



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1051TX-1 for Harmony Science Academy (Harmony Public Schools)

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that appropriately addresses the four core educational assurance areas and articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity. Score = 10 of 10 points

Comments for each criteria are presented below

A. The consortium appropriately addresses the four core educational assurance areas, but they have no low-performing schools that are part of the 10 LEAs and 36 schools participating in this grant proposal.

A1 College and career standards & assessments

- According to their proposal “Harmony’s instructional approach strives for equity by providing a rigorous, challenging STEM curriculum to serve all students, a focus on formative assessment, and a culture of high expectations and support.”
- While Texas has not yet adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Harmony is committed to ensuring all of their programs are aligned to CCSS as well as the State standards.
- Their curriculum is “inquiry-based and student-centered and matches the focus of the CCSS on rigor, depth, and higher-order skills such as conceptual understanding and application.” In addition, they emphasize mastery of 21st century skills that all students will need to be successful in college and career. They have a strong Advanced Placement (AP) program at each of their high schools and encourage students to begin taking AP courses as early as 10th grade.
- Implementation of their core curriculum is supported by the purposeful use of diagnostic, formative, benchmark, and summative assessments aligned to the standards.

A2 Robust K-12 data systems

- Harmony has a robust assessment and reporting platform called the *Harmony Performance Management Database* (HPMD). This SQL-based school database features individual and aggregate student information on logistics, culture and discipline, and academics. Data is interoperable, enabling it to be exported for use in other commonly used student data tracking systems.
- HPMD has an integrated assessment bank and associated data analysis and remediation feedback. Harmony students take locally-developed benchmark assessments every six weeks.
- The HPMD allows teachers to view individual student or aggregated group results and administrators to benchmark student achievement and growth across classes, schools, and the entire Harmony system, by subgroup. Their leadership uses this information in system-wide continuous improvement cycles to guide decision making around resources and supports.

A3 Hiring, retaining, and evaluating effective teachers and principals

- The applicant states that the “effectiveness of our approach rests on the quality of teachers and principals at our schools.” Since they are STEM schools, offering subjects that are traditionally hard-to-staff, they indicate that they have developed innovative human capital strategies that will support getting and keeping the highest quality teachers for our schools and developed a set of strategies to grow talent from within by cultivating personalized career paths for teachers and principals. Their approach leverages the following strategies:
 - Providing incentives for hard-to-staff subjects (math, science, computer/technology applications, bilingual/ESL,

- and special education)
 - o Providing tuition assistance to Harmony alumni to attain a teaching certificate and return to a Harmony school
 - o Providing financial assistance to Harmony teachers to obtain a Master's of Education degree or principal's certificate and grooming them to become Harmony school leaders
 - o Supporting the pursuit of subject-based advanced degrees for Harmony school leaders
 - o Providing ongoing high-quality professional development to current staff
- High-quality professional development is their key strategy for ensuring excellence in teaching and school leadership and retaining staff. They provide extensive professional development for teachers and school leaders before and during the school year, including training all new teachers in their curriculum and data-driven approach and providing support structures for ongoing improvement through frequent collaboration meetings and a mentoring program. Periodic cluster-wide professional development around key Harmony initiatives supports district-wide alignment to their approach. These strategies have enabled them to sustain the quality of their program while scaling it across the state.

A4 Turning around lowest performing schools

- The application states: "Harmony schools provide critical proof points for what is attainable for all students. Harmony does not have any lowest-achieving or low-performing schools – all of the schools have significantly outperformed their respective districts and the state. .With a majority of their students coming from low-income households and 15% feeding in from the state's lowest-performing middle or high schools, they provide a high-quality option that puts their students on the path to college and career. Their central office closely monitors schools' progress and provides immediate feedback to school staff. Their responsive system ensures that if a school is struggling to meet its goals, their central office provides immediate support."
- A review of their data tables in section A4 indicates that none of the participating schools are low performing. Even where baseline performance for some subgroups is low, their growth goals significantly reduce or eliminate the gaps.

B. The application articulates a clear and credible approach to (B1) accelerating student achievement, (B2) deepening student learning, and (B3) increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

- Harmony sees Race To The Top as an opportunity to deepen personalization of classroom instruction so that every student has choice and customized support, and to equip students, teachers and other stakeholders with real-time, actionable information on student learning to facilitate this individualized approach. Specifically, Harmony will invest in three key strategies:
 1. Expand on a successful pilot of a STEM Project-Based Learning curriculum to implement a cross-disciplinary, multi-sensory, technology-enabled project-based learning (PBL) curriculum that integrates STEM, social studies, and English language arts
 2. Strengthen and integrate into the school day the personalized intervention and enrichment programs that are currently offered after school by instituting a Custom Day schedule whereby students receive 2 hours a day of targeted instruction on three flexible paths: receive remediation and extra support in math and English Language Arts (ELA); choose math or ELA advancement; or pursue electives in areas of interest
 3. Improve existing data systems by building out their Data System and developing customized Data Dashboards to provide real-time data to inform the first two strategies (and their system more broadly) and to support students in setting goals and creating personal learning plans
- Successful implementation of these reform strategies will rely on two key underpinnings: high-quality professional development and stronger teacher and principal evaluation systems.
- The proposal includes a strategy for initial and ongoing professional development for teachers and leaders to support learning new skills and practices. At the same time, they will align their teacher and principal evaluation systems to the reform strategies and make them both more rigorous and more connected to the personalized learning approaches that they will expect to see in practice. With these support systems in place, Harmony will be poised to successfully carry out the personalized learning initiatives proposed here to ensure all Harmony students graduate college- and career-ready.

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

The applicant clearly describes the process used to select participating schools and the data provided in the A2 tables confirm that all LEAs and participating schools meet the student eligibility requirements.

Score = 10 of 10 points

- To determine the highest-leverage approach to reform for schools, Harmony’s leadership followed a systematic process to identify needs and gaps, as well as the most promising strategies for reform. Concluding that the most promising strategies for augmenting personalized learning and teaching were expanding the Project-Based Learning pilot, instituting a Custom Day program, and redesigning the data infrastructure to support these individualized approaches, the next question was which schools would benefit most from, and which would be most likely to implement successfully these changes. Harmony decided that initiating these programs in all of the middle and high schools, and not the elementary schools, is the best course of action for the following four reasons:
 1. They want to expand the Project-Based Learning (PBL) pilot from the STEM area to include more core subject areas. The STEM pilot is currently operating in the high schools, and so it is a natural fit to expand it in these schools.
 2. They want to expand the PBL pilot to middle schools to address their students' critical developmental stage.
 3. The Custom Day initiative will be a natural fit for middle and high school schedules because these students switch classes regularly.
 4. They want to provide these initiatives to students who are heading into the college- and career-readiness portions of their educational careers so they can lay the groundwork for the future in middle schools and build on that foundation in high school.
- All Harmony schools serving grades 6 through 12 meet the Race To The Top – District competition’s eligibility requirements. Specifically, the schools in aggregate serve 12,240 students from grades 6 through 12 with 60.1% low-income and 81.2% for minority.
- Participating schools include all 36 of their middle schools and high schools, located in 10 LEAs.
- In total, 50% of Harmony students will participate in this initiative, representing all 12,240 students in grades 6-12. 57% of participating students are from low- income families, and all students are classified as high-needs as defined by federal standards since all of our schools are high-minority schools. Overall, 572 educators will participate in this program.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has clearly defined, credible plan that includes scale up to all elementary schools within the 10 LEAs, but it is not a high-quality plan because it does not include key goals, activities and rationales, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible. They stated in their proposal that they felt it is premature to develop detailed plans for scale up now because the goals, activities, timelines, and deliverables will be shaped by the lessons learned over the next four years.

The consortium does have a high quality, credible plan to help the applicant reach its outcome goals for their three initiatives – Project-Based Learning, Custom Day, and Data Systems and Data Dashboards. This high-quality plan has clear and credible key goals, activities and rationales, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible.

Score = 8 of 10 points.

