



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0132AZ-1 for Tucson Unified School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) has shown dedication and results in its work in the four core education assurance areas. Their implementation of the Arizona Common Core Standards has completely rededicated their focus to the required skills in both Language Arts and Math, although their Math scores are significantly lower, which is the impetus of this grant proposal. TUSD is in a Race to the Top State, and their funds were used to reinvent their Science curriculum, which has been very successful. This experience has helped them build this math proposal, which is designed to put highly-trained math teachers in every classroom at the elementary level and provide an online learning experience for some students in the middle and high schools. While not addressed in this section, the application describes the expected classroom experience elsewhere in the application, and in addition to other writing throughout the proposal, they have supplied evidence of a high quality plan.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The low math test scores of so many schools within the TUSD district motivated this proposal. 39 of the district's 85 schools were selected as participants based upon their low performance, low economic status with nearly 70% of the students from low income families, and 85% identified as high needs students. These students participate in the free or reduced lunch program, speak a different language at home, or are homeless. All of the required data is provided and the district falls within the qualifications of the grant. What was not included in this section of the application was whether the principals of these 39 schools were in agreement with their selection and were fully on board to implement the program immediately.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes a detailed description of the plan and how it will affect change in the targeted schools. There is no mention of how the project would improve other schools in the district. Several key topics were not discussed that would be fundamental to the success of this program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most highly qualified teachers would be selected for this program, but there is no mention of how the lower performing teachers would receive needed training. • Only 175 students in the middle and high schools will be reached with this plan, and there is no mention of how other students at this level will benefit at any time. <p>This is not a high quality plan because it does not show potential for scaling up and improving education for all students within the district.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section specifies learning goals for all groups of students, anticipating growth in all four areas: summative assessments, achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment; and includes a table related to postsecondary education. Some of the goals are formulaic and therefore are not always appropriate. One instance is the table that</p>		

describes the decreases in the achievement gap expected over the life of the grant. The Native American percentage was 29, at least 10 percentage points lower than the other groups. The growth goal for this group by school year 2017-18 is 46%, which is still less than half, which does not demonstrate an ambitious goal. African American students in that same group started at 39% but it is anticipated that they will grow to 51% achievement goal, which is too low for a project of this magnitude. There is extensive narrative in this section that does not belong here, describing the implementation plan and schedule, and while there are important points and questions here, they will be addressed in the appropriate section.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>One of the most striking narratives in this proposal is a copy of a newspaper article (included as an appendix) that describes the journey of C. E. Rose Elementary School in which it went from being a failing school to a model of effective school turnaround, showing marked improvement in test scores, attendance, and parent and community attitudes. While it is still too early to see the long term affects on graduation and post secondary education rates, the changes are truly impressive. The story is compelling and demonstrates the ability of TUSD to lead and affect school change. Other schools are also described in the application and their growth is noteworthy. Now, instead of focusing on troubles in a handful of low income schools, the district seeks to improve the mathematics instruction in 39 of its schools.</p> <p>One section that is noticeably absent is (B)(1)(c), in that no mention is made of transparency of performance data to students, educators, and parents. While it is included in the grant proposal, it is not evident that the district has a track record of success in transparency.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In accordance with Arizona State Law, TUSD provides publications that include school expenses, district employee reports, and proposition 301 results. These publications are evidently available upon request, but it is not noted in the narrative how and to whom the publications are made available. The internal district reports are "available for review" but this implies that a member of the community needs to know what to ask for and whom to ask. All of these reports display the expenses in the required categories. Salaries are made available through the state's department of education's web site.</p> <p>The narrative states that at least one request is made annually for the release of individual wages of district personnel by local news media, demonstrating that the information is not transparent and concerned individuals must file for release.</p> <p>Information is made available verbally through a volunteer organization of parents and staff from TUSD, the School Community Partnership Council, which seeks to keep families and community members current on district processes.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes the current state laws that enable each district to have extensive autonomy over curriculum, design, and budget. The proposal ties in seamlessly with the state's statutory and regulatory requirements that mandate that students be allowed to move ahead when ready, in addition to principal and teacher evaluations and emphasis on STEM subjects.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	15
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal began with a collective of stakeholders who gathered to examine the current progress and brainstorm ideas for continued growth. The plan developed through multiple conversations and meetings with numerous people from a variety of backgrounds. The president of the teachers' bargaining unit met with several district directors as part of this process. A table is included which lists all of the personnel involved in the creation of the plan and where many of them fit into the process.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is not a high quality plan because it does not provide enough quality math instruction to students, but rather focuses on teachers. The number of students who benefit from the individualized learning plan in middle and high schools is limited to 175 students.</p> <p>(a) Student understanding of the importance of learning in their futures is fundamental to this section of the application. Unfortunately, this plan provides for enhanced teacher education in mathematics to enable the teachers to provide these stronger math education for their students. This section of the application provides a detailed description of the teacher education plan, but does not directly address the questions being asked.</p> <p>(b) This plan will provide a potentially strong individualized program for students to take charge of their own learning and learn at their own rates. The instruction has the potential to be especially strong, but it will be entirely based upon the input of the district teachers, and their current strengths are not described. This plan could be an extremely valuable tool, if the district has the personnel and time to put it into action correctly. The summer professional development plan sounds especially strenuous for teachers, who are being asked to teach 1/2 days, 4 days a week, while meeting and taking classes the remaining time each week of 4 1/2 days and 1 full day. Teaching in a regular classroom can take extensive planning time, but no where is it evident that teachers have any planning time in their schedule. They will be observed daily by other team teachers, which can also be stressful when a teacher is not comfortable with the lesson being taught. The entire month-long professional development sounds potentially stressful to teachers and therefore could backfire and delay the project's growth.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is a high quality plan because participating teachers would receive many hours of professional development in personalizing instruction.</p> <p>(a) This plan proposes a learning environment in which all students in grades K-5 are taught math by highly trained math teachers. The teachers themselves would attend summer workshops in which they would learn how to personalize student learning and maximize each individual student's growth. Students would take frequent assessments and teachers would have the tools and training to score and interpret these tests to determine the next course of action for that student. The goal is to teach a topic thoroughly one time, so it will not need to be repeated again. The plan would also include assessing teacher effectiveness and creating cohorts of teachers who work together to create the best lesson possible. These teachers will be supported through a partnership with the University of Arizona's Colleges of Education and Mathematics, among others. A reference letter was written by Dr. William McCallum, who is one of the authors of the Common Core State Standards, and he is mentioned in this section of the application, but it is not clear in either document exactly what his role would be with this program.</p> <p>(b) Part of the plan is to have the summer Jump Start program run each year through the life of the grant, with the expectation that 275 highly effective math teachers would be trained and then teaching all of the elementary students. It is also stated that they would be providing professional development to newly hired teachers, although there is no mention of how these teachers are trained to present the sessions and where the budget for this training would come from. The teacher effectiveness measurements would be set according to the Arizona Common Core Standards, which include the development of leadership and advocacy skills.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district is currently involved in a 5-year strategic plan, into which this program dovetails well. The Superintendent has directed the developers of this plan to ensure that the programs are aligned, as well as consideration for the State of Arizona's Unitary Status Plan. The organizational team is described in a different section of the application, however it does not give specific job descriptions that would demonstrate exactly how the needs would be filled. The goal is to hire certified project managers to develop the organization and sustain the program. The school leadership teams would continue to enjoy the autonomy they already have in the district to make their own personnel and budget decisions. The plan includes educational models that the teachers will learn to differentiate their classrooms and provide the individualized learning paths students need. This is not a high quality plan because the governance structure does not appear to be fully in place and the current policies in place do not fully support students progressing according to mastery and not amount of time on topic.

