments, improved academics and social-emotional support is thoroughly described in the detailed plan provided by TASD.

Student achievement goals to decrease achievement gaps, increase student performance in math and science, increase student graduation rates and to provide regular and immediate feedback are feasible.

A description of blended learning labs for all students is included in the grant application. Classrooms that incorporate technology, expert mentors/facilitators with real world experience in engineering, learning stations, online courses and learning labs are sound.

Student learning is clear in this high quality plan. Classrooms will be equipped with technology tools to assist students. Also, through STEAM, students and teachers will be exposed to experts in the field of science. It is clear that increasing student performance and ensuring that students will have access to personalized learning environments will be an endeavor that requires collaboration among students, teachers, field experts, and parents.

The vision of Project Young Engineer has been articulated well by the grant applicant. A detailed description of the vision and a plan for implementation is included in the proposed project. Full points have been assigned.

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

The majority of the schools selected in this grant proposal are described as low-achieving and high in poverty schools with large gaps in student achievement. The district has described a plan to eventually include all elementary students.

3,281 students would have direct benefits from implementation of the grant proposal. There are 2,892 (79%) students are economically disadvantaged and 70% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch status. 266 educators have been selected to work with participating students. The following schools were mentioned in the application and were targeted because of their low achieving status:

- Arkansas High School(grades 9-12)
- North Heights Junior High School (grades 7-8)
- College Hill Middle School (grades 5-6)
- Fairview Aerospace & Environmental Science Elementary (grades K-4)
- Union Communication Arts Elementary (grades K-4)
- Vera Kilpatrick Math/Science Wellness Elementary (grades K-4)

TASD has done an excellent job of describing the process for selecting schools using both data charts and descriptive information. All schools selected meet the eligibility requirements defined in the grant notice. The applicant has fulfilled criteria for A(2). Full points have been assigned.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The district's high quality plan includes a theory of change model and achievable timeline that enables teachers and students to lead their own learning. The logic model includes a clear definition of terms, resources needed for project success, project requirements, short term outcomes for years one and two, long term outcomes for years three and four, and project impact after five to seven years of completion of grant funds

It is noted that PLCs will assist with promoting student achievement, teacher retention and staff motivation. TASD completed major reform within the school district to become a magnet school system. Professional Learning Communities have been implemented to provide sustainable change promote teacher retention and motivation. TASD states that the model used to design effective PLCs will be used to scale up selected Scholarship teams, technology integration, and processes for evaluating teachers and principals.

Efforts to close achievement gaps are addressed in A(3) by mentioning that it will provide rigorous P-16 curriculum. Although this is an achievable task, the district has failed to address content area reading and language arts and how content reading is infused in math and science classes. Efforts to strengthen reading capabilities and comprehension in all classes were not included in this plan.

In an effort to increase graduation rates, the district plans to track all students that have a grade of F in core subject classes. The district has listed key personnel that will track credit completion and achievement in math and science.

The theory of change model also includes an analysis of instructional effectiveness. The district appropriately addressed efforts to scale up transforming the current evaluation tool to a model that can be utilized online.

TASD's Project Young Engineer has clear ambitious goals. All goals are realistic and can be met if the district implements all actions included in the logic model and timeline. This high quality plan's weakness is that the district lacked to address how it would scale up achievement for all instructional content areas and not just targeted math and science contents. Seven points have been assigned.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The grant applicant has included a sound plan to raise performance on summative assessments. This plan includes: (1) Raising overall district math proficiency rates to 90%, and rising by at least three percentage points per year through the 2017-2018 school year. (2) Raising overall district science proficiency rates to 85%, rising by at least three percentage points per year through the 2016-2017 school year. The grant applicants plan to close achievement gaps through monitoring student results on performance assessments, incorporating technology in the personalized learning environments, and providing students with multiple ways to demonstrate learning

is acceptable.

Baseline scores from the Arkansas Comprehension Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) are consistently low for Black students and students with IEPs. The goals for all student populations, including low achieving student populations, are achievable and ambitious. The applicant has an equitable plan to close achievement gaps.

TASD's visions to increase student graduation rates are concise. Upon completion of the grant cycle, the desires to obtain an overall graduation rate of 88%. This goal is realistic due to lower high school completion rates in some student populations.

Plans to increase college enrollment are ambitious yet achievable. Currently the district's overall college enrollment rate is 29%. Goals to increase college enrollment for school year 2017– 2018, have been set for 90%.

The applicant has scored high. Full points have been assigned.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Economically disadvantaged students are performing at the same rate as non-economically disadvantaged students. The district fails to provide a clear record of success for the past four years in advancing student achievement. However, the district has provided some data that demonstrates that it has a commitment to student achievement and a commitment to provide quality instruction to all students for the last three school years.</p> <p>TASD demonstrates support of professional development and enhancing the leadership capacity of adults within the district by paying for teachers to complete Master's degrees and national board certification. The district requires a one year commitment upon completion of higher education goals achieved with financial assistance of the district.</p> <p>Reform efforts to enhance student learning began in 2005 when the district transformed schools into a magnet system. The district describes efforts to improve math scores by 14% and literacy rates of students by over 20 percentage points at Vera Kilpatrick Elementary Math/Science Wellness Magnet.</p> <p>College Hill Middle School has had five new principals within the last six years but managed to improve math scores by 4% and literacy score by 5% since the 2010 – 2011 school year.</p> <p>The literacy rates at Fairview Aerospace and Environmental Studies Magnet Elementary School and Union Elementary Communication Arts Magnet School have improved by 15% and 17% respectively. School success is attributed to strong leadership, high expectations, common planning, data analysis and student interventions. The district notes that college enrollment rates rose from 9% in 2011-2012 to 29% in 2012-2013. Also, the evidence provided on high school graduation rates is impressive. The district's graduation rates have increased by 29% in four years.</p> <p>According to district documentation within the grant application, Arkansas High School was in the top five most improved high schools in the southwest region for algebra achievement in 2010-2011, by increasing student performance from 36% to 59% on the end-of-course Algebra I exam. The school also has implemented a flexible learning format for students that desire a non-traditional class schedule.</p> <p>The school district has an open door policy to invite parents and community members within schools. Parents have access to parent centers to monitor students learning online. The district disseminates reports cards quarterly. Missives, counselor newsletters, student folders and class newsletters are additional ways that TASD communicates with students and parents. The Learning Institute provides reports to students and parents upon completion of each lesson module to assist with informing and improves academic progress, goal setting and student participation.</p> <p>Prior record of success and conditions of reform has been addressed by Texarkana Arkansas School District # 7, however the district did not provide charts and graphs and a clear description for all assessment performance/student learning outcomes on how it has closed the achievement gaps for a the past four years This selection criteria was scored in the low high-range. Twelve points have been assigned.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The grant applicant notes that it reports salary and benefit surveys to the U.S. Census Bureau. Included in the grant application is a description on how an internet user can navigate the district's website to locate current expenditures and personnel salaries for the last three years. The description provided is concise and concrete. The district grant application describes how it is required to post school level expenditures and non-expenditures as part of the Arkansas Financial Transparency Act that passed in 2011. The school district measures to assure transparency by providing a spreadsheet on the homepage of its website detailing contract information for all personnel in the district, including salaries and names are sound. The district also post all financial audits. T ASD also described how it provides the public with the status of Title I funding. In addition to online transparency, information is also provided to the public at Governing Board meetings. T ASD has addressed this selection criterion and has been assigned full points.