1. A plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.
 - Harmony will scale up and create meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools by 1) monitoring the results as they implement these initiatives in their middle and high schools and making continual improvements and 2) applying lessons learned to the program’s eventual rollout in their elementary schools. Importantly, as their middle and high school students become more practiced at project-based, inquiry-driven activities, they will identify the building block skills their elementary students must develop to succeed at the more complex assignments expected of them in middle and high school.
 - Enhancing their data systems at the elementary school level will be more straightforward. With the infrastructure already in place and tested at their middle and high schools, the technical aspects of rolling out their new data systems for elementary school will be far less complex. In terms of using the more robust data that will then be available, they will take what they have learned from user experience with their new Data Dashboards and apply these insights to the building of and training around their elementary-level dashboards.
 - This a credible plan, but it is not a high-quality plan because they do not present detailed plans with goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible. They stated in their proposal that they felt it is premature to develop detailed plans for scale up now because the goals, activities, timelines, and deliverables will be shaped by the lessons learned over the next four years.
2. A plan that will help the applicant reach its outcome goals

- The consortium does have a high quality, credible plan to help the applicant reach its outcome goals for their three initiatives – Project-Based Learning, Custom Day, and Data Systems and Data Dashboards. This high-quality plan has clear and credible key goals, activities and rationales, timeline, deliverables, and parties responsible for each of the three initiatives which constitute their plan to achieve their outcome goals.
- This high-quality plan is based on a theory of change that aims to increase the percentage of students graduating from Harmony schools college- and career-ready. To improve these student outcomes, they have developed a plan for a personalized learning program in which students engage deeply with core content, receive targeted support or enrichment to accelerate learning, and demonstrate ownership over their own life trajectory by actively participating in developing and monitoring their own learning plans. This personalized learning program will be realized through the implementation of their three key strategies: PBL, Custom Day, and enhanced Data Systems and Dashboards. These strategies were developed through a rigorous feedback process involving students, educators, and parents, and analysis of available student data around Harmony’s current instructional model.
- In section C1, they outline the details of this theory of action; the expected outcomes from implementing these initiatives; and the details behind their implementation plan, including how they will equip educators, students, parents, and other stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary to execute on these goals successfully, and their plan for continuous improvement.
- The PBL initiative will improve student engagement by increasing the relevance of the learning as students choose topics based on their interests. Students will engage in complex, authentic learning activities that will deepen content knowledge and develop skills key to success in the 21st century. The Custom Day strategy will offer educators flexibility during the school day to provide targeted, differentiated support to create an effective learning environment for each student. Lastly, the Data Systems and Dashboards efforts will allow educators to draw more useful, frequent insights about student learning and provide the most responsive learning environment possible for each student. The more robust data system will also enable school and system leaders to identify and share promising practices early on in the program and to respond quickly to problems in order to refine, sustain and scale this work.
- While the Harmony focus is on preparing students to enroll in college and pursue STEM careers, the project based learning program they plan to implement will also prepare students for work after they graduate because they will have the content knowledge and skills through the STEM curriculum, the analytic, reasoning, and writing skills through the Common Core curriculum, and the 21st century skills for technology-infused collaboration, problem-solving, and communication.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Based on the performance goals described in this section and its tables, the Harmony’s vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

The consortium provides annual goals for the four subcriteria in this section - performance on summative assessments (percent proficient), decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, and college enrollment. Executing the strategies described in this proposal to deepen and personalize student learning will accelerate achievement and allow them to reach the ambitious college- and career- readiness goals they have set for their schools.

All the annual goals under all four subcriteria are achievable and ambitious and will improve student learning and increase equity.

The consortium did not provide comparison data on state targets, if any, for these four subcriteria.

Total score = 10 of 10 points.

(a) Performance on summative assessments (percent proficient). A review of the A4a tables indicates that all groups of students across the 10 LEAs will achieve 91% to 100% proficiency by 2017. These are ambitious goals with some subgroups having 2011 baseline scores of 40% to 50% proficient in a number of LEAs.

Goal: At least 91% of Harmony students will be proficient in Math and Reading on Texas’s summative assessment by 2017

- Harmony believes their personalized learning initiatives will directly improve student learning outcomes because each initiative focuses on ensuring that students develop college- and career-ready knowledge and skills. The PBL curriculum will align to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as well as Texas state standards, requiring students to go deep into the content and apply their knowledge using higher-order skills. The Custom Day initiative will provide each student with individualized support to accelerate learning and ensure mastery of math and ELA standards. Their Data Systems and Dashboards will ensure we have real-time, actionable data to keep students on track to their ambitious goals.
- Their baseline data and goals for summative assessments are included in section (A)(4)(a) of the A Tables section at

the end of this proposal. Harmony's results from SY 2010-11 for each grade-level and subject-level test are included, comparing the performance of students by individual Harmony LEA by subgroup (minority group, low-income status or other special needs categorization). For SY 2011-12, STAAR End Of Course (EOC) tests were introduced for 9th grade students with the tables reflecting this addition.

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps. A review of the A4b tables indicates that all groups of students across the 10 LEAs will close the achievement gaps by 2017 with Texas white students overall and all groups of students across the 10 LEAs will achieve higher scores than Texas white students overall. These are ambitious goals with some subgroups having 2011 baseline achievement gaps of 30% to 50% in a number of LEAs.

Goal: Achievement gap between Harmony subgroups and Texas white students overall will decrease by 3% every year

- Harmony has already made great strides in decreasing the achievement gap, but they will not be satisfied until the gap is completely closed and their minority and low income students are performing at least as well as their white peers in each school and across the state. By engaging all students deeply through highly personalized, student-driven inquiry projects, providing individualized support to achieve mastery of skills, and ensuring that all their students have access to the tools and resources they need to excel in their rigorous program, Harmony will accelerate their movement along the trajectory toward closing this gap.
- To evaluate progress in decreasing achievement gaps between white students and Harmony's minority and low-income students, Harmony will use measures of summative assessment as outlined in (A)(4)(a) and compare achievement of each subgroup of Harmony students to that of white students across the state of Texas (a state-wide average of white student performance). Their baseline performance and targets are included in table (A)(4)(b) in the A Tables section at the end of this proposal.

(c) Graduation rates. The A4c tables for graduation rates provide data for the 2 Harmony LEAs that currently have grade 12 students. Both LEAs had 100% graduation rates across all subgroups and have projected a constant 100% graduation for current and new subgroups as they expand. Maintaining the 100% rate while expanding is an ambitious goal.

Goal: Maintain 100% graduation rate

- Harmony schools are designed to grow gradually from K – 8 in year 1 to K – 12 in year 5 after opening. The latest graduation rate data reported by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) includes only 2 of the 10 Harmony LEAs in the consortium. Their goal is that all Harmony LEAs in the consortium maintain a 100% graduation rate as their schools expand to grade 12 and the graduation rates come available from the Texas education agency.
- As they expand, they will maintain their college-preparatory culture and continue their work focusing on students who are struggling to ensure that they maintain the graduation rate that they have worked so hard to achieve.
- Graduation rate tables (A)(4)(c) are in the A Tables section.

(d) College enrollment. The A4d tables for graduation rates provide data for the 2 Harmony LEAs that currently have graduates. A note on the charts states that they can only provide overall data because the National Student Clearinghouse does not provide data by subgroup. These are ambitious goals with the 2 LEAs having 2011 baseline college enrollment rates of 76% and 77%.

Goals: 100% of Harmony student enroll in college by 2017

75% or more graduates choose STEM-related majors in college by 2017

85% or more students attain postsecondary degrees by 2017

- A critical outcome of these initiatives is to ensure their students are college- and career- ready. Currently, their schools have a college enrollment rate of 74%. (Baseline data and targets are included in Table (A)(4)(d) in the A Tables section at the end of the narrative.) Going forward, Harmony will collect college matriculation data by subgroup to understand trends among various student groups and use this data for continuous improvement of current initiatives. They will also track their students through college to monitor their progress on students choosing STEM-related majors, and to monitor degree attainment.

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	15
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(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony provides a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. Narrative, graphs and data presented in the proposal show that Harmony demonstrates the ability to meet each of the three criteria in this section.

Their middle and high schools have improved student learning outcomes, closed achievement gaps, and increased graduation and college acceptance rates. Harmony schools have consistently outperformed regional and state averages in all four core subject areas. Harmony student subgroups in 2011 outperformed their statewide peer groups in all four core content areas. Students' participation rates and scores in Harmony's Advanced Placement (AP) program and on the SATs, and Harmony's 100% graduation rate and 74% college acceptance rate, demonstrate the success of the HPS model. A university study of college enrolment data from 2007 to 2011 found Harmony students outperformed the national average in admission to two-year and four-year colleges and in selection of STEM majors.

Harmony has no low-performing schools. It turns around low-performing students. With a majority of their students coming from low-income households and 15% feeding in from the state's lowest-performing middle or high schools, they provide a high-quality program that puts their students on the path to college and career. They closely monitor schools' progress and provide immediate feedback to school staff. Harmony has had two new campuses that needed extra help to meet their high standards. Harmony's central office provided those schools support in the form of intense professional development, mentorship and buddying with high-performing principals, and specialists and interventionists in the subject areas in which they were struggling. Since the establishment of the first Harmony school in 2000, no Harmony school has failed to fulfill its obligations to the charter authorizer (Texas State Board of Education) or the local community of its parents and students.

Over the last 10 years, Harmony's in-house information technology team has developed and continuously improved a robust assessment and reporting platform called the *Harmony Performance Management Database* (HPMD) that makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. HPMD has an integrated assessment bank and associated data analysis and remediation feedback. Students have access to their own information and their parents/guardians have access to their child's information by logging on through their school's website using their own home computers, smartphones, or school-based computers. Data is interoperable, enabling it to be exported for use in other commonly used student data tracking systems.