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

This year the TUSD underwent a major IT restructuring to ensure that every school has a 21st Century network and capabilities. This restructure also includes a centralized database which will allow accessibility to all stakeholders, as well as the ability to export data using standard protocols. Part of this plan includes a suite of software and data systems that will provide personalized learning environments for qualified middle and high school students. The district has ensured that the network is capable of supporting this system and has IT personnel to help with the process. Another part of the plan includes an online resource for participating teachers which will house lesson plans, assessments, and other key lesson items. Teachers will be provided laptops so they will be able to access these materials at any time.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is evidence of a high quality plan here. One of the strengths of this plan is its ability to use assessments to adjust the course as needed. Teachers will be continuously using formative and summative assessments to determine student progress, and the lessons will be built upon this information. Participating teachers will be sharing assessment results to compare results and share methods that have been most successful. Another important strategy is called "Data Talks" which involves teachers speaking with students daily about their learning, teachers speaking to families regularly, teachers to teachers to share ideas, and teachers to principals to make course corrections as needed. Other measurement tools include surveys, principal and teacher evaluations, and other assessments that will all contribute to the total picture to help guide the project successfully.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the earlier section spoke more directly to ongoing communication, this section mentions the communication within plan administrators, including quarterly meetings to share information and determine if changes need to be made. Considering that these are all full-time employees devoted fully to this project, quarterly meetings appear much too infrequent for the magnitude of the project. This district also plans to communicate with the general public at least quarterly through its web site. The Grant Coordinator will also be communicating with the School Community Partnership Council, a volunteer organization, to report on the progress and impact of the project.