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

**10**

**10**

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

T ASD's acting mayor has written a letter of support for Project Young Engineer (PYE). Statements on how T ASD sent its grant application to the State Clearinghouse for review prior to officially submitting their grant application to the U.S. Department of Education is also sound evidence of support for the grant application. The state of Arkansas has ESEA flexibility. T ASD has provided evidence that the school district has state autonomy to successfully implement the goals of Project Young Engineer (PYE). The school district established new performance targets in reading and math that lead to improvement in state and district accountability. It is noted in the grant application that interventions and permission to utilize expertise from external partners must be approved by the state if a school is considered low achieving. Starting with the 2011 - 2012 school year, T ASD established state autonomy in selecting an evaluation tool for instructional staff. The district's unique staff evaluation system utilizes the framework of Charlotte Danielson and requires that all be trained using the framework. T ASD also requires that all administrators pass a certification exam. Throughout the grant application, there is strong evidence that it goes beyond the minimum state expectation requiring 20% of instruction use a tactile learning approach. The applicant has provided a sufficient description of conditions of autonomy. Full points are assigned.

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

**15**

**13**

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

T ASD has provided evidence that creation of its RTTT-D grant application was done with collaboration from a variety of stakeholders. The proposal team consisted of an administrative liaison, two teachers, two parents, and four to six students. In addition to creating a committee, the district sent surveys and petitions to gauge support for Project Young Engineer. Although the district does state that principals and other stakeholders provide items for discussion towards the vision of the grant application, the district does not fully describe how principals were informed and engaged in the proposal process.

The school district obtained over 2,000 signatures and received support from 100% of the community that participated in the survey, 90% of its teachers, and 95% of parents. It is unclear how many teachers that responded to the survey are working in schools that have been selected to participate in the Professional Young Engineer project.

57 collaborative partners are described in the appendix of the grant application. The school district has also provided evidence on how each partner will provide support to STEAM initiatives. Letters submitted by the school district, included in the appendix, demonstrate support from principals and teachers that are representatives of schools that would benefit from RTTT-D funds if the district is selected as an award recipient.

T ASD demonstrates evidence of written support from a variety of stakeholders. Engagement beyond surveys and petitions is not clearly understood. T ASD is a LEA without collective bargaining representation. This grant application lacks clear support from 70% of teachers from schools participating in Project Young Engineer. Thirteen points have been assigned.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>

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

The high quality plan provided by Texarkana Arkansas School District (T ASD) #7 includes a sound vision that ensures that students will graduate college and career ready. The district prides itself as being facilitators of student learning by equipping students with skills to be supervisors of learning communities. The goal to mandate that all students maintain an individual data notebook where goals

included in the notebook are reviewed quarterly is commendable. It is noted that within the notebook students will keep track assessment information and STEAM goals. Utilizing the notebook throughout a student's years of study will show student progress while they are enrolled in school. The school district has clearly documented that learning is key to student success and that frequent collaboration amongst parents, teachers, administrators, and students is necessary to monitor student progression towards obtaining STEAM goals.

The district foresees and recognizes that a child's learning needs may change as he/she matures. It is sound that the district reevaluates student interest and learning styles twice a year. The vision to incorporate findings from the learning inventories to develop lessons specific to the needs of all students is further documentation that the district vision is structured to put the needs of students first. The grant applicant's structure to achieve learning goals is concrete. It is commendable that T ASD has included peer to peer interaction as an accountability tool.

Dialog within the grant application is clear that students learn by doing. Allowing students to learn through inquiry will ensure that student retain essential information and will deepen the learning process. The grant applicant also acknowledges that it is necessary to provide diverse career paths for students that have no desire to enter STEM careers. The description of other learning career paths offered within the district is sound.

The plan to incorporate technology into the classroom to diversify the learning experience is reasonable. The LEA's vision to use the digital platform as a means to access researchers, speakers, and other students from diverse backgrounds can be achieved if the LEA is awarded RTTT-D funds.

All students will learn at their own pace according to the T ASD's Project Young Engineer vision. STEAM objectives will expose students to a multitude of skills to ensure student success. Although the vision outlined by the school district describes how the courses that will be designed will be rigorous and enhance students critical thinking, the district did not provide specific course information that students will take yearly. The plan also does not include specific provisions or course outlines for students with disabilities.

The LEA does address providing students with a variety of approaches to learning, including collaborative grouping, personalized self-paced learning, and technology-enhanced instruction. A vision of expecting personal accountability for all students is understood.

Student exposure to high quality content is described in section C of the LEA's vision. Included are plans to provide students with access to webcasts, engineers, nationally certified math instructors, and rigorous assessments aligned to the state's science framework.

The applicant has thoroughly described goals for student accountability and feedback incorporating data notebooks and digital portfolios. A plan for how all stakeholders will have access to student learning is clear. Included in the plan is a written outline to provide interventions for struggling learners.

The descriptions on how the district plans to accommodate high needs learners and students with disabilities are concise. Resources for all students are accessible at home and at school.

T ASD incorporates a train the trainer model for learning. The district has included detailed support systems for teachers. The LEA has also described how students will utilize technology in math and science labs. A provision to provide 24/7 support is unique.

Project Young Engineer is designed to allow students to be active participants in the learning process. The idea to allow establish I-Teams where students train each other and adults can be achieved with grant funding. The district also has a plan to provide 24/7 training for students on the new math and science software. Providing training in the form of handouts, videos, and modules is appropriate.

Overall, this section was well developed. The applicant's high quality plan has a direct linkage to college and career standards and the Arkansas Science Framework. An accountability measure to track students' progress through benchmarks in grades 5 and 7 and with pre and posttest with checkmarks is sound. However, the applicant did not provide a detailed course sequence for all students. The sequence and process used to develop content for each academy would provide the reader with a clear understanding of instructional approaches the district plans to incorporate to ensure that students are college and career ready. As a result, the applicant was scored in the high mid-range. A score of eighteen points was assigned.