Score = 15 of 15 points

a. Improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps

1. Raising student achievement

Since the opening of their first school in 2000, Harmony Public Schools has been successfully advancing student learning and achievement across the state of Texas, providing exceptionally high-quality educational experiences for traditionally underserved students. In just 12 years, Harmony has grown from one school serving 200 students to 38 schools serving over 24,000 students across the state, with their low-income and minority students consistently and significantly outperforming their peers within their respective regions and statewide.

- *Recognition of success:* In 2006, Harmony Science Academy Houston, their original school, received the Title I Distinguished School Award from the US Department of Education for outstanding performance in the categories of exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years and closing the achievement gap. Harmony Science Academy was one of two schools in Texas and 52 across the nation to receive this award and was the *only* school that qualified to receive this award in both categories. In this same year, due to its success as a STEM school, Harmony Science Academy Houston was selected to serve as an incubator school in the T-STEM (Texas Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) initiative, which was funded by a combination of public and private agencies including Texas Education Agency, Dell, and the Gates Foundation. Today, because of the high performance of the students and the focus on science, math, and computer technologies, 17 Harmony campuses have been designated as T-STEM Academies as part of the Texas High School Project.
- *Outperforming the state:* Harmony schools have consistently outperformed regional and state averages in all four core subject areas. From 2007-08 to 2010-11, Harmony system-wide has outperformed the state in every year. The data below show results from Texas's statewide TAKS assessment for 2007-08 through 2010-11 (last year Texas shifted to the STAAR assessment and results from that assessment are not yet available).
 - *Math Achievement:* On average, from 2007-08 to 2010-11, the percent of Harmony students grades 3-12 passing Mathematics TAKS was 89.8%, approximately 5.6% higher than each school's given region and 6.2% higher than the passing rate of the entire state.

- Science Achievement: On average, from 2007-08 to 2010-11, the percent of HPS students grades 3-12 passing Science TAKS was 88.9%, which was 7.3% higher than each school's given region and 7.6% higher than the passing rate of the entire state.
- Reading/ELA Achievement: On average, from 2007-08 to 2010-11, the percent of HPS students grades 3-12 passing Reading TAKS was 93.8%, which was 3.2% higher than each school's given region and 3.2% higher than the passing rate of the entire state.
- Social Studies Achievement: On average, from 2007-08 to 2010-11, the percent of HPS students grades 3-12 passing Social Studies TAKS was 98.6%, which was 4.2% higher than each school's given region and 4.7% higher than the passing rate of the entire state.

2. Closing achievement gaps

- Harmony students across every subject and subgroup (white, African American, Hispanic, and low income) are outperforming their peers across the state. A graph in the proposal in section B1 illustrates the performance of Harmony subgroups compared to their counterparts across the state on the 2010-11 TAKS in each of the core subjects.
- Their Special Education and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are also outperforming their peers across the state. (Special Education students make up 4% of their population and are significant subgroups in 10 of their schools. LEP students make up 14% of their population and are significant subgroups in 29 of their schools.) On average, across all grades and subjects on the 2010-11 TAKS, 55% of their LEP students passed, compared to 29% statewide, and 54% of their Special Education students passed, compared to 44% across the state.

3. Raising high school graduation rates

College-ready results: Harmony's individualized approach and unique combination of programs yield a model that ensures students graduate prepared for college. Students' participation rates and scores in Harmony's Advanced Placement (AP) program and on the SATs, and Harmony's graduation rate and college acceptance rate demonstrate the success of the HPS model.

- AP participation rates and scores: From 2007-08 to 2010-11 (scores not available yet for 2011-12), the percentage of students taking AP courses steadily increased from 46% to 57%, with 46% of test takers scoring 3 or higher, compared to 44% statewide. Their AP pass rate is now higher than that of the state.
 - Their pass rate rose strongly over time, except for a decrease in 2009 for African American students. The decrease in African American AP scores in 2009-10 is something they focused on, and scores improved dramatically the following year. It can be explained, in part, by the low number of test-takers that year (only 32 African American students took AP exams that year, as compared to 59 the following year), and thus, the number was highly sensitive.
 - They are now focused on closing the gap with national pass rate results, which reflect an overall student demographic that is significantly more affluent than their student demographic.
 - Within these results, Harmony's minority subgroups are showing particularly strong results. Specifically, in 2010-11, of Harmony's African American test-takers, 54% scored 3 or higher, as compared to 22% statewide, and 26% nationally. And of Harmony's Hispanic test-takers, 37% scored 3 or higher, as compared to 29% statewide and 39% nationally.
- SAT participation rates and scores: From 2007-08 to 2010-11, the percent of students taking the SAT increased from 80% to 100% across all Harmony students.
 - Over 2006-07 to 2010-11, the achievement gap between White students and Hispanic and African American students has decreased as demonstrated by the mean score trends for each subject.
 - In 2010-11, Harmony Hispanic and African American students significantly outperformed comparable groups nationally across all subjects. Each year, Harmony scores have been steadily rising for all groups in each component of the test.
- Graduation rates: Harmony works closely with students and families to ensure all students receive the support they need to stay on track and graduate. They are proud of their four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of 100%, calculated in accordance with State and Federal guidelines.

4. Raising college enrollment rates

College- and Career-focused: From its inception, Harmony has been committed to ensuring all of its students have access to rigorous, engaging, high-quality STEM and college preparatory curricula and graduate college- and career-ready. This focus has resulted in the strong performance of their students on state tests and in their high graduation rates and college acceptance and enrollment rates.

- College acceptance and enrollment rates: With college admission a requirement for graduating, 100% of Harmony Public Schools' graduating seniors have been accepted to college since 2005. NCS data shows 74% of Harmony students matriculating in comparison to a statewide matriculation rate of 55%.
 - STEM in college: Harmony's focus on STEM preparation is having an impact – a university study described in Appendix B found Harmony students outperformed the national average in admission to two-year and four-year colleges and in selection of STEM majors, with 65% of matriculating Harmony students choosing STEM majors, compared to a national average of 33% (see Appendix B for slides from this study). These results are even more striking for women and minorities: for matriculating students, 51% of female Harmony students selected a STEM major, compared to a national average of 15%, as did 94% of African American Harmony students (vs. 18% national average) and 57% of Hispanic Harmony students (vs. 22% national average).
- b. Achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its low performing schools
- With a majority of their students coming from low-income households and 15% feeding in from the state's lowest-performing middle or high schools, they provide a high-quality option that puts their students on the path to college and career. Harmony holds all their schools accountable to high standards of success. They closely monitor schools' progress and provide immediate feedback to school staff. Since the establishment of the first Harmony school in 2000, no Harmony school has failed to fulfill its obligations to the charter authorizer (Texas State Board of Education) or the local community of its parents and students.
 - While they do not have any lowest-achieving or low-performing schools – all of the schools have significantly outperformed their respective districts and the state – Harmony has had two new campuses that needed extra help to meet their high standards. Harmony's central office provided those schools support in the form of intense professional development, mentorship and buddying with high-performing principals, and specialists and interventionists in the subject areas in which they were struggling.
- c. Make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services
- Harmony makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.
 - Over the last 10 years, Harmony's in-house information technology team has developed and continuously improved a robust assessment and reporting platform called the *Harmony Performance Management Database* (HPMD). This SQL-based school database features individual student information on logistics (e.g., registry, lunch records, library records, extracurricular activities), culture and discipline (e.g., attendance, home visits), and academics (e.g., grade book and transcripts and assessment data including six-week benchmark assessments and standardized test performance). Data is interoperable, enabling it to be exported for use in other commonly used student data tracking systems.
 - HPMD has an integrated assessment bank and associated data analysis and remediation feedback. Every six weeks, students in all subjects use the HPMD to take a benchmark assessment. Teachers view information student-by-student, as well as in aggregated levels. They meet in teams every six weeks to analyze this data and make informed decisions about immediate lesson planning as well as longer-term plans to ensure individual students reach their annual goals. The results are also used to form tutorial study sections of similarly performing students who spend the next week with a teacher/tutor on customized remediation. Harmony's central office uses the HPMD to fuse and analyze aggregate and disaggregated student achievement and student growth data from all of the Harmony schools to guide decision-making around allocating resources and supports and to support continuous improvement.
 - Students have access to their own information, and their parents/guardians have access to their child's information by logging on through their school's website using their own home computers, smartphones, or school-based computers. The schools draw on internal or local resources to provide basic training for parents who have never used a computer or the Internet. They send home an informational flier about how to use the website to monitor student progress and communicate concerns or suggestions. Harmony also reaches out to parents through six- week report cards, three-week progress reports, and regular teacher-parent checkpoints and conferences, all geared toward keeping parents informed about and engaged in their child's progress.
 - In addition to the HPMD, Harmony has personalized learning programs with real-time data capture for specific subject areas, including reading and math for grades 6-12, STEM for grades K-8 and social studies for K-5. While these do not currently feed into the HPMD, integrating this data into the central database is one of the goals of this grant.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Harmony Public Schools has moderate transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public,

by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.