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

The application includes tables listing the goals of the plan by population ages. The goals are all very ambitious, with expectations that 80% or more students at each grade will have achieved the results, especially given the data shown earlier on current student performance. Since the entire project is math-related, all of the goals are math focused as well. There are 3 performance measures that are meant to fulfill the social-emotional health requirement at each grade span, but these measures include:

- "On a scale of 1-5, one being least like me and 5 being most like me, 80% of students will rank themselves a 3, 4, or 5 when responding to the statement, 'I try to use clear and specific language when talking with others or explaining my reasoning in my math class.'" The rationale states that this allows students to explore mathematical vocabulary while building confidence in their math skills. - Grades K-3
- "Grades 4-8 construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others on a scale of 1-5, one being least like me and 5 being most like me, 80% of students will rank themselves a 3, 4, or 5 when responding to the statement - 'I am confident in my ability to construct arguments using verbal or written explanations.'" - Grades 4-8 Social-Emotional Goal
- "On a scale of 1-5, one being least like me and 5 being most like me, 80% of students will rank themselves a 3, 4, or 5 when responding to the statement, 'When trying to solve math problems, I check my answers using different methods and I ask myself, "Does this make sense?"'" - Grades 9 - 12

Each of these "social-emotional" goals are actually included in the Mathematical Reasoning section as part of the Common Core State Standards, which are the standards already accepted and implemented in the state. These goals do not reflect a high quality plan because they are basic requirements already in place.

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

A Professional Learning Portal will be utilized by TUSD to house and monitor professional development activities for participating teachers. Part of the new teacher evaluation system will include an examination of a data notebook and other evidence of growth that are generated from the activities in this project.

One of the most innovative features of this project include the hiring of an outside evaluator who will examine the project, along with the other project administrators, to note progress and look for opportunities for improvement. It is unclear if the other administrators will be newly hired for this project or not, and since no job descriptions are included, it cannot be determine what role, if any, each of these personnel have in the improvement process.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

TUSD is requesting nearly \$25 million to support this innovative plan to bring mathematics growth to a district that currently demonstrates weakness in mathematics. No other funds have been secured or are being sought for this project. Nearly 1/2 of the expenses related to personnel, with the hiring of multiple administrators and at least ten consultants to man the program. The budget does not mention if these personnel will be retained after the life of the grant to continue the project, if they will be relocated within the district, or if their services will end. The remaining expenses are very reasonable for a project of this magnitude and include normal operating supplies and equipment.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This plan provides a great resource that would enable the project to continue in the future. Upon completion of the grant period, the district will have a complete electronic library of classroom videos, lesson plans, assessments, and other teacher resources. This library will be relatively low-cost to maintain after the project. The administrators will no longer be available, but the experienced teachers are expected to step up and train new teachers and continue the dialogue and sense of cooperation maintained during the grant period. There is no funding provided for these new trainers, nor professional development to enable them to become effective trainers. There is also no mention of a budget provided to fully train the new teachers.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Tucson Unified School District is partnered with several county-wide initiatives to provide health and wellness for the children and young of their population. This project will provide resources for parents, community organizations, and tutoring services to provide academic assistance to all students that will meet the goals measured by each assessment. Beyond the math boost to the community, these partnerships also provide special assistance for foster and homeless children, individualized tutoring for children and youth on probation, reading and reading readiness programs, assessment of social/emotional needs of students, mental and physical health assessments, and many more services. This project works well within these existing partnerships and services by providing additional mathematics resources for students and the adults who help them.</p> <p>This is not a high quality plan because it is unclear how the partnerships would be related to or benefit from this project, how the results of this project will be used with students outside of those initially selected for the project, and how the expansion would involve the partners, as stated in the application.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal meets the personalized learning environments goal by providing individualized technology-based learning for the middle and high school students, and helping teachers learn to differentiate their instruction in the selected elementary schools. The plan includes professional development that will increase the effectiveness of teachers and provide better quality instruction in the lower performing schools.</p>		

Total	210	166
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0132AZ-2 for Tucson Unified School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section addresses the selection criteria in a general manner, and, as a result, warrants a low to middle range score. • The applicant does a good job of setting the stage and creating a picture of the district as a whole. • The applicant briefly addresses the four core educational assurance areas, and provides some information on the AZ RTT State grant as well as efforts within the district to focus on STEM. These are addressed very briefly so it is difficult to assess whether the proposed project would build on work in those areas. • The applicant does make a case for improving and deepening student learning, however, the proposed activities are only briefly mentioned. This makes it difficult to evaluate whether the proposed actions would accomplish a specific 		

- vision (although the activities sound like they would be effective and based on best practices).
- No clear and comprehensive vision is stated - narrative does create a vision focused on improved math instruction and achievement
- No information regarding what the classroom experience will be like is included in the proposal.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section provides general information about the district and the schools participating (39 of 85 schools). No clear description of how, or why, schools were selected, is provided. As a result, this section warrants a low score. A list of schools and school demographics is provided in this section. Total number of participating students, and general demographic information (free and reduced; homeless; at-risk) is provided. The weakness in this section is the lack of detail regarding why schools were chosen as well as some type of narrative that ties these items to the selection criteria . . . this section does not seem to make the case, or show, the "extent to which the approach to implementing its reform proposal will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation . . . " 		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section is strong. It includes a high quality plan for scaling the reform efforts up and creating meaningful outcomes through partnerships and grant activities. It warrants a high score due to the level of detail included in both the description of teacher training and PLCs The applicant includes partnership information (post-secondary institution; pre-service and current teacher training) The applicant includes information regarding scaling up the efforts to reach a large number of teachers The applicant describes the development and implementation of professional learning communities. The proposed activities are clearly tied to the desired outcomes for both students and teachers All of these elements contribute to an overall high quality plan to ensure that the proposal is implemented and scaled up to be available to additional students and schools 		