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

**20**

**16**

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

The district has successfully included a detailed timeline that outlines goals, activities, deliverables and personnel responsible for implementing the vision of Project Young Engineer. Included in the high quality timeline is a plan to assign tables so that students can create digital data notebooks and electronic portfolios. A rationale on utilization of professional learning communities to discuss student achievement, teacher collaboration, and data driven decisions is clear. Teacher collaboration will allow for careful data analysis to take place. Also, teachers will be supported in training on how to lead classroom learning to allow students to be active participants in the learning process and guide their own learning goals. It is ambitious that the district will provide a multitude of training during various

times of the year. If awarded the RTTT-D grant, the district plans to provide intensive training during the first year of implementation, to instruction staff that includes:

- Common Core – once a month
- Steam – 25 times per year
- Scholarship teams – weekly
- Digital teacher/Principal Evaluation Tool – 3 times
- Technology Integration – 20 times
- Formative Assessment Training – ongoing

The district plans to provide professional development in a variety of modes. The design of the vision to provide science-rich curriculum based on student academic needs, interest, and learning styles has been described at length.

The plan to monitor student progress is achievable. From the description provided in the grant application, it is evident that all decisions in regards to student achievement are based on data. It is noted in the grant application that student progress towards college and career readiness will be frequently measured through portfolios, data notebooks, math/science programs, and through formative and summative assessments.

Teacher growth will be measured with utilization of videotaped lessons and feedback given through post-observation conference. The protocol for implementing Common Core Standards will be able to enhance learning for students. The questions included in the protocol are reflective and will assist teachers in making informed decisions about instruction. Included in this grant application is a high quality plan to improve learning and teaching within the school district. There is clear evidence that through implementation of the high quality plan, the science, technology, and engineering, math, and arts goals to provide personalized learning opportunities will improve instruction for students.

The applicant has done a good job describing how software resources for math and science will serve as interventions and support new learning outcomes. The data notebooks and portfolios that students will carry throughout the school years will also address personalized learning goals.

Teachers in this school district will have access to a number of professional development opportunities to improve instruction and assist students with meeting graduation requirements. The self-paced plan for teachers to complete professional development is realistic. According to the grant application, the district’s math training will include opportunities such as four week online courses with 11 sessions that teachers can complete on their own schedules and Algebra I preparation trainings. Math professional development will support teachers in understanding misconceptions students bring to learning and provide instructional practices to help students revise mathematical thinking.

It is evident throughout this grant application that training will be provided to all educational stakeholders. It is clear that the LEA desires to create professional learning communities that collaborate to improve overall school and individual student instruction. The district also does a sound job of addressing how the learning environment will address student outcomes with meeting college and career standards. As noted in the application, the scholarship team model will provide a protocol which these teams can use to further analyze instructional practices and improve on outlined practices and goals noted in the grant application. The high quality plan submitted by the LEA includes a Scholarship Team timeline that launches in the spring of 2014. This timeline appropriately address how an when training and practices will be implemented to close achievement gaps. Also, the LEA has provided a realistic protocol that will be used to assist teachers in the study of effective implementation and teaching of the Common Core State Standards.

The grant applicant has a plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The district’s competitive plan to provide stipends and signing bonuses to attract student teachers to apply to their district is ambitious. Also, the plan to move out ineffective instructors that are not improving instruction is realistic. It is clear that the LEA has a vested interest in create a system where educators can receive quality feedback and reform educational practices. Although there is a plan to provide students with highly effective and effective teachers and principals, there is no supporting numeric evidence on how many effective and highly effective educational practitioners students will increasingly have access to each school year. The applicant has scored in the low-high range. Sixteen points have been assigned.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

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

From the description of roles and responsibilities provided by the school district, TASD central staff can successfully support Project Young Engineer (PYE) schools. The district's high quality plan assigns duties and responsibilities to central staff administrators. The applicant provides a clear plan to obtain a PYE director, technology facilitator, and technician.

It has been stated that schools have autonomy to create student schedules, budgets, and calendars but there is a lack of clear evidence demonstrating specific autonomy. The strategy to allow students the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery and not seat time is adequate. Accountability for student achievement is a collaborative effort between the student, parent, and school personnel. The school district has a working partnership with Hope Community College to provide opportunities to earn college credits.

The district's goal is to ensure that each student has a personalized learning plan is clearly justified. Allowing students a choice on three graduation tracks they can select is a step in providing an opportunity for students to be active participants in their own achievement/success. The LEA intervention model will equip struggling learners with the assistance needed to achieve success. The support given to at-risk students is commendable. At-risk students have access to a night credit recovery program, summer school and Washington Academy Charter School that offers individualized learning and flexible class schedules.

TASD has written within its vision procedures to address the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities and limited English. Modifications and adaptations for all students have been appropriately addressed. As stated above, TASD's high quality plan has sound description of roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders including the central office staff members. The high quality plan effectively describes school leadership autonomy and the plan also provides a detailed description of student learning outcomes beyond the traditional classroom setting. The applicant has scored high. The weakness in this application is that the grant applicant lacks details on district and local school autonomy with creating budgets and calendars. It is not understood if each school has full control to create budgets and calendars or if schools must obtain permission from the district and state before budgets and calendars can be created and implemented. Thirteen points have been assigned.

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

**10**

**8**

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

The high quality plans included in this grant application includes solid systems of support. The district has provided evidence of a strong desire to collaborate with all stakeholders. According to the applicant's grant application project timelines, goals, grant application, project staff contact information, approved scopes of work, partnerships, and student spotlights will be available for all on the district website.

The goal to allow teachers to enhance knowledge of content specific instruction is well outlined by the district. The idea to allow teachers to observe master teachers in action will strengthen the collaboration process within the school district. The applicant notes that labs will be open for certain evenings to provide students and parents access to technology. Information on when and how long labs will be open is not clearly mentioned. The LEA has not clearly stated if students can take the tablets home at the end of the school day. As a result, it is not clear that at-risk student and their parents have access to internet resources beyond the scope of the school day.

Access to open data formats are included in the high quality plan. The district has described how the StudentGPS provides a description of student achievement, attendance, class schedules, assessment results, grades and discipline referrals. Access to this system is available to parents and students from the MyData online system. Students and parents also have the ability to export data. The plan to provide 24/7 support to parents on how to utilize the system is appropriately addressed in the grant application.

The district has adequately described efforts to ensure that parents are involved in activities and programs on school campuses. The plan to provide parents with access to the parent resource center, sessions on how to read academic assessments, and resources on how to assist with academic achievement are appropriate.