- Harmony Public Schools complies with all local, state, and federal rules and regulations set by the U.S. Department of Education regarding transparency, accountability, reporting, and other obligations.
- Harmony publishes the following information on its public website: Organizational chart, Policies and procedures, School handbooks, 990 Forms, Organization-wide budget, Site-based budgets (curriculum and instruction, library, school leadership, health services, transportation, food services, extracurricular activities, administration, maintenance, security, data processing, debt service), a link to HPS data on the CRDC’s web site (Civil Rights Data Collection), and a link to Director of Communications for further information.
- As a publically funded institution, Harmony Public Schools states that their records are open to public inspection as permitted by law. It has the technical capabilities to report all required expenditure data.
- They state that it has always been and will continue to be Harmony’s policy to provide information about policies, practices, investments, salaries, and other expenditures upon request. This includes making available actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff including teachers, as well as non-personnel expenditures at the school level. Information requests are directed to and managed by the Director of Communications, who provides requested information within 10 business days.
- Last spring, following the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) guidelines, HPS registered with the Office for Civil Rights and is prepared to submit all required data as soon as the CRDC survey opens this fall. An email from June 2012 confirming their CRDC registration is included as Appendix D as evidence of our timely participation in this process. HPS has a link on its public web site to HPS data on CDRC’s Web site.

Score = 4 of 5 points. Salary and expenditure data is available to the public by request only, but not posted on its public web site.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under Texas state requirements for rigorous college-ready academic standards, student achievement metrics and accountability, and autonomy for charter schools such as Harmony to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant’s proposal – despite Texas not adopting the Common Core standards and not being a Race to the Top state.

Score = 10 of 10.

The state of Texas has in recent years made a strong push towards more accountability and autonomy for innovative school models along with stronger data systems to encourage developments in personalized learning. Primarily, in relation to encouraging personalized learning environments, Texas has:

- Adopted rigorous college-ready academic standards, in order to provide reliable, high academic standards required to define an individual students’ progress and learning needs
- Made strides in using student achievement metrics with more useful data systems to evaluate the quality of instruction in order to reliably measure individual student learning and inform continuous improvement of instruction and content
- Created policies to provide a high level of autonomy for charter schools, to provide schools with appropriate flexibility and authority to experiment with different approaches to teaching and learning

Successful conditions

Rigorous Standards

- Despite not participating in the adoption of Common Core Standards, Texas has a history of supporting the adoption of rigorous college-ready standards. Since 1998, Texas has followed the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as the established curriculum standards for K-12. The state continuously revises these standards for rigor, with the most recent revision adopted in 2012. In 2008, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (including representatives from Texas universities) adopted and the Commissioner of Education approved the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) to be integrated into TEKS in order to create stronger alignment between public school and higher education curriculum and ensure a more seamless transition between high school and college.
- Texas legislation from 2006 onwards has laid the groundwork to ensure high standards, increased funding for dropout prevention and career-readiness, and ensured the development of more meaningful assessments tied to the standards.

Legislation described in Appendix E has included requiring vertical teams of high school and college faculty to develop college-readiness standards for core subjects, and directly linking cut scores on End-Of-Course exams with preparation to succeed in college without remediation.

- To support educators in the adoption of CCRS statewide, the Texas Education Agency piloted online professional development courses in 2011 on how to teach content to students. In addition, statewide teacher professional development academies focus on state standards, adolescent literacy, algebra readiness, science and End-Of-Course success, in addition to offering online follow-up modules, resources, and learning communities for continued support. These resources enable more learner-centered approaches to education by providing teachers with tools necessary to understand competency-based learning.

Student learning as a metric for quality

- Texas continues to invest resources in building tools for measuring and tracking data around student learning to have more objective information with which to measure individual progress toward college- and career-ready standards as well as make evaluations of quality of content, courses, schools and instruction.
- As evidence of the state’s focus on data-driven instruction and accountability, effective in 2013, Texas will require 35% of a teacher’s evaluation to be based on student outcomes as measured by standardized assessments. This has already resulted in significant investment by the State into the development of meaningful assessments and robust data systems.
- In 2012, the State Board changed summative assessment systems from the Texas Assessment of Key Skills (TAKS) to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The development of the new system was driven by the legislative push towards more rigorous standards and will focus on increasing postsecondary readiness of graduating high school students and helping to ensure that Texas students are competitive with other students both nationally and internationally.
- To ensure effective use of this student learning data, Texas has invested in ensuring data systems are aligned, updated and robust to inform longitudinal management decisions, accountability and instruction. Texas has made significant progress in this regard, as evidenced by performance on criteria established by the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) initiative, which encourages “state policy towards a culture of effective data use in which quality data are not only collected but used to increase student achievement.” The DQC evaluates each state on 10 actions to take towards high quality data systems and 10 elements that a high quality data system should have (see Appendix F for details). Texas measures 8 out of 10 on the number of actions met and 10 out of 10 on the number of elements met which is significantly ahead of most other states.

Sufficient autonomy

- Harmony Public Schools believes that personalized learning is best supported through operational autonomy, where schools have flexibility to determine how to appropriately allocate their budget while also making the best instructional decisions for their individual students.
- Charter school autonomy in Texas provides Harmony with the ability to operate with such flexibility. The state of Texas was among the first in 1995 to support open-enrollment charter schools. To encourage the operation of high-quality, innovative charter schools, Texas law provides for fiscally and legally autonomous schools with independent charter school boards for state-authorized open-enrollment charter schools. Thus Texas provides charter schools complete autonomy over budget, staffing and curriculum as long as the charter meets the rigorous academic and financial standards dictated by the state of Texas for all public schools

In addition to the conditions described here – support for rigorous standards, high-quality data systems, robust student achievement metrics, and charter school autonomy – Texas has just launched an online personalized tutoring and remediation program (Texas SUCCESS) and policy analysts expect to see more investment in digital, personalized learning from the Lone Star state. These conditions combine to create a state context that is supportive of personalized learning environments and charter school innovation.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium provides extensive and convincing evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal.

Score = 10 of 10 points.

1. A description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and

feedback.

Harmony states in section B4 that “the strength of this proposal is drawn in part from the collective input of many stakeholders. Students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were all engaged in the development of this plan and overwhelmingly support this proposal.”

- The design team (composed of the Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Secondary Curriculum, Director of Elementary Curriculum, Heads of the STEM, ELA, and Social Studies programs, and the Director of Information Technology) first informed all Harmony stakeholders about the grant and their intent to apply. Then they solicited input and feedback from teachers, students, families, and principals through a variety of formal and informal channels including an online survey, educator and administrator meetings, and focus groups.”
- Teachers and principals received an online survey on September 11, 2012 that described the initiative and asked for feedback on the details of the plan (please see Appendix G for the description of the initiative and the accompanying survey). Harmony emailed the survey to all 1,637 teachers, and 38 principals of both participating and non-participating schools. Principals encouraged teacher participation in the survey in weekly faculty meetings. They had 606 responses (37%) from teachers and 30 responses from principals (79%). Additionally, the design team sought in-person input and feedback from teachers and principals at cluster-level professional development days, conducted across the Harmony system over a two-week period in September.
- The design team also used Cluster Superintendents meetings and Outreach Coordinators meetings to engage cluster-level leadership in discussions about the plans for this grant.
- They sought parent input and feedback through multiple channels. Principals in participating schools mobilized their Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) to solicit feedback from parents directly and via the online survey. Schools placed announcements about the online survey in Wednesday folders that go out to families every week. Some parents filled in the survey online and some dropped off feedback at school offices and administrators at those schools entered the feedback into the online survey. Teachers also sought feedback from families in parent-teacher conferences. In addition, principals shared information about the proposed program at school events and open houses and solicited feedback from parents at those events.
- Homeroom teachers provided information to students in participating schools and solicited feedback via class discussion. Homeroom teachers also asked students to write essays on the topic. Teachers shared their students’ feedback through the online survey.
- The design team analyzed all of the feedback collected from the stakeholders. The team identified common themes in the feedback and came up with a short list of the most common comments. Upon collective agreement, identified feedback was incorporated into the design of project.

Content of stakeholder feedback

The three initiatives proposed – Project-Based Learning (PBL), Custom Day, and Data Systems and Dashboards – address the needs expressed by each of their stakeholder groups in the survey, summarized below.