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant provides reasonable goals for increasing student achievement This section warrants a mid-range score due to the lack of additional narrative regarding the development of the goals. Goals are focused on math (as the project is primarily math-focused) Increases seem reasonable, but somewhat ambitious given the current population and the continuous change within the district, described by the applicant College and career readiness were not addressed in a high level of detail 		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant provides information on successful efforts in a variety of schools within the district. The table included, presents specific examples of high interest activities at each school In addition, the applicant provides State data regarding school report cards and growth from "c" and "D" schools to "A" and "B" schools. The data show small improvements that the applicant notes are "pockets of excellence". These do show a record of success in improving student achievement. The lack of significant raw data or large numbers of schools showing the same kind of improvement (in a large district) results in a mid-range score for this 		

section.

- The applicant does not address making student performance data available to students and educators, in a high level of detail . . . which is a minor weakness in this section

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant provides detailed information regarding transparency in all aspects of district operations and governance. This section warrants a higher score due to the level of transparency required by the State and referred to within the narrative.
- Items within the narrative address each of the items within the selection criteria
- The applicant provides evidence that data is available to all stakeholders.

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

- The applicant provides a brief, yet thorough, description of the State context for this project. It is clear, from the information provided, that the State has conditions in place to support this project. It is also clear that there is sufficient autonomy for the school district to implement the proposed program. As a result, this section warrants a high score.

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

Excellent! The applicant provides extensive detail regarding participation from a variety of stakeholder groups. It is clear that a thoughtful approach to gathering input from sources that include students, teachers, parents, administrators, the local collective bargaining unit, etc. was utilized. The applicant included examples and letters of support in the appendices, as well as a clear table (in the narrative) outlining the process used to include all of this input. This is a very strong section and warrants a high score.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- This section addresses a comprehensive approach and a high quality plan to recruiting and training teachers of mathematics. While at first, it seems somewhat unresponsive to this specific selection criteria, the plan provides detail that supports the development of highly engaging, personalized learning environments for students. As a result, this section warrants a somewhat high score.
- The plan for recruiting and training teachers seems well thought-through and sustainable
- The personalized learning plans, and associated strategies, address many of the elements described in this selection criteria. If the applicant is able to effectively implement the described plan, the results sound like they will match the associated goals.
- This section often addresses selection criteria in an indirect manner - asking the reader to make assumptions and tie items together, rather than explicitly addressing the items from the RTTD application. This is a relatively minor weakness.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Item (a) is effectively addressed through the description of the JUMP start program as well as the Essential Elements of Instruction training. These descriptions make it clear that the applicant is aware of the importance of high quality professional development to ensure all program elements are implemented successfully.

- The weakness, in this section, is the lack of specific information regarding item (b). It is unclear whether teachers will have access to, and be trained, to use data to make decisions and to inform continuous improvement. It seems like (based on the descriptions) teachers will have access to high quality materials and programs. The training, and monitoring the use of these items, is not as clear.
- Item (c) is addressed (again, somewhat indirectly) through the description of the research-based teacher and principal evaluation systems and State requirements. These could have been tied more directly to the specific proposed activities, however, the items included seem like they will more than meet the goals of RTTD.
- This section provides a good amount of detail, and a plan that is high quality. The only minor weakness is that it is not tied as directly as it could be, to the selection criteria (although it is tied to the mathematics initiatives proposed in the applicant's plan. As a result, it warrants a high score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	7
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant seems somewhat unresponsive to the criteria for this section. As a result, the section warrants a low to mid-range score. • The applicant describes project management; assessment and evaluation components. While these are important elements of the project, they do not respond to the criteria in a, b, c and d. • Information regarding student achievement of standards, in multiple ways; at multiple times, etc. is not included • LEA support and governance is indirectly described as part of the project management description. • School leadership teams are briefly described as part of the project management plan. • The major weakness, in this section, is the lack of inclusion of a description of a plan (unresponsiveness to the requirement for a high quality plan) 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is stronger and warrants a mid to upper range score. • The description of the EBAS (evidence based accountability system) is very detailed and responds to the criteria regarding making data available to teachers and students. The extensive description is aligned to project goals and seems to ensure that transparency and accountability will be in place and used on a regular basis. • Parents and other stakeholders are not explicitly addressed in this section. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section is excellent. Multiple measures are included in a continuous feedback loop. • The applicant includes measures addressing all program goals and has included a plan for training and ensuring all participants will use data to evaluate and improve. • This section is very responsive to the selection criteria and warrants a high score. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan described in this section is somewhat brief, but does include quarterly reporting of project information. • The applicant has/includes several mechanisms to communicate that feedback. 		