The vision to provide technical support to all stakeholders is commendable. The vision within the school district to assign a person to be available 24/7 is sound.

It is noted that teachers and principals have access to StudentGPS, a dashboard system documenting achievement, attendance, class schedules, discipline and grades. The description of the support to parents for navigation of this program is satisfactory.

Interoperable data systems are included in this high quality plan. Throughout this application you can locate a comprehensive description of the teacher/principal evaluation tool and student dashboard system that houses employee records, student information, budget, and student achievement.

As stated previously, it is not clear if students will be allowed to take home tablets. The vision does not clearly state the accommodations that will be made to parents, beyond access to the parent center, to assist students with technology needs beyond the scope of the school day. It is also unclear how long labs will be open on the evenings and weekends for parents. A score of 8 has been assigned for criteria D(2).

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The plan to conduct walkthroughs weekly will ensure that the intent of the vision and the goals of Project Young Engineer (PYE) are successfully implemented is sound. The questions that will be used to assess the effectiveness of professional development, technology implementation, and student achievement are well thought out. The guidelines for monitoring school improvement are clear, concise and realistic. These four steps are of quality and keep all stakeholders on monitoring school improvement. The steps are also reflective in the high quality timeline and logic model. The applicant has clearly outlined in table E-1 a plan for implementation of desired goals, a measure for monitoring and sharing information, a plan to receive feedback from stakeholders, and a description of responsible parties that will ensure goals of the project have been implemented. Below is a summary of the district's action steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Locate the problem</li> <li>2. Prepare a plan</li> <li>3. Utilize resources that will drive data reflection, analysis, and next steps</li> <li>4. Work towards improvements</li> </ol> <p>The products used to measure the district's effectiveness of PYE are realistic and can efficiently be used to highlight the desired high level of transparency with all parents, staff members and students. The LEA has a high quality plan to provide feedback on progress and has clear strategies to rectify corrections that may be needed after implementation of PYE. Table E2 in the grant application provides a clear check and balances on monitoring district RTTT-D project's investments. The table includes opportunities to address improvements and weaknesses that may arise in implementation of the project. The applicant does a good job of listening to the needs of all stakeholders (teachers, parents, and students). The goal of sharing information of success and weaknesses of the project at monthly leadership meetings, through postings on the district's website, and Facebook pages is logical. The district has also made provisions to provide information about the project in the form of newsletters is appropriate. Full points have been assigned.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The plan to include a variety of stakeholders to hold positions on the leadership advisory board is notable. It is mentioned in the grant application that monthly leadership advisory meetings (involving principals, instructional facilitators, teachers, students, parents, district office representatives, Board members, community partners.) will address strengths of the ongoing project, review lessons learned, brainstorm future issues before they arise, and provide solutions to problems. With assistance from the people included in this comprehensive list, the clear project goals are achievable.</p> <p>Communication with community members and parents is clear. Providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate successes twice a year is ambitious. The vision to have meeting once a week to engage in dialogue about student achievement demonstrates the LEA's desire to put the needs of students first. The plan for making student learning a partnership is clear. The district's efforts to communicate with all stakeholders are stated throughout this application and are also noted in the district's high quality E-1 and E-2 timelines and logic model. The timelines include personnel responsible for the project's implementation and it describes in detail measurements that will be utilized to monitor the goals of the project. The applicant's desire to be transparent by posting items on its website and Facebook page also demonstrates the applicant's desire to engage with all stakeholders. Full points have been assigned.</p>		

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant did a thorough job of providing a rationale of why each performance measure was selected. The improvement percentage targets are ambitious. For example, the district has documented that it desires to TLI scores in grade 3 science by 50%, decrease the number of grades 9-12 antisocial behavior by 65%, improve state science assessment scores by 62% and decrease grades PreK-4 antisocial behavior by 80%.

Performance goals for addressing how many educators will be effective and highly effective are not clear. Yearly, the district has made targets, but through further analysis, these targets in some cases add up to more than 100%. There is a lack of rationale within the tables on how the LEA plans to provide students access with effective and highly effective teachers and principals. It is not clearly understood that the LEA has a process in place to measure how students will have access to quality highly effective instructors that will ensure that students have access to stakeholders that are knowledgeable of how to improve instruction and lead instruction as defined in the notice.

Having a focus on monitoring drop outs is realistic. There is sound evidence in the grant application to addressing the benefit to early interventions. The efforts addressed in this grant application to close achievement gaps and provide social-emotional support to students can assist in lowering future poverty rates. By providing students with a rigorous college and career curriculum throughout all school years, the district is also demonstrating the importance in quality education.

There is a component in the application that addresses student motivation. The plan to revise project goals if students' needs are not met is feasible.

The included logic model provides a sound explanation of desires goals, what the district needs to implement goals, and a plan to monitor short term and long term outcomes. The process used to gauge progress is appropriate. The district's plan to increase participation, collaboration, and mentoring amongst all stakeholders is supported in the grant application.

With the awarding of grant funds, high expectations for students and staff, and documented accountability these goals can be accomplished. The applicant has scored in the mid range. The numbers provided in the timeline for highly effective and effective teachers and principals are not justified in the rationale for the selected performance measures. Three points have been assigned.

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

The high quality plan, timelines, and logic model provide sound evidence of how the district plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the projects investments. The timelines provided describe the process that will be used to implement and measure the effectiveness of professional development. The district also plans to have yearly checklist to ensure that all goals have be addressed. The logic model and timelines thoroughly describe the availability to technology, how staff will be trained using technology and the LEA provides a plan on how to obtain feedback on how to better utilize resources. The plans for Project Young Engineer's (PYE) Director to review expenditures are appropriate. The district places a high regard from hearing the needs of all stakeholders (parents, staff and principals). The desire in table E-1 to have all stakeholders complete surveys is also fitting and provides further evidence of utilizing tools to measure the quality and effectiveness of investments. Collaboration efforts to share best practices are sound.

Efforts to employ technology that are accessible to all are realistic. Also, the goals to hold principals accountable for providing quality professional development and desire for them to monitor all technology investments are ambitious. It is notable that the district only plans to make purchases for materials that are supported by proven research and are aligned with federal guidelines.