- Teachers wanted to use technology to scaffold support for each student and differentiate to meet unique learner needs. They wanted more technology in the classroom, especially hand-held devices, and training on how to use any new technology. They also expressed the desire for course offerings at the middle school aligned with the high school courses to better prepare students at an earlier age.
- Parents wanted easy access to lessons and classroom activities, as well as improved online resources to track their child’s goals and performance. Parents also want rapid notification if their child is struggling.
- Students wanted access to technology in the classroom and beyond school hours and wanted technology as an enabler to make the topics they are learning in the classroom relevant to them (helping identify real-world applications).
- Principals wanted data dashboards to see their schools’ performance all at once, and then to be able to drill down in specific areas of concern. They wanted tools to support deep dives into teachers’ performance in specific areas of content mastery and tools to help identify why students are not mastering specific concepts. Principals also wanted more technology in the classrooms to support differentiation and address unique needs of individual children, and they want a specific person on campus to coordinate instructional technology.

2. Evidence that at least 70 percent of teachers from participating schools support the proposal

- Based on the table in section B4 of the narrative, Harmony teachers are overwhelmingly committed to the success of the program. In addition to investing in the project by providing design feedback, 94% or 1605 of 1700 teachers from 36 participating schools have expressed support for the proposal. The level of support from teachers in each LEA ranged from 92% to 99%. Appendix H contains copies of the signature sheets from each participating school. They meet the criteria for at least 70% support from teachers for each LEA.

3. Letters of support from key stakeholders

- Harmony Public Schools believes in the importance of the ties between the community and the students within the community and has pursued opportunities for community participation to foster students' feelings of belonging to their community and the community's feeling of responsibility toward the students.
- Harmony has submitted 107 letters of support for their proposal, representing a wide variety of key stakeholders who have invested in the success of Harmony's programs and students. Appendix I contains letters of support from community and civic organizations, Mayors, higher education institutions, Harmony school PTOs and parents, student organizations in Harmony schools and their students, elected officials in their communities, businesses, corporations, and community business organizations (Chambers of Commerce).

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has a strong, high quality response to each of the three criteria: (1) conducted an analysis of its current status in implementing personalized learning environments,(2) developed a logic model or theory of action that supports the reform proposal, and (3) identified the needs and gaps the plan will address.

1. The consortium conducted a thorough analysis of its current status in implementing personalized learning environments by examining student performance data, engaging numerous stakeholders in dialogue in the participating schools and other venues, and analyzing current initiatives.
2. The design team developed an input-process-output Theory of Change to guide its reform plan that has four components – (1) Resources and Inputs, (2) Activities, (3) Outcomes, and (4) Impact. The theory of change is that Resources and Inputs are applied to accomplish Activities in the participating schools to address needs and achieve Outcomes that yield the desired Impact.
3. The design team used its analysis of its status in implementing personalized learning environments, Resources and Inputs, to identify the needs and gaps the plan will address, to define Activities to accomplish through the plan, Outcomes that staff and students will achieve, and the Impact for students – All HPS students are college and career-ready.

Score = 5 of 5 points.

Detailed comments about each step

1. The consortium has conducted a thorough analysis of its current status in implementing personalized learning environments
 - For six years, Harmony has been striving to improve learning outcomes for students through project-based learning, leveraging online resources, and providing personalized support. To evaluate these efforts, Harmony has used a mix of data (TAKS results, AP and SAT results, college acceptance and matriculation, extracurricular STEM participation) to look at trends within student groups. They found (details in section B1):
 - Harmony students are outperforming state averages and closing the achievement gap on TAKS summative tests
 - AP participation rates and scores are rising
 - Passing rate for all students is higher than state averages and passing rate for minorities is outperforming national averages
 - SAT participation rates and scores have been rising over the years
 - SAT achievement gap has been closing and SAT scores for minorities are outperforming national averages
 - Despite these promising trends, they found that they were falling short of their own goals in two critical areas: college-readiness for all students, and student achievement across all subgroups. While their students were doing exceptionally well relative to state and national averages, only 61% of their students graduate college-ready as measured by the AEIS definition of College-Ready Graduates. They also saw that, while Harmony outperformed districts and other charter schools on raising student achievement across all of their student groups, they still faced an achievement gap between white students and students of color and low-income students.
 - Their focus is on addressing these two areas as they believe that college-readiness and equity are critical to ensuring that each student is able to achieve his or her full potential.
 - Once they knew how their students were doing, they gathered input from their established analysis processes that inform continuous improvement, and conducted a deeper scan of these efforts. Established processes include a system-wide structure of weekly and monthly leadership team meetings (described in section E1) and a major stakeholder annual meeting called the Site-Based Decision Making Committee (SBDMC).
 - The deeper scan was conducted by the Harmony RTTT-D design team (described in section B4). This team examined student data and discussed the strengths of each initiative and whether or not each one is currently helping students

meet goals and helping teachers identify gaps in personalized learning initiatives.

Current initiatives examined by the committee included:

- STEM-related initiatives, including afterschool STEM projects, science fair projects, science Olympiad teams, STEM-internships and university partnerships, a robotics program and engineering programs, two STEM career pathway programs
 - AP courses and state dual-credit program
 - Approaches to personalization in classroom instruction, including project-based learning and inquiry-based learning
 - Technology-enabled learning initiatives such as the use of Accelerated Reader, Accelerated Math, and Study Island
 - Supports for populations such as students with disabilities, English learners, and at-risk students
 - Enrichment and intervention supports, including after-school and Saturday programs
 - Harmony's data system: HPMD
 - Harmony's character education program
2. The consortium has developed a logic model or theory of action that supports the reform proposal
- The design team developed an input-process-output Theory of Change to guide its reform plan that has four components – (1) Resources and Inputs, (2) Activities, (3) Outcomes, and (4) Impact.
 - The theory of change is that Resources and Inputs, such as staff, students, current programs and services, and funding, are applied to address needs and accomplish Activities in the participating schools, such as developing a strong foundation of STEM curricular and extra-curricular activities, to achieve Outcomes, such as increased interest in STEM careers, that yield the desired Impact, such as 75% or more graduates choose STEM-related majors in college by 2017 – one part of the overall impact for students – All HPS students are college and career-ready.
 - The work described above, a thorough analysis of its current status, was to describe the Resources and Inputs and the corresponding strengths and weaknesses. The work described below was to identify needs and define Activities, desired Outcomes, and intended Impact.
 - The actual Theory of Change developed by the design team to drive this reform plan is presented in section A3.
3. The consortium has used its analysis of its status in implementing personalized learning environments and a needs analysis to identify the needs and gaps the plan will address.
- Building on its thorough analysis of the current status, the design team then identified from its discussions about current initiatives four primary areas of need related to the problem discovered in the data analysis - increase equity by closing achievement gaps and increasing college readiness across all subgroups:
 - Engaging students in deeper learning: Many teachers, driven by a focus on End- Of-Course Exams, are still focusing on coverage of material with a one-size-fits-all pedagogy and pacing. Efforts to expose students to college and professions, and implementation of inquiry-based approaches are not facilitating a deep enough level of engagement or engaging all students in deep learning.
 - Differentiating instruction for individual student needs: Data on college readiness and the achievement gap and success of their other intervention supports suggest they could better support all students by offering more intervention, enrichment or elective courses tailored to students' individual needs.
 - Integrate data systems and improve usability: By integrating their multiple databases they could see student trends more easily around individual and subgroup performance. In addition, more meaningful dashboard displays of this integrated data would better support remediation and advancement and system-level improvement.
 - More frequent targeted assessment: Their current assessment cycle is on a six-week schedule. For continuous improvement to move their students towards their college readiness goals, Harmony needs more frequent assessment to provide actionable information to educators. In addition, Harmony's assessments need to more closely target college- and career-ready skills to drive tailored, rigorous instruction.
 - The team then brainstormed how current initiatives could be improved and scaled and what new initiatives looked promising to address these needs. This conversation was informed not only by the formal feedback mechanisms described above, but also by feedback routinely collected from parents, students and teachers. The team evaluated the initiatives by considering which built on Harmony's existing strengths and which would have the greatest impact, based on their previous experience and on research.
 - They concluded that addressing personalized learning through expanding their PBL curriculum, expanding on and integrating their intervention and enrichment program into the school day, and significantly upgrading their data systems and developing dashboards were the most high-leverage strategies they could reasonably undertake to address the needs and gaps they identified.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In section C1, Harmony has organized its presentation of its plan around the specific criteria for this section. They have converted the criteria and sub-criteria into a set of goals that the organization will achieve to improve student learning. The rationale for their approach to each goal and its activities and their descriptions of the activities are comprehensive and convincing. This is a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

Score = 20 of 20 points..