- The applicant also seems aware of a variety of stakeholder groups, and includes those in the communication plan.
- It is unclear whether the communication plan is a reflection of what the district is already doing (with general information) or whether this is an additional effort to communicate RTTD information.
- This section is brief but responsive to the selection criteria. Due to the lack of a comprehensive, high quality plan, the section warrants a low to mid-range score.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Excellent!

- The applicant includes all performance measures, along with a rationale for choosing each measure.
- Each measure is described, within a table, and a rationale is provided that is tied to the overall vision of the project as well as to specific elements both within the proposal and from the selection criteria.
- Tables are clear and easy to read.
- This section is strong and warrants a very high score.

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

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- This section provides general information stating that the program will be evaluated. Due to the lack of a detailed description, it is difficult to evaluate whether the plan is rigorous. As a result, it warrants a mid-range score.
- This section does include some description of personnel responsible for evaluation of the project. That is a strength of the section.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section provides very thorough budget information - both about the overall budget and project-specific budgets. • The narrative provides a fairly detailed overview. • The budget sub-parts provide extensive information about each project. • Costs/expenses included seem reasonable. • Funds used for one time expenses and ongoing expenses are not as clearly delineated as they could be. • This section is fairly strong and warrants a mid to high score. The primary weakness of this section is the lack of detail on one time expenses and on other fund sources. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This narrative provides good programmatic rationale/plan for sustainability. It does not, however, address budget sustainability. This is a concern and warrants a low score as a result. • The strength of this section is the sustainability information related to project activities and elements of the proposal. • The weakness of this section is the lack of information regarding funds that will sustain each element of the project once RTTD funds are expended. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- Very good description of partnerships. This section warrants a high score.
- Partnerships support project goals and documentation is provided in the appendices.
- Goals are aligned with the project (although somewhat general).

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- This priority is adequately met through the variety of personalized learning practices (and products) included for both teachers/educators and for students.

Total	210	152
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0132AZ-3 for Tucson Unified School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The primary goals identified for re-inventing mathematics as a part of the proposed program are to:

- Strengthen mathematics instruction strategies and content knowledge aligned with the Arizona Common Core Standards for K-12 mathematics teachers.
- Build broad-based understanding and application of the standards for mathematical practices for all teachers in order to create systemic improvement for learning and teaching to extend across all grade levels and content areas.
- Build on existing programs and assessments to create a data management system that is able to provide timely feedback to guide teaching and learning at the individual student and educator (teacher and principal) level.
- Strategically align professional development and educator evaluation systems with Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

The implementation of these key goals and the execution of a sustainable systemic plan will ensure academic achievement, close academic gaps, and prepare students to enter a career or postsecondary option of their choice.

The proposed project focuses on mathematics, emphasizes the development of personalized learning communities for students and teachers, and compliments efforts targeted in the State Race to the Top District program.

Danielson's Framework for Teaching is the model/philosophy that will be used for guidance. It includes four domains: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities.

The application does not describe how the proposed project will facilitate increasing equity through personalized student

support grounded individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. No explanation is provided for how individual academic interests will be identified or how those interests will be used to increase equity.

The proposed project will accelerate student achievement through improved mathematics instruction. The improved mathematics instruction will include differentiation of content, process, and product in a personalized learning environment.

The priority in each classroom will combine face-to-face instruction, embedded mathematical practices, project-based learning, and online learning opportunities.

The proposed project is for students grades K-12. No rationale is provided for including online instruction and project-based learning for only grades 6-12.

Instruction will be clear and explicit, using the Essential Elements of Instruction (EEI) and the principles of learning that include intermittent formative assessments, checking for understanding, multiple opportunities and methodologies to practice and learn, high levels of student engagement, critical thinking questions, and a positive and encouraging learning environment that supports and recognizes the importance of a personalized learning experience.

The applicant sets forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals associated with Race to the Top. The application provides detailed information about activities that will be implemented. However, more information is needed about how the proposed activities build on current activities related to the four core educational assurance areas.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes an identified need with an explanation for the program focus. A constant decline in mathematics scores throughout the district is the rationale for improving the instructional methods for mathematics at the classroom level.

The selected schools are the ones scoring lowest on the state grading scale. Schools scoring C or D will participate in the proposed program.

Students in grades K-5 will have mathematics instruction from a teacher who is part of the care of highly effective teachers.

At least 175 students in participating middle and high schools will participate in online math courses.

A Grant Management Team will oversee the implementation of the proposed project

The project will be implemented initially into 39 of the 85 schools in the district. A list of those schools is included in the application.

The applicant includes a table showing, by participating school site, the total number of participating students, the total number of participating students from low-income families, the total number of participating students who are high-need students, and the total number of participating educators.

The applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal is clearly supported at the LEA-level. However, no information was provided about whether or not the participating schools were involved in the development of the proposed program and are on board with the school-level implementation of the proposed program. Stakeholder buy-in is a critical component of success.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. The plan also describes how the reform proposal will help the applicant reach its outcome goals. However, not all components of a high-quality plan are included in the proposal. The application does not identify parties responsible for implementing activities as it relates to this component of the application.

Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) allows educators to gather data to guide instructional decisions.

The criteria are listed for staff selection to be a part of the 275 highly effective mathematics teachers.

An in-depth multi-level professional development model aligned with Common Core Standards will strengthen mathematics

instruction in the participating schools. Specific topics for professional development are identified. Community partners who will assist with and provide professional development are listed. This will help build internal capacity and sustainability.

The application includes research supporting the program activities of looping and teacher pairing. By using these research-based strategies, the program is more likely to result in meaningful transformation of the district. Looping will help increase student achievement. Teacher pairing will increase instructional equity.

Anecdotal success in the district for the project strategy of personalizing the learning environment through online instruction is described. The proposed project will allow the district to build on this previous success.

The application includes a description of the components of the personalized learning plans that will provide the framework for students to take ownership of their own learning. Students will engage in reflection, setting learning goals, continuously assessing and monitoring the progress toward meeting their goals, and providing the teacher the necessary data to structure learning opportunities designed to move the students towards mastery and success.

A digital library of mathematics lessons and formative assessments will be enhanced. Instruction for accessing these resources will be provided.

Teacher collaboration will be facilitated through eSource, a digital curriculum delivery platform that provides resources and serves as a collaborative workspace.

A data management system will provide data monitoring opportunities for parents, students, and educators through the data dashboard and management system.

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

10

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes tables showing ambitious and achievable annual goals for performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. Baseline data and annual goals extending one year post-grant have been identified for each component. Based on the clear description of the applicant's vision for the Race to the Top program, it is likely that the proposed program will result in improved student learning and performance as well as increased equity overall and by student subgroup.

The applicant identifies the summative assessment(s) that will be used, the methodology for determining status, and the methodology for determining growth.

The application includes a description of the specific methodology used to determine the achievement gap.

The graduation rates are provided for the district and for each high school.

College enrollment baseline data and annual goals are provided for the overall population as well as identified subgroups.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Several schools in the district have successfully implemented strategies that are a part of the proposed project. Examples include the incorporation of personalized learning environments, quality first instruction, student ownership of learning, online learning opportunities, and the use of data to guide instruction. Numerous schools in the district have used these strategies to raise student achievement and increase high school graduation rates. This clear record of success demonstrates the applicant's ability to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps by raising student achievement and high school graduation rates.

The application does not specifically address a record of success in raising college enrollment rates.

Multiple schools in the district are low-performing. The application describes strategies that have been implemented in these schools that have resulted in ambitious and significant reforms.

The application does not explain how the proposed program will make student performance data available to students in ways that inform and improve participation.

The application does does indicate how student performance data will be made available to educators in ways that inform and improve participation instruction, and services.

The application does not describe how student performance data will be available to parents in ways that information and improve participation, instruction, and services.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Required and routine reporting occurs through the publication of the annual financial report and the district's budget. This includes salaries for all personnel.

The state provides information about district expenditures.

Internal district reports detail information by category, function, school, personnel expense, and support expenses.

All Requests for Public Information are complied with.

Quarterly events are hosted to provide information to parents.

A volunteer organization of parents and staff help facilitate communication between the schools and the community.

While the district does achieve the minimum level of transparency identified in the criteria as indicated by the list of examples above, the proposed activities do not demonstrate evidence of a high level of transparency.

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

The governor's funding task force developed six guiding principles to drive educational funding. Four of the six focus on local autonomy. They allow freedom of spending at the local level to improve student achievement and encourage innovation at the local level.

Arizona law creates conditions that are conducive to the implementation of personalized learning environments.

The LEA demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. The application linked proposed activities to the educational funding principles established by the governor's funding task force and existing laws.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Reform efforts for closing achievement gaps were discussed with stakeholder groups that included teachers and principals as well as other community stakeholders.

Idea-sharing opportunities for personalized learning environments and teacher recruitment and retention were provided at the district's monthly academic coaching meeting.

A table was included in the application which summarized stakeholder engagement and support.

A cross-section of district employees formed a planning group that identified the project goals and the strategy for identifying target students.

Student and parent surveys were distributed across the district. A copy of the survey was included in the application. The survey solicited feedback about mathematics and ways to improve mathematics instruction. The feedback was used to guide the development of the proposed activities.

The application does not describe direct engagement and support for the proposals from teachers in participating schools.

Letters of support from several stakeholders are included as a part of the application. Letters of support represent community stakeholders including university representatives, the Boys and Girls Club, and the United Way.

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



	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Key goals for the project are established. The applicant intends to develop a cadre of highly effective elementary mathematics teachers, offer online classes where highly qualified mathematics teachers are not available, and integrate personal learning environments. A high-quality plan to accomplish this is presented in the application.