One weakness in this section is that the district has not considered consulting an external evaluator that has no vested interest, and has the capability to provide a unbiased perspective in evaluating PYE's effectiveness. The applicant states that it will consider hiring an outside evaluator only if it is required. The applicant has scored high. Four points have been assigned.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Included in this grant application are comprehensive descriptions of future budget expenditures. The budget narrative is sufficient. The explanation that funding sources are from Title I, Title II-A, Title IV-A, ELL funding, Texarkana Arkansas Educational Foundation, Magnet School Assistance Grant, eRate technology funds, and grant/donations is clear and concise. The district desires to make purchases based off of sound research.</p> <p>Rationale for investments and priorities is clearly explained in the LEA's narrative and in subsequent tables. All rationales are realistic.</p> <p>Listed in this grant application are realistic one-time investments for supplies, technology hardware such as laptops, tablets, and wireless access points. Provisions to assure that the investments are maintained beyond the grant cycle are sound. These investments can assist with improving student achievement.</p> <p>The grant applicant's high quality tables provide additional evidence to support budgetary needs for project implementation. This criteria has been thoroughly addressed. Full points have been assigned.</p>		

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Included in this grant application is a high quality table that describes how project goals will be sustained three years beyond the grant cycle. The school district has listed an all-inclusive diverse list of external partnerships within its high quality plan. The funding sources provided by the LEA to support project goals for the three school years beyond the grant cycle is appropriately described. The district also notes that it has an educational foundation that supports STEAM projects. The description with collaborative efforts with Texarkana A&amp;M University will ensure that students are career and college ready. The timeline that describes potential future funding beyond the scope of the grant is adequate.</p> <p>The applicant has scored high but there is limited information on how the district has the capability to provide an unbiased perspective in evaluating PYE's effectiveness. There is no mention of obtaining an external evaluator that has no vested interest, and has the capability to provide a unbiased perspective in evaluating PYE's effectiveness.</p> <p>The applicant has soundly described its vision for Project Young Engineer and how the plan can be sustained. The applicant has scored high. Nine points have been assigned.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>TASD does an excellent job with describing its partnership with the Southwest Arkansas Prevention Task force and the Texarkana Police department. Collaborative efforts between the two groups lead to a creation of a soundly described behavior modification academy. The description of the district's efforts increase volunteers is commendable. The goals to curb risky behavior are aligned with district goals to provide students with social-emotional support. Also, programs that are offered in the summer will be beneficial to students and the descriptions of the lessons provided are of quality. These lessons can also contribute to increasing student achievement beyond the school day.</p> <p>The desire to reduce risky behavior, provide role models, expose students to drug preventive and STEAM curriculum and to provide families with outside support is realistic. These goals are aligned with the competitive preference criteria.</p> <p>The high quality timelines and logic model also include provisions to support students' needs. Collaboration with parents and providing students with leadership opportunities are logical and can improve the desired outcome of encouraging a healthy lifestyle. The LEA fails to fully describe how it plans to build the capacity of staff in participating schools. The district outlines a plan and notes goals to decrease drinking, arrests, and attacks.</p> <p>The listed rationales for improved results overtime are clear. However, it is not clear what supports will be in place to assist staff in meeting these desired goals. The section is rated in the mid-high range. Eight points have been assigned.</p>		

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant, Texarkana Arkansas School District # 7(TASD) provides a clear and comprehensive vision to launch Project Young Engineer(PYE) by integrating science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics(STEM) within all aspects of its vision. The vision for PYE to provide enhanced student learning opportunities, personalized learning environments, improved academics and social-emotional support is understood in the detailed plan provided by TASD. This plan addresses the four educational assurances defined in this notice. The LEA desires to create online assessments and digital lessons that are accessible to all; it desires to implement an interoperable StudentGPS data base system that monitors student achievement, grades, and discipline; the LEA has effectively described recruitment and efforts to retain teachers; and through Project Young Engineer, the desire to turn around low performing schools is clear.</p> <p>3,281 students would have direct benefits from implementation of the grant proposal and of all students, 2,892 (79%) are economically disadvantaged. 266 educators have been selected to work with participating students. TASD's visions to increase student graduation rates are concise. Upon completion of the grant cycle, the desires to obtain an overall graduation rate of 88%. This goal is realistic due to lower high school completion rates in some student populations.</p> <p>TASD has provided evidence that creation of its RTTT-D grant application was done with collaboration from a variety of stakeholders. The district has included numerous of letters from variety of stakeholders that support its RTTT-D application.</p> <p>Schools have autonomy to create student schedules, budgets, and calendars. The strategy to allow students the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery and not seat time is adequate. Accountability for student achievement is a collaborative effort between the student, parent, and school personnel. The district's goal is to ensure that each student has a personalized learning plan. Allowing students a choice on three graduation tracks they can select is a step in providing an opportunity for students to be active participants in their own achievement/success. The LEA intervention model will equip struggling learners with the assistance needed to achieve success.</p> <p>Overall, this is a strong grant application. The applicant has provide compelling evidence that its grant application will assist with meeting the academic needs of children within the school district. The applicant has met goals of Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>186</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0013AR-3 for Texarkana Arkansas School District #7

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

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
(A)(1) Proposal does an excellent job of articulating a comprehensive, coherent reform vision. Proposal focuses on the		

"engineering theme" which aims to help students "realize the world around them is natural, but there is always a design component." The focus is on STEAM (STEM plus art and design) for all age groups. Pursuant to this vision, the proposal would implement Project Young Engineer (PYE) in its six lowest achieving schools. PYE would integrate STEAM in all classrooms; provide students with a one-to-one computing personalized learning environment, STEAM mentors, and social-emotional support; and support educators and leaders through intense, job-embedded professional development in STEAM areas, enhanced professional development communities (PLCs) and improved evaluation systems. The proposal expects that PYE would increase math and science achievement, decrease the achievement gap, and increase high school graduation and college enrollment rates. Proposal does a thorough job of describing how PYE builds on each of the four core educational assurance areas. Proposal lays out a plausible case for how increased personalization will deepen and accelerate the achievement of students in the LEA's lowest achieving schools. Proposal paints a clear picture of how PYE classes would work in both elementary and secondary. (SCORE – HIGH – 10)

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

**10**

**10**

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

(A)(2) Combining the narrative from (A)(1) with this section, the proposal would support high quality implementation. The proposal targets all students in all grade levels in the LEA’s six lowest performing schools. These schools were selected to participate based on their persistence of low achievement, number of high-need students, robust data system, demonstrated capacity for improvement based on the four core educational areas in Race to the Top. All 3,281 students and 266 educators in the six schools would participate. Based on data presented in the table for each of these 6 schools, about 70 percent (2,292) of these students are low-income (ranges from a low of 54% to a high of 94%). Proposal quantifies high-needs students. (SCORE: HIGH – 10)

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

**10**

**6**

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

(A)(3) Regarding a plan for scaling up the (success elements) of the project district-wide, the proposal notes that the "creative use of funding and additional grants will enable the two nonparticipating high schools to grow in STEAM areas as well. However, while LEA partnerships are well described, this section does not discuss other elements of a high quality plan. Specifically, the narrative does not provide information regarding the time table for implementing actions or who's responsible for carrying out the actions. Moreover, the plan does not include a statement of expected outcomes. (SCORE – MED - 6 )

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

**10**

**5**

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

(A)(4) The proposal provides an extensive set of annual goals by school, grade level, and subgroup for math and science, closing the achievement gap, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. The proposal states that "Mean growth percentile to determine growth is based on district/state comparisons & ESEA Math Annual Measureable Objectives created for TASD by the Arkansas Department of Education." While many goals seem reasonably ambitious, some annual goals seem overly ambitious (e.g., college enrollment), and some only modestly ambitious (e.g., graduation rates). However no explanation is provided. Moreover, some entries seem inconsistent (e.g., goals related to achievement gaps).