For each goal they begin by defining "where we are," a brief narrative that describes the programs and approaches that are currently in place to address elements of the criteria and sub criteria. They then present/describe what they intend to do in "where we are headed." In this part of the narrative about a goal they describe an overview of the proposed plan and then indicate specific key activities that will be undertaken to accomplish the plan for that goal and the rationale, with citations from the research literature, for their choices. The key activities are linked to one of the three initiatives – project-based learning (PBL), custom day, and data systems and data dashboards. They specify deliverables in the activity descriptions.

At the end of section C1 they provide for two of their initiatives, project-based learning and custom day, a GANTT chart timeline of activities over the next five years and a table that describes specific activities and the responsible parties. The activities listed in the table include the key activities described in the narrative as well operational activities that are required to complete the initiative such as establish a design team for the initiative and test products and approaches in a pilot project with a small number of participating schools. Details for the third initiative – data systems and data dashboards - are presented in section C2, along with a GANTT timeline and activity table.

They also provide in the appendices examples of the kind of work that students are doing in the project-based learning pilot project (appendix K), an example of a model lesson that illustrates the five key characteristics of their lesson design - engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation (Appendix J), and they provide a description of the services and supports that they currently provide to students to enable them to be successful in school and to graduate college and career ready (Appendix L).

Presented below is a summary of the goals in section C1 and their key activities. These goals address each criteria in section C1.

Goals – criteria a1 & a2 – Students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals, identifying and pursuing learning and development goals linked to college – and career – ready standards, and understanding how to structure their learning to achieve their goals and measure progress towards those goals.

Key Activity - Develop student investment approach

They state that “investing students in their own learning is a precondition for the success of all three initiatives, project-based learning, custom day, and data dashboards. This activity has three objectives: to support students in (1) visualizing their long-term goals for college and career; (2) mapping their school year class and activity schedules to those goals; and (3) developing shorter-term goals and learning plans that will lead to accomplishing the student long term vision.”

Goals – criteria a3, a4, a5 – Involving students in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest, having access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives, and mastering critical academic content and developing 21st century skills and traits. The key activities

1. Develop a bank of cross-disciplinary, technology-enabled PBL projects
2. Develop outcomes and assessment tools for PBL projects
3. Develop PBL skills, scope and sequence

They apply a backwards-mapping approach to the PBL initiative and appropriately indicate that the second activity, develop outcomes and assessment tools for PBL projects, should guide the creation of the bank of PBL projects and the specification of skills, scope, and sequence. It is in these activities that they connect design principles for project-based learning to rigorous content standards in ELA, social studies, and STEM subjects (and the associated analytic skills) to the development and

mastery of technology skills and 21 century problem-solving, communication, and collaboration skills.

Goals – criteria b1 & b2 – Access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development and access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments

Key Activities

1. Implement the custom day schedule

They indicate that implementing this activity will require

- Developing an instructional approach framework that articulates the high leverage instructional strategies, management techniques, and ways to organize the classroom to allow for the coexistence of multiple forms of instruction happening simultaneously
- Identifying and purchasing technology products including intervention programs and online AP courses and other challenging curriculum
- Adjusting student-teacher schedules
- Ensuring data analysis to support frequent feedback and grouping and regrouping of students
- Training of teachers, as described in section c 2

2. Develop instructional approach framework for PBL

Harmony appropriately recognizes that “the introduction of cross-disciplinary, multi-sensory PBL projects across three core subjects will also require a shift in instructional approaches. While not requiring entirely new classes, teachers of existing classes will need to incorporate new instructional approaches to guide students through the process of these in-depth inquiry projects that will require new ways of demonstrating mastery. Examples of practices that will support personalized, project based learning include differentiating with small groups based on common needs or skills gaps, building in time for individual reflection and goal setting, offering targeted mini-lessons that may be optional for some students and required for others, and structuring the class to allow time for students to be working in various configurations, including online.

3. Upgrade data system and develop dashboards (this is a related activity in the data systems/dashboard initiative and is described in section C 2)

Goal – criteria b3 – Access to high quality content

Key Activities

1. Establish and populate a PBL online platform (e.g., Blackboard)

The platform will also be structured so that teachers and students can easily search and add resources. Harmony will establish a cycle for evaluating new content resources; once they are “approved” as high-quality, they will cycle up from “shared” to “endorsed” resources. A sub group of PBL teachers in each subject will conduct these ongoing evaluation cycles. The interactive platform will also hold all project resources, including tutorials, project assessment rubrics, timelines, and calendar.

2. Procure student learning technology for the custom day program

They plan to invest in the latest technology software to provide learning opportunities specific to the interests and abilities of each student, including intervention software for ELA and math skill development, as well as specialized curriculum for electives and enrichment courses. The use of technology in Custom Day classes will provide one source of individualized instruction in and of itself, and it will also free up teachers to work with individuals or smaller groups to provide more individualized content and instruction where that is most appropriate.

3. Provide one-on-one access to technology devices

They will provide portable devices for each student in middle and high school that students will be able to take home.

Goals – criteria b4 & b5 – Access to ongoing and regular feedback

They plan to “dramatically shift the culture of data at Harmony by developing a system that will provide real-time information to users, including students, through customized user-friendly dashboards. The wealth of information in the new data system and the synthesis of that information on the customized dashboard will significantly strengthen teachers’ ability to determine the most appropriate learning recommendations for every student.”

Their approach to Custom Day and the smart use of adaptive technology supports high-need students by providing up to 10

hours per week of highly personalized instruction that will focus on getting and keeping every student on track for college and career. Enabled by the data systems teachers will monitor student progress and place students in the Custom Day class most suited to their specific needs, and within that class, have the information they need to determine the most appropriate strategies for individual students. The instructional frameworks they will develop for these initiatives will include specific strategies for meeting the needs of high-needs students.

In addition, they are forming a partnership with four organizations that will significantly strengthen their capacity to provide the social and emotional supports their students need to be able to succeed. Details of this partnership are in the Competitive Preference Priority section.

Key Activities – Development of data dashboards (this is a related activity in the data systems/dashboard initiative and is described in section C 2)

Students will have anytime access to their learning profiles which will be instantly updated whenever they have taken a quiz, completed a problem set, submitted an assignment and received a grade or comments. Teachers will use this information to determine personalized learning recommendations.

Goal – criteria c – mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students

Key Activity - Training students to use Blackboard, video production, website production, learning programs, and the data dashboards.

Built in to the scope and sequence (described in the goal for criteria a5) will be training and support in the technologies and skills they will use to personalize learning. In addition to formal training, students will have frequent check-ins with their teachers and counselors (as described in the goal for criteria a1) to review progress on their learning plans, making the use of Data Dashboards and the Blackboard platform part of the daily routine. They will identify staff (including the school’s IT coordinator, computer teachers, and teachers of record, who will be trained in the technology) and in some cases student “experts” who can answer questions and provide additional support, particularly around technologies students will use to develop their PBL products. They will also develop resources such as video demonstrations, that students can access anytime from anywhere, to provide additional support as students learn new technologies and skills.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In section C2, Harmony has organized its presentation of its plan around the specific criteria for this section, just as it did for section C1. They have converted the criteria and sub-criteria into a set of goals that the organization will achieve to improve student learning. The rationale for their approach to each goal and its activities and their descriptions of the activities are comprehensive and convincing. This is a high-quality plan for improving learning, teaching, and leaders by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready and to provide all teachers and leaders the support to become highly effective. It answers the question that focuses job-embedded professional development and professional learning communities – “What do their students need teachers and leaders to learn and do to enable students to be ready for, and successful in, college and careers?”

Score = 19 of 20 points. Lack of information on (1) criteria a1, concerning the principal's role in supporting and guiding teacher PLCs and (2) criteria d, concerning specific activities to develop personalized learning plans for teachers and principals to help them move to higher levels of effectiveness.

For each goal they begin by defining "where we are," a brief narrative that describes the programs and approaches that are currently in place to address elements of the criteria and sub criteria. They then present/describe what they intend to do in "where we are headed." In this part of the narrative about a goal they describe an overview of the proposed plan and then indicate specific key activities that will be undertaken to accomplish the plan for that goal and the rationale, with citations from the research literature, for their choices. The key activities in this section are linked primarily to the data systems and data dashboards and to professional development that supports all three initiatives. They specify deliverables in the activity descriptions.

At the end of section C2 they provide for the data systems and data dashboards initiative a GANTT chart timeline of activities over the next five years and a table that describes specific activities and the responsible parties. The activities listed in the table include the key activities described in the narrative as well operational activities that are required to complete the initiative such as establish a design team for the initiative and test products and approaches in a pilot project with a small number of participating schools.

Presented below is a summary of the goals in section C2 and their key activities. These goals address each criteria in section C2. Comments have been inserted for criteria a1 and d.

Goals – criteria a1, a2 & a3 – Educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that (a1) supports their capacity to implement personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs; (a2) adapt content and instruction, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches; and (a3) frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of practice of educators.