The applicant describes what activities will be conducted to achieve the goals and provides the rationale for those activities. Teachers will be selected for the cadre of highly effective mathematics teachers based on identified criteria. The project also has established criteria for the identification of students to participate in the online classes. Standards for mathematical practice have been established in order to effectively implement the personalized learning environments into the participating schools.

All project activities are included in the project timeline.

Data will be used to guide instruction so that all stakeholders are making informed decisions about student and program progress.

Personalized learning plans will allow for teachers and others with an interest in the academic progress of each student (including parents) to help students identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards and/or graduation requirements. These plans will also help students structure their learning to achieve their goals and measure progress toward these goals. Creating and revising the personalized learning plans will help students develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, perseverance, critical thinking, and communication.

The application does not describe how program activities that facilitate student understanding that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

The application does not describe how the proposed project will enable students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

The application does not describe how the proposed project will provide students access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

The project incorporates a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments including looping, teacher pairing, and online instruction.

Students will be assessed at least quarterly to measure progress toward the goals of their personalized learning plans. The student data will be used to modify instruction and to revise the plan as needed.

High need students in middle and high school will be in classrooms with highly qualified teachers so that they can have face-to-face instruction.

Accommodations for high-need elementary students are not addressed.

The application does not describe mechanisms that are in place to provide training to students to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

While the application does include the components of the high-quality plan, several of the criterion in this section are not addressed. Information is needed about how the program activities will engage and empower all learners.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application lists specific topics that will be addressed through professional development. These professional development sessions support the implementation of personalized learning environments as well as the other identified components of the proposed program.

Teachers and staff will participate in professional development on culturally responsive instructional strategies and practices.

The applicant provides details about the instructional strategies that will be implemented at each grade level that will be participating in the proposed program.

Students will be assessed at least quarterly to measure progress toward the goals of their personalized learning plans. This

data will be used to identify strategies to accelerate student progress.

The summer Jump Start academy will provide the cadre of highly-qualified teachers with the opportunity to be trained for half a day then implement the content the other half of the day by helping students participating in the summer program.

The eSource virtual library can be accessed by students and educators. It provides content and instructional resources that will help stakeholders facilitate student success. Teachers can match the student data on eSource to instructional content on eSource to assist in the development of the personalized instruction. Educators can use eSource to collaborate and share lessons and instructional strategies with other educators in the district. Resources on eSource will be vetted by a district team of teachers who will use the EQuIP rubric, a criterion-based rubric and review process to evaluate the quality of lessons and units intended to address the Common Core Standards.

The district is conducting an effectiveness/efficiency audit to identify what educational resources are being used across the district, which curricula is effective, and what the district needs to focus on to be effective. This will result in the improvement of individual and the collective practices of educators.

The proposed project will use the data collected as a part of the personalized learning plans to guide the selection of instructional strategies.

The online courses will allow students to complete tasks at their own pace. This could lead to acceleration of student progress.

The eSource data system will provide educators with actionable information that helps them identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests. It is also a source of high-quality learning resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. eSource can be used to create and share new resources throughout the district.

The use of the EQuIP rubric by the vetting team will help ensure that the resources available in eSource are effective in meeting student needs.

The district has identified Danielson's Framework as the value-added model for teacher and principal evaluations. The framework consists of four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. This evaluation system will help school leaders and school leadership teams assess and take steps to improve individual and collective educator effectiveness for the purpose of continuous school improvement. It will also provide information that will help school leaders and school leadership teams assess and take steps to improve school culture and climate.

Educators will have access to training, systems, and practices that enable them to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps. The professional development plan will provide the necessary training. The eSource system will provide the necessary data and information to enable the participating schools to address these criteria. The practices of Quality First Instruction and Essential Elements of Instruction will facilitate the district's progression toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

The highly effective mathematics teachers will train other teachers and educators in the district. This cadre is only elementary teachers. No strategies are included in the proposal to address middle and high schools need to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The applicant presented a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers. However, the plan does not include details about increasing the number of students who are served by highly effective principals. Additionally, goals and activities targeting specialty areas were not included in the plan presented in the proposal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The program structure and staffing proposed is adequate to provide support and services to all participating schools.

The application does not address the flexibility and autonomy that is provided to school leadership teams in participating schools with regard to school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and

responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets.

The proposal does not address giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic.

The proposal does not address giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.

The accessibility of resources to students with disabilities and English learners is not addressed in the application.

While the program structure for the proposed program is adequate, many of the criterion for this section are not addressed. This results in a lack of a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed to facilitate personalized learning.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The comprehensive and integrated data system will be accessible to students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders. Different users will have different levels of accessibility to the system. It can be accessed from within the school or outside the school. For individuals who do not have internet access, the public library is working with the district as a partner to provide access to the internet for those stakeholders.

The application does not describe activities or strategies that will be a part of the proposed program that will ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support.

It is not clear if the information contained in the district data systems can be exported in an open data format.

The district information technology systems are compatible so student data is available to parents and students across the learning systems within the district.