(A)(4)(a) Annual performance goals (i. e., growth in % proficient/advanced by subject and grade level) are ambitious. If the LEA achieves them, both overall achievement would rise significantly and the achievement gap for the listed subgroups would diminish greatly. However, some of the growth targets are so large that the proposal would have benefited from an explanation. For example, in Fy 2012-2013, 4% of (students with) IEPs who took 8th grade math scored proficient/advanced, while the goal for FY 2013-14 is set at 36% proficient/advanced. While this is laudable goal, the proposal does not explain why it deems this very ambitious goal achievable.

(A)(4)(b) While the proposal explicitly sets goals for decreasing the achievement gap only for Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS), achievement gap goals for all subgroups are implicitly set in (A)(4)(a). However, the entries in the two tables are in some cases inconsistent [e.g., for Algebra 1, the gap for EDS is 22% in one table but 12% (61% - 49%) in another table.] (A)(4)(c) Annual graduation rates goals (about 1% increase per year overall and for each subgroup) seem reasonable, although not as ambitious as performance and achievement gap goals. (A)(4)(d) The annual college enrollment goals (increasing college enrollment from 29% to 90%) seem overly ambitious. The proposal would have benefited from a discussion of the feasibility of the college enrollment goal that describes how the LEA's high school graduation goal is aligned with its college-going goal which, in turn, is aligned with the availability of slots in local (and other) colleges. (SCORE: MED – 5)

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



	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>(B)(1)(a) Overall, the LEA has enjoyed impressive growth in performance outcomes over the past few years in math and literacy across grade levels, graduation rates, and college enrollment. Given that the RTT-D proposal guidelines ask about the LEA's record of success over the past four years, it is not clear why the proposal provides only three years of data for student performance on state assessments, two years of data on college-going rates, and only a one-year comparison of the performance of economically disadvantaged students vs non-economically disadvantaged students for only one subject (math). As a result, the complete performance of the LEA over the past four years is uncertain. (B)(1)(b) Most of the participating low-achieving schools have experienced success (i.e., growth in student performance) in recent years. Key common reforms include: all schools are now magnets; all schools have implemented professional learning communities (PLCs). (B)(1)(c) Teachers have ready access to student performance data through their engagement in professional learning communities (PLCs) at each school. Both teachers and students have access to student performance data through the development and monitoring of each student's Academic Improvement Plan. In addition to traditional sharing methods (e.g., report cards), parents can access student grades by computer at home or at a parent center. (SCORE: MED – 10)</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>(B)(2) Proposal states that, pursuant to the Arkansas Financial Transparency Act passed in 2011, the LEA makes detailed expenditure data readily available to the public. The proposal states the following expenditures are provided to the public: (a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff; (b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only, and: (d) Actual nonpersonnel expenditures at the school level. Furthermore, the proposal states that the LEA's website provides public access to information on salaries of every district employee. An appendix of the proposal includes a sample document (2012-13 T ASD Staff Contracts as of September 3, 2012) that supports this statement. (SCORE – HIGH – 5)</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>(B)(3) The state has adopted college and career-ready standards (i.e., Common Core State Standards) and the state has passed legislation that "calls for one-half of the summative evaluation (of teachers and principals) consisting of student assessment scores as evidence, including external tests." The state sets some key student performance targets (e.g., cut achievement gap in half within six years). The state has become instrumental in providing schools and the public ready access to school accountability information. These developments are conducive to the effective implementation of the T ASD proposal.</p> <p>To support its statement that the LEA has sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the initiative, the proposal presents the following evidence: (a) The Arkansas Department of Education (DOE) approved ESEA Flexibility Request; (b) the LEA's 2012 approved district strategic plan. However, the proposal also notes that low-achieving schools, which are the primary focus of the LEA's proposal, must gain state approval for interventions and external partners. This suggests possible limits in the autonomy of T ASD to implement its vision of personalized learning environments. (SCORE: MED – 7)</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>(B)(4) While the proposal shows effective engagement of educators, community, and students, it is not evident that a sufficient percentage of teachers in the participating schools support the proposal. Given that the LEA does not have a teacher union, the LEA is required to show evidence that at least 70 percent of teachers from participating schools support the proposal. The proposal does not present direct evidence to this effect. Indirect evidence is provided in two forms. First, the proposal notes that a petition was conducted to gauge support for the proposal (Project Young Engineer). The proposal states that the petition picked up over 2,000 signatures. However, it is not clear how many of the petition signers were teachers from participating schools. The proposal also alludes to results from an online survey of teachers and others. 243 teachers responded to the survey. However, it is not clear how many of these teachers were from participating</p>		

schools. Moreover, it is not clear that responses to the survey can be interpreted as support for the proposal. Finally, in an appendix, I identified 68 letters of recommendations from the LEA's teachers, primarily from three schools: North Heights JHS (10), Trice (32), and College Hill MS (21). About half of these letters were from teachers in a nonparticipating school (Trice). In the case of participating schools, in no instance did the number of support letters exceed 70 percent of teachers (highest was about 40% for College Hill MS). Given the importance of high teacher buy-in for the successful implementation of new school-level initiatives, and in light of the proposal's failure to demonstrate such commitment, the criterion is scored low. (SCORE – LOW – 3)