Comment: While the new activities listed for this goal focus on criteria a1 and a3, they do not explicitly address a2, teachers developing the capacity to adapt content and instruction apart from using consortium-developed PBL modules and having time to do this. However, they do describe in the “where are they now” subsection under this goal that teachers in biweekly meetings already adapt content and instruction to meet individual student needs, and that this practice will continue

Under criteria a1, there is no discussion of the role of principals in actively guiding and supporting PLCs and ensuring that PLCs receive actionable feedback on their work or of the need for professional development for principals about PLCs and their role.

Key Activities

1. Design and implement professional development training modules

Harmony's lead teachers and cluster and central office instructional leaders will design professional development modules to scaffold teachers' learning of the skills and content needed to successfully implement the new personalized learning initiatives..

The modules will introduce teachers and principals to the following new practices and technologies and build their capacity to implement the following:

1. Data Dashboards and data analysis - using data to inform instructional decisions and adapt instruction in short feedback loops
2. Student assessment and other inputs to student learning profiles, including observational data
3. PBL environments, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques (these will be content-specific sessions and will have course-specific break-outs)
4. Custom Day environments, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques
5. Instructional technology and media skills such as website design (for PBL)
6. Use of PBL online platform

These modules will take a developmental approach to building capacity over time and will tie into the embedded professional development structures described below. They will use the following research-based design principles in the creation of the professional development modules:

- Clearly articulate their vision for personalized learning and how these new practices build on where they have been but also require a foundational shift in practice
 - Articulate their theory of action for how these new practices will lead to achieving their goals of college- and career-readiness for all of their students.
 - Engage teachers in the kinds of activities and experiences they are expecting them to create for the students
 - Provide opportunities for hands-on practice with new technologies
 - Ensure there is sufficient time for planning and reflection
 - Build in time to practice or rehearse new strategies and skills
 - Scaffold learning over time (scope and sequence will plan for teachers to try things in between sessions and then build on their experiences in subsequent sessions)
2. Refocus professional learning communities (PLCs) on instruction and continuous improvement, strengthen the six-week data meetings, institute monthly PBL meetings, and relaunch an enhanced online teacher community platform

Refocus professional learning communities (PLCs) on instruction and continuous improvement

While the PD modules will train teachers on the basics of the new PBL curriculum and assessment rubrics and begin the process of norming around these new assessments, a shift in practice as deep as this will require ongoing support and collaboration through PLCs to deepen teachers' individual and shared understanding and improve instruction and student learning outcomes.

Building on the research about effective PLCs, they will refocus the biweekly grade-level PLC meetings for teachers to review student data, examine student work, have conversations about what constitutes evidence of deeper learning, norm around rubrics and standards, and talk about ways to respond to student work to push students to the next level of depth or rigor in their projects.

In alternate bi-weekly meetings, teachers will do consultancies on particular students to get input from other teachers who know that student in other contexts. Teachers will pick a student who is not progressing as expected in Custom Day or PBL and present that student as a mini-case. The team can then draw on everyone's knowledge of that student to come up with new approaches to try with that student, basing the conversation around the PBL rubric and Custom Day standards. This process will serve as an extra "catch" mechanism to address the needs of students who are not meeting goals. It will also serve to improve instructional practices in Custom Day and PBL, as teachers think about what might work to achieve student outcomes, try new approaches, evaluate the results, and continuously learn from this cycle of inquiry. The guiding principle behind this activity is to shift the focus of conversation to student learning and instruction in response to evidence, using inquiry techniques to develop the best approach to instructional improvement. Grade level or department chairs will facilitate these meetings.

Strengthen the six-week data meetings

Six-week data analysis meetings are already in place, but they will improve these meetings with the availability of more frequent data on student achievement. Specifically, they will use data to identify best-practices and share specific learnings in the case study style described above; this will help spread effective practices across teams of educators. Each of these meetings will re-focus the team on progress towards overall goals of student achievement and what each teacher can do to improve his or her practice and accelerate learning.

Institute monthly PBL team meetings

They will add monthly PBL team meetings to their current practices. PBL teachers will meet after school in cluster-wide teams to discuss successes and challenges with PBL implementation and work together to make adjustments to practice. These meetings will be organized by cluster-level department heads and supported by cluster superintendents.

Re-launch the online teacher community platform

While the current data system (HPMD) has an online platform for teachers to collaborate and share resources across sites, it has not been widely used. As they roll out the PBL and Custom Day initiatives, they will make a push through professional development and communications to (re)introduce teachers to this platform, helping to increase the understanding of how it will support their professional growth. Teachers and PLCs who are doing similar projects can use it to share resources or instructional strategies as well as discuss dilemmas of practice with a broader professional community. The distance of their teachers, spread across the extended geography of the great state of Texas, will be bridged as teachers come together in virtual communities to support each other in implementing new curricula and new ways of teaching.

Goal – criteria a4 – All participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to (a4) improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems, including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

Key Activities

1. Redesign current teacher and principal evaluation systems

To effectively implement personalized learning, they will develop a redesigned teacher and principal evaluation system that (1) serves as both a tool for instructional improvement as well as a means of accountability and (2) meets all of the specifications set forth in the notice.

Key areas of their redesign will include:

- Incorporation of specific practices described in the instructional framework (see (C)(1))
- Formative feedback cycles that support growth toward long-term goals
- The use of multiple measures of student achievement, including standardized assessments and PBL measures of deeper learning, as both a feedback and accountability mechanism

Redesigning the tools itself will mean redesigning the entire evaluation system; this is a complex task with implications across the organization. As they proceed, they will draw from learnings in the field and determine a development approach that includes teachers and principals in the process and once the system is in place, they will prioritize professional development for teachers and principals on this new system (including establishing acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability) and will align induction support of new teachers and principals

2. Provide differentiated professional development and support based on evaluations

They will develop rigorous system of support for teachers and principals aligned to the new evaluation system. With

resources aligned to each articulated competency, and teacher evaluation data feeding into principals' dashboards, a principal will be able to identify needs and access or deploy strategic supports to address specific areas of improvement – just as their LEA leaders with principal evaluation data feeding into their dashboards. Their central office team will be responsible for populating web-based resources aligned to different competencies in the system. They will use their current mentoring system (which pairs teachers with a mentor who provides one-on-one support for growth in a specific area) more strategically to address areas of growth identified through the evaluation system.

Goals – criteria b1, b2 & b3 – All participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements, including (b1) actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests; (b2) high-quality learning resources, including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and the tools to create and share new resources; and (b3) processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

Through the new data system and dashboards, teachers and principals will have real-time assessment data they can use to make on-the-spot decisions and benchmark and summative data, as well as other kinds of student data (PBL, attendance, learning styles or preferences, interests, etc). Harmony will develop dashboards for their data system that will be customized for each end-user group. The dashboards will display real-time information about mastery and progress toward college- and career-ready goals in understandable displays. Data dashboards will become a common reference point for conversations about student progress.

Key Activity - Redesign data system and design dashboards

Teachers will need timely access to a variety of information on student learning to implement their approaches to personalized learning. Their software development team, with four new hires supported by funds from this grant, will improve their current HPMD data system to incorporate new forms of assessment, integrate all existing data systems, and provide real-time data in user-friendly displays through customized dashboards.

The system will integrate all student assessment data as well as additional inputs related to student learning such as student interests, learning styles and preferences. Behavior and health data will also be integrated into the dashboard.

Teachers and students will use the data system to customize a student's individual learning plan. Every student will have accelerated goals for the year, with interim benchmarks. Teachers will use the data system to track student progress toward their goals and adjust instruction as necessary to ensure that a student is on track. The data system will provide teachers with the information they need to make appropriate instructional decisions for each student; they will then be able to leverage technology-based learning and assessment systems to provide one-on-one personalized learning experiences for students, create smaller teacher- student ratios and support rapid feedback cycles with real-time assessment data.

The continuous monitoring enabled by the data system will also serve as an early warning system, allowing teachers and administrators to quickly identify any student who is significantly off-track and may need additional interventions or supports. The system will allow teachers to personalize instruction in response to immediate needs. This redesign will be managed by an Instructional Technology Director to be based at the central office, with the support of a Dashboard Project Manager who will work closely with the end users to develop the dashboard displays

Goal – criteria c1 & c2 – All participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements, including (c1) information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system, that helps school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement; and (c2) training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

Harmony's school leadership teams (SLTs) meet weekly to review data and discuss improvements related to maintaining a strong culture of learning and a focus on equity. Harmony policy ensures that a variety of meetings take place frequently among various levels of staff for purposes of information sharing and coordination across many different layers. Leadership team members are trained on best practices of data analysis so that the leadership team meetings can focus discussions based on data.