The multiple components of data system are integrated. The approach is systematically engineered and separately sustained so that systems are not integrated on an ad hoc basis as needed throughout the district. The systematic approach will help continue the interoperability of the data systems.

Overall, the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed to support personalized learning.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes high-quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

The plan addresses how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments

Quantitative and qualitative measures will be used to gather multiple, independent sources of data.

The applicant has identified a process for ongoing review and evaluation to determine progress.

The application lists several summative assessments that will be used to measure student academic achievement both annually and on an on-going basis.

The application discusses the process evaluations that will be used to provide timely feedback, describe the use of new math content, and measure the impact through each student's personalized data plan and notebooks including data.

Ongoing monitoring of information will assist the staff in assessing both long-term and short-term outcomes.

Strategies to monitor progress will include testing, surveys, and evaluations. The application identifies and describes the strategies that will be used.

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

The Math Director, Grant Coordinator, partners and evaluation team will meet quarterly to share information.

Annual reports will inform stakeholders about the progress of the program.

Information about the progress of the program will be updated at least quarterly on the district's website.

The applicant included the components of a high-quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

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

The applicant included 12 performance measures as a part of the proposed program.

Based on the vision and the proposed activities described in the proposal, the performance measures identified for each participating student population are ambitious and achievable. The performance measures include annual targets for the population and for each subgroup. The applicant explained the rationale for each of the chosen performance measures and goals. The application identifies the frequency with which the performance measures will be assessed.

The Program Management Team will review the program annually to identify successes and areas in need of improvement.

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

The applicant developed a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the Race to the Top – District activities. The plan includes goals, activities, rationale, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties for the evaluation component of the proposed program.

Evaluation activities are included as a component in the high-quality plan included in the application.

The impact of the professional development plan will be evaluated through the Professional Learning Portal. This will allow the district to monitor professional development activities and identify participants. Satisfaction surveys will be administered at the end of each professional development activity.

The district will identify most effective online programs based on student performance.

A district walk-through observation team comprised of various district employees will monitor the implementation of mathematics instruction.

The timeline and work plans will provide guidance and indicators for determining the development of deliverables and achievement of goals.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget narrative and tables identify all finds that will support the proposed project. Funding will come from other grants, Federal funds, and district funds.

The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed project.

The budget narrative and table identifies funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs.

Deliverables from the project will support systemic sustainability.

A portion of the cadre of highly effective math teachers will train other teachers to build capacity and sustainability within the district.

The looping strategy and teacher pairing strategy will be embedded in the district culture.

The cadre of 275 highly-qualified math teachers will support the continuous professional development in mathematics across the district by working with teams of grade level teachers and/or professional learning communities.

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

10

8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Deliverables included in the electronic library from the project will support systemic sustainability.

The looping strategy and teacher pairing strategy will be embedded in the district culture.

The cadre of 275 highly-qualified math teachers will support the continuous professional development in mathematics across the district by working with teams of grade level teachers and/or professional learning communities. This is a core component of program sustainability, but the financial sustainability of this component of the program is not addressed in the proposal.

The application contains most components of a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan includes support from State and local government leaders. The plan includes a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. The plan would be strengthened with additional information about financial support to ensure financial sustainability of the proposed program.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application includes a list of community partnerships and the services that each partnership will provide as a part of the proposed program. These partnerships include public and private organizations including community-based organizations, afterschool programs, public health, and civic groups.

Population-level results are identified that align with the goals of the proposal. The identified desired results encompass both educational results and family/community supports.

The partnership will track selected indicators by identifying students who participate in the additional interventions and supports and comparing their results to students who do not receive the additional interventions and supports.

The Project Management Team will work with the Family and Community Outreach Department to identify the specific supports that are available for high need students and then connect the students with these services.

Lessons learned with this project will be used to expand beyond participating students to meet the needs of additional high need students.

Project staff will work with the Family and Community Outreach Department to identify the appropriate indicators and a strategy to track student progress to show improved results over time. The Grant Management Team will also use this data to help identify areas where students may need more support if results are not showing improvement.

Partnerships will provide counseling services and can connect students to work and training opportunities. Several different partners provide tutoring services to different segments of the participating population.

It is not clear what tools and supports will be provided to the staff to assess the needs and assets of participating students.

The district is conducting an internal review of the needs and assets of the school. However, it is not clear what tools and supports will be provided to the staff to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community.

In addition to the instructional team that vets resources for eSource, each school has a site council comprised of school

leadership, students, and parents for a school-based infrastructure for decision-making and supports.

Parents and students will be surveyed annually about the quality of the school.

The Grant Management Team will review the program annually. They will discuss successes, challenges, and ways to improve the program.

Ambitious yet achievable performance measures are identified for each of the population-levels. Desired results are described for each population-level as well.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a coherent and comprehensive plan that addresses all areas of the core educational assurance areas. The strategies that will be implemented as a part of the proposed program will create learning environments that will significantly improve learning and teaching.

Total	210	174
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