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(C)(1) Proposal presents a detailed plan for improving learning in STEAM that has two goals: (a) create a personalized learning environment, and (b) provide individual customized learning opportunities. (C)(1) (a) The proposal details an excellent approach for learning that engages and empowers all learners. Learners would be engaged and empowered through employment of methods used for PLCs, e.g., student reflection on their own practice, collaborative learning, acknowledge that students have different talents and interests, and view students as supervisors of learning communities. Students would create an individualized learning plan with STEAM goals during a meeting with parent-teacher-administrator. Students would monitor their own progress by maintaining a data notebook and electronic portfolios containing assessment information. Students discuss this information with their parents, teachers, and STEAM mentors. Students review goals quarterly and adjust as necessary based on changes in interests, needs, and teachers'/counselor's input. To aid students in identifying development goals, schools would "administer an interest and learning style inventory to each student twice a year." Project-based learning and the "inquiry approach to learning" would be used to engage students in deep learning experiences. Through digital platforms, students will interact with other students from around the world, researchers, guest speakers, and places they may never actually visit." "A one to one personalized learning environment allows students to accelerate learning when skills are mastered plus more time and a different approach to skills not yet mastered." "Students will learn through choices, variety, detailed instructions, immediate feedback, modeling, practice, structure, a student-centered classroom, and extra support for both high needs and high achieving learners."</p> <p>(C)(1)(b) The proposal details an excellent approach for customizing the education of each participating student. Project will use math and science software to establish initial placement and to organize the most appropriate instructional sequence for students. Teachers may assign students special activities based on individual interests. Project will place emphasis on use of conversational models of instruction, vocabulary building, and project-based learning. "Having high quality wireless internet connectivity provides T ASD with more options for student assessment, academic support, student research, STEAM learning labs, teacher collaboration, online instruction, increased parental involvement, and collaboration with community professionals and their resources." To promote mastery, personalized learning model would accommodate learning interests and styles of each high-need student. For example, teachers could adapt the reading level for individual students either "to alleviate reading frustration (such as for ELL or special education students) or to challenge more advanced readers." Accommodations may include audio text, taking pictures of teacher or peer notes, videotaping lectures, manipulating 3D models, frequent feedback, and repetition.</p> <p>The overall plan for (C)(1) tabulates the various activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The narrative provides extensive, description of the details of the plan. However, the tabulated version of the plan would have been more coherent had it included other details discussed in the narrative, such as the creation of student learning plans and the twice-yearly administration of the "interest and learning style inventory." (SCORE: HIGH – 16)</p>		
<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(C)(2) (a) (i) &amp; (ii) The proposal tabulates a good plan for teaching and learning that includes specific professional development activities, delivery systems, responsible parties, outcomes, and time line. The plan for Teaching and Learning indicates that professional development (for teachers) will cover the following areas: Common Core, STEAM, Scholarship Teams, Digital teacher/principal evaluation tool, technology integration, and formative assessment. All these areas are well aligned with the discussion throughout the proposal. While reference is made to "personalized learning environment" as a deliverable, the narrative in this section focuses on the need to strengthen teachers' use of data. The narrative suggests that when teachers effectively collaborate to use data to inform instruction, "students take control of their own learning." Logically, however, this does not necessarily follow. (iii) Proposal describes a coherent process for regularly measuring</p>		

student progress. Teachers have online access to these data, and teachers work collaboratively to analyze and use data. However, the section does not describe what, if any, additional professional development educators would receive in this area. (iv) The proposal states that "Administrators and instructional facilitators will learn about the chosen digital teacher effectiveness tool in order to perform classroom observations, compile detailed results, and plan PD (for classroom teachers?) and job embedded support based on instructional gaps." However, it is not clear if ALL educators will receive this training.

(C)(2)(b) Proposal does a good job of describing how teachers will have access to tools data, and resources, as well as guidance on how to use same. (i) Math and science software learning programs will provide immediate feedback to teachers regarding the performance of students in these curricular areas as well as suggested actions to take to improve instruction. (ii) Online access to professional development modules, including using technology effectively in the classroom, differentiated instruction with technology, managing a technology rich classroom, and creating technology-rich lessons. (iii) "TASD will provide each teacher with a classroom set of tablets, and sufficient training in order to raise student achievement through project based learning and STEAM integration."

(C)(2)(c) The proposed plan includes a clear discussion of how school leaders and leadership teams will access or possess tools, data, and other resources that will enable them to create an effective learning environment. (i) Teachers are evaluated using the Charlotte Danielson Professional Evaluation System for Teacher Performance. The school principal analyzes data for each classroom and the entire school, looks for patterns, and uses the results to sharpen the school's and classrooms' instructional focus. (ii) LEA will use "scholarship teams" to continuously improve school progress toward set goals. This approach involves teachers at a school working together to identify common student needs, developing or adopting an instructional approach for addressing each critical common need, and implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the approach. Principals and instructional facilitators would receive training on this approach. Subsequently, a consultant would assist principals and facilitators with the implementation of the model in participating schools.

(C)(2)(d) The proposal narrative describes a high quality plan for increasing the number of students receiving instruction from effective teachers and principals includes the following elements: signing bonuses for math, science, and special education teachers; encouraging high-performing student teachers to apply for permanent positions in participating schools; counseling out teachers and principals who continually receive poor evaluations; facilitate recruitment of new teachers by using videotaped STEAM lessons posted on the web along with traditional methods; encourage and promote the development of more master teachers and principals; celebrate and reward effective teachers and leaders. The narrative discusses the timelines and responsibilities for implementing these elements. (SCORE: MED – 14)

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(D)(1) Adequate practices are already in place for facilitating the implementation of the project's vision for personalized learning. However, the level of autonomy available to schools for implementing the project is not always clear. (a) Central office is organized to ensure all participating schools have access to adequate STEAM resources (e.g., leadership team training, professional development, and technology support). (b) While school leadership teams "have the opportunity to participate" in human resource meetings and "interviews for new staff," it's not clear how much control these teams have over critical human resource decisions (e.g., hiring and firing). However, the proposal states that school leadership teams are "granted sufficient flexibility and autonomy over school schedules, calendars, hiring, firing, staffing models, staff roles and responsibilities, school improvement, and school-level budgets." (c) Through the use data notebooks, portfolios and work with mentors, the district provides all students with an opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. (d) In addition to traditional approaches to gauging mastery (course grades, standards assessments), the project would promote other means of mastery assessment, including portfolios (for Project Based Learning) as well as math and science software assessment software. Mastery can be gauged through multiple methods and at multiple times. Students will have several options for making up for failed courses (e.g., night school, summer school, online credit recovery). (e) The LEA's ESL Coordinator and Director of Special Services, along with teachers, will ensure that learning resources and instructional practices are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. (SCORE: HIGH - 13)</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

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

(D)(2) The proposal describes a practical plan for how the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning. The plan delineates what actions will be implemented, who will bear responsibility for carrying out the activities, as well as expected outcomes. However, the narrative lacks sufficient information regarding the implementation timeline. (a) To support project based learning, the LEA will provide all students an electronic tablet. (b) To assure adequate levels of technical support, project funds would be used to hire additional staff, e.g., Project director, secretary, and several technology support staff. (c) Students can export their records in an open data format into the MyData Button online system." Not clear parents will have the ability to export data to other formats. (d) The proposal states that "Human resources records, student information including college attendance/completion, budget data, and instructional improvement system data will all be interoperable." In support of this statement, the proposal notes that the LEA has an interoperable system in place. However, the LEA's interoperable system is not described. (SCORE: MED – 7)

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(E)(1) The proposal presents a high-quality plan for pursuing continuous improvement of the project. For each of the RTT-D investment areas (professional development, technology, staff, and student interventions), the plan delineates the key questions (e.g., Are we using principal and teacher evaluation data to guide PD? Are we giving teachers sufficient grade level/content area time to collaborate, problem solve and reflect?), measures (e.g., teacher/principal surveys, observations, classroom walkthroughs), and information dissemination activities (e.g., district website, grant meetings) that will guide the continuous improvement process. The time table for conduct of each monitoring/measuring/sharing activity is specified along with the parties responsible for carrying out the activity. (SCORE: HIGH – 15)</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(E)(2) The proposal provides a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement. Strategies include public monthly leadership advisory meetings, along with meeting agendas, minutes, and reports publicly posted in hard copy and on the internet. School-site leadership teams would meet weekly. All stakeholders would be duly informed of project developments. These ongoing communication and engagement activities are integrated into the proposal's plan for pursuing continuous improvement (as discussed in (E)(1) above). (SCORE: HIGH – 5)</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(E)(3) The proposal follows the required format in listing its performance measures and annual goals for the duration of the project. However, many of the performance measure entries seem incorrect or questionable. Some examples follow: (i) Combined entries for numbers/percentages of teachers/principals who are "effective" (E) or "highly effective" (HE) appear incorrect. If E and HE are mutually exclusive, then <math>E\% + HE\% \leq 100\%</math>. However, in the performances presented <math>HE\% + E\% &gt; 100\%</math>. If HE is a subset of E then <math>E\% &gt; \%HE</math>; but generally <math>HE\% &gt; E\%</math>. (ii) Assuming principals manage entire schools and all students in participating schools participate in the project, logically the number of effective principals for subgroups of participating students should equal the number of effective principals for all participating students. So it is not clear why these numbers differ. If the numbers are correct, the proposal should devote more space to explaining why TAGG (ach gap) students do not have access to highly effective principals and how the project would remedy this problem. (iv) For 8th grade TAGGs (8<sup>th</sup> grade algebra), the 5-year target is for 100% of participating students to be on track, while for high school (grade 9 algebra 1) the on-track 5-year target is set at 53%. The narrative does not explain the precipitous drop from grade 8 to grade 9 in the % of participating students on track.</p> <p>The proposal states "The performance measures described below will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information on the success of <b>Project Young Engineer</b> by holding all stakeholders accountable." It is not evident that "holding all stakeholders accountable" implies "rigorous, timely, and formative information." (SCORE: LOW - 1)</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

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

(E)(4) The proposal states that "Teachers, students, parents, and community partners complete yearly surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of programs purchased with federal money." The proposal discusses the roles of various staff in ensuring that project funding is spent wisely and that project initiatives are implemented. However, the proposal does not present a high-quality plan for a rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of the project. Such a plan would enumerate key evaluation questions related to the implementation and impact of the project's key components. For each evaluation question, the plan would describe a method(s) for addressing the question that specifies data collection, analysis, and reporting procedures, time tables, and the evaluator(s). Moreover, the plan would clarify how the project would ensure the evaluation was objective (e.g., use of external evaluator or use of internal evaluator who reports to the director of the district's research director). Finally, the plan would present a budget for evaluation activities. (SCORE: LOW - 1)

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(F)(1) Budget is logically structured and provides ample detail regarding planned expenditures by year for the sole project (Project Young Engineer), the rationale for the use of RTTD funds (including the front-loading of expenditures in the first year), distinguishes one-time and ongoing expenditures, describes the specific functions of key hired personnel, and describes funds from other sources (primarily supplemental education services, eRate dollars used for technology hardware, software, and professional development; and the Magnet School Assistance Grant). Overall, the budget seems reasonable and sufficient. (SCORE: HIGH - 10)</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(F)(2) Proposal presents a sustainability plan (Table F1) that projects that when RTTD funding ends, Project Young Engineers' continuation will be aided by about \$4 million annually from various funding sources (e.g., Magnet School Assistance program, eRate \$). The resources will be used for project staffing, professional development, instructional materials, hardware and software upgrades). However, the narrative would benefit from more details regarding specific tasks, time table, and responsibilities for pursuing project sustainability. (SCORE: MED - 6)</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY</p> <p>Results from recent administrations of the LEA's Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (administered annually to sixth, eighth, ninth, and twelfth grade students) indicate that the five highest risk factors for students are: Transitions &amp; Mobility, Interaction with Antisocial Peers, Parental Attitudes Favorable to Antisocial Behaviors, Low Perceived Risk of Drug Use, and Academic Failure. To address these and related issues, under the competitive preference priority the project would partner with Southwest Arkansas Prevention Task Force and the Texarkana Police Department to pursue ambitious yet achievable goals such as the following: (1) Provide successful, caring adult STEAM role models to encourage career interest and instill confidence; (2) Reduce risky behaviors in youth through early intervention and thereby promote a healthy lifestyle; (3) Reduce the incidence of antisocial behavior on each district campus; (4) Increase number of youth peer leaders participating in community initiatives; (5) Foster student interest in STEAM areas related to community safety (e.g., forensic science, criminal justice, crisis response); and (6) Encourage healthy and effective parenting through seminars. To pursue these goals, the narrative describes the systematic actions the partnership would take on an ongoing basis: (1) Assess the needs and assets of participating students; (2) Identify and inventory the needs and assets of schools and community aligned with goals; (3) Create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports; (4) Engage parents and families of participating students; and (5) Routinely assess the District's progress in</p>		

implementing the plan. The proposal plan for carrying out this work is well articulated. However, the discussion could have benefited from a more detailed implementation timeline. (SCORE: HIGH - 9)

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1

Project Young Engineer (PYE) presents a coherent, comprehensive proposal that would use a \$10 million RTTD grant to enhance the LEA's personalization of the learning experiences of all students in its six lowest performing schools. This would be accomplished primarily by extending the use of one-to-computing (computer/tablet access for each in participating schools) and using inquiry and project –based learning to get each student to take greater interest in education and to take greater responsibility for his/her education. Teachers and principals would receive professional development on how to create/optimize personal learning environments. The proposal does a thorough job of describing how PYE builds on each of the four core educational assurance areas. Implementation of PYE as described in this proposal would enhance the effectiveness of educators and school leaders and thereby accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning, and improve student outcomes (graduation rates and college-going rates) for all participating students, including those with high needs. (MET)

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>153</b>
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