With a new teacher evaluation system aligned to personalized learning practices, school leaders will be able to strategically distribute resources based on teacher need. The principal and key members of the leadership team will regularly analyze student data by class and review teacher evaluation information to determine strategic use of resources such as mentoring. Harmony will meet this goal through the professional development activities described above – principal trainings on how to use the dashboard and principal PLCs that meet regularly – and an improved system to measure and support educator effectiveness. PD will be revised to help educators and administrators understand continuous improvement goals as they

relate to building an environment that supports personalized learning and continuing to maintain a strong focus on closing the achievement gap.

Principal and educator trainings will include a deeper understanding of metrics included in the dashboard around suspension and expulsion data, which will sort occurrences by reason code to gain a better understanding of issues related to school climate and culture. These metrics will indicate trends among groups of students, which will provide better data for analyzing the impact of efforts to close the achievement gap.

Key activity: Establish Principal PLCs

They will initiate cluster-level meetings for principals to support each other in improving school-level outcomes. Similar to the teacher PLCs, they will have each participating principal bring a data-based problem of practice to each meeting and then use a consultancy protocol to analyze the problem and develop a solution. Using data from student achievement, school climate and culture, and other indicators, principals will develop their capacity to effectively use data for continuous improvement.

Goals – criteria d – Increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education)

Harmony strives to attract highly-effective teachers and principals to their schools in several ways (described here and further detailed in Appendix A):

- Providing incentives for hard-to-staff subjects (math, science, computer/technology applications, bilingual/ESL, and special education)
- Providing tuition assistance to Harmony alumni to attain a teaching certificate and return to a Harmony school
- Providing financial assistance to Harmony teachers to obtain a Master's of Education degree or principal's certificate and grooming them to become Harmony school leaders
- Supporting the pursuit of subject-based advanced degrees for Harmony school leaders
- Providing ongoing high-quality professional development to current staff

To increase the number of students taught and led by highly-effective teachers and principals, they will pinpoint specific areas of growth for each teacher and principal currently in the system. This will allow them to provide targeted professional development to each staff member to support the implementation of new practices. This professional development approach will enable continuous improvement of their team's talent in serving each of their students on their path to success.

Comment: Lack of information about plans to develop personalized growth plans and dashboards that would enable teachers, principals, and their supervisors to monitor progress, identify learning resources and learning approaches, just as Harmony proposes to do for students.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony has appropriately and convincingly responded to the five sub-criteria in this section and demonstrates that it has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning.

It delineates new and existing personnel who will be involved in leading and implementing project initiatives, describes their responsibilities and to whom they report and provides an organizational chart. As described in the narrative and in the appendices, it already has in place comprehensive policies and infrastructure to support project implementation.

Score = 15 of 15 points.

Key elements from their narrative are summarized below to provide evidence of the structures and policies already in place and how Harmony intends to modify and improve its practices if their project is funded.

As a consortium of 10 Harmony Public Schools LEAs that are all governed by one nonprofit board, Harmony is well structured to provide support for all of its schools to implement its personalized, STEM-focused, college-preparatory approach. Their

structure will also enable their schools to innovate and feed back best practices and key learnings to the larger organization in support of a robust continuous improvement cycle across all levels of the organization. Harmony's practices and policies, as described in section D1 of the proposal, will provide significant support and services to member schools to enable each school to effectively implement this plan. (Consortium MOU is included as Appendix U.)

- a. Organizing the consortium governance structure and LEA central offices to provide support and services to all participating schools.

While HPS is applying as a consortium, Harmony's governance structure more closely resembles that of a traditional school district. Harmony Public Schools is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Harmony's 38 schools are organized into ten regional clusters (LEAs for the purposes of this grant), which are each led by a regional superintendent. The charter for each of the LEAs is held by Harmony Public Schools. Because the governance and management structure across the ten LEAs is the same (same governing board, same executive leadership team), Harmony's 10 LEAs function as one cohesive organization. There are no differentiated roles. Harmony's LEAs are supported by a lean central office, led by the HPS Superintendent of Schools who is accountable to HPS's board, who reports to the Texas Education Agency.

The central office management team consists of a Chief Academic Officer, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer. The central office sets strategy (mission, vision, intended impact), sets growth goals, codifies and shares Harmony's school model, and supports clusters with training and recruitment. Cluster superintendents provide the day-to-day management of cluster of schools, support the sharing of best practices within clusters, coordinate and execute PD, and develop leaders. School principals ensure a high-quality education is delivered within their own schools and across the organization through implementing the school model, sharing best practices, and identifying and supporting innovative teaching methodologies. While principals are responsible for delivering the Harmony model, they have the autonomy to tailor their approach to the unique needs of their students and communities.

Project Staffing

To support implementation of the proposed reforms Harmony will add key personnel to build infrastructure and capacity for the duration of the grant. Some of these new hires will be temporary, such as the Dashboard Project Manager who will build new technology infrastructure, and other positions will be absorbed by the increase in Harmony's per pupil budget as they expand over the next four years:

- Personalized Learning Project Director will manage and supervise grant program (reports to Chief Academic Officer)
- Director of Instructional Technology will oversee and support technology integration in key initiatives (PBL and Custom Day) (reports to Chief Academic Officer)
- Dashboard Project Manager will oversee design and development and management of data dashboards (reports to Chief Operating Officer)
- Software Developers (computer programmers) will develop data dashboards (reports to Dashboard Project Manager)
- Statistician will develop and advance role of data in dashboards, execute data mining for continuous improvement purposes (reports to Project Director)
- Data analysts will analyze data at the school and cluster levels and share with school and cluster leaders (report to cluster superintendent)
- PBL consultants will lead the PBL design team to develop the PBL curriculum and associated professional development (reports to Project Director)

Roles and responsibilities of a number of existing personnel in central office, LEA cluster offices, and at campus offices will be shifted to support this work. In section D1a, Harmony describes the key central office positions, their responsibilities, to whom they report, and how their responsibilities will change if Harmony is awarded a RTTT-D grant. It also provides an organizational chart showing both existing personnel and new hires.

Harmony teachers along with school and cluster leaders were all engaged in the grant planning process that included opportunities to provide input into and feedback on this proposal plan. As with all system-wide grants, all clusters will be responsible for adopting and implementing all aspects of the program.

The Harmony consortium is governed as a 501c3 non-profit according to governance and decision-making structure described in its charter, and as such the leadership team and board of directors have decision authority over all material aspects of operation, including all decision-making related to this program. Harmony has a clearly defined decision-making

process that assigns roles or activities to every party involved in a particular decision.

They utilize the RAPID model, assigning everyone involved one of the following roles: R = recommend, A = agree, P = perform, I = input, and D = decide. Appendix M is an example illustrating how Harmony uses this model; it shows the decision-making roles for 13 critical decisions related to growth across their organization. They will use this same approach to clarify decision-making responsibilities around RTT-D grant implementation.

The consortium's procedures for managing funds received under this grant. Because HPS is not organized like a traditional consortium, but rather like a large district with the central office functioning much like a district's, all grant funds will go directly to the lead LEA, Harmony Science Academy, where they will be managed by Harmony's finance department and disbursed through HSA's account. Harmony Public Schools fully complies with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and standards for financial management systems. Harmony has developed a lean financial engine with tight fiscal management, resulting in financially sustainable schools.

HPS has a standardized procurement process; all clusters abide by the process described here. The primary objective of HPS's purchasing system is providing quality materials, supplies, and equipment in the right quantity in a timely, cost-effective, and consistent manner in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Once goods or services are identified, the procurement of these goods or services is monitored in the finance department at the central office. The campus principal/department director is responsible for all expenditures made from their budgets. For large contracts, they will put an RFP out or otherwise open competition. (For more details, see their governance policies in Appendix N).

- b. Providing school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets.

HPS's school-level leadership has both the necessary support and flexibility within the Harmony system to successfully facilitate personalized learning. While every school is responsible for implementing the Harmony model, their model recognizes that many decisions are best made at the school level in order to most appropriately serve the particular students of a school community. School Leadership Teams (SLTs) have the autonomy and flexibility to set school schedules and calendars and Harmony encourages innovation, allowing schools to experiment with various instructional and structural ideas as they work to identify the best approaches for their students (please see Appendix O for more details about their governing policies and infrastructure). The school leadership team is composed of the principal, APs, grade level or department chairs, and at high schools, the high school counselor.

School personnel decisions are made at the school level, with principals having the autonomy to hire, retain, and fire teachers and assistant principals. The central office supports schools in finding the best-qualified personnel by providing job descriptions that articulate roles and responsibilities, as well as interview guides, to which schools can add local criteria. Hiring decisions are forwarded to the central office for final approval to ensure that proper policies have been followed. Schools have complete autonomy in structuring their department or grade-level staffing, including adding and changing roles.

School-level budgets are prepared by principals annually based on the revenue estimates from the Texas Education Agency. The budgets are approved by the central office and then become final and adopted by the Board of Directors. Principals may request budget amendments throughout the year, approved by the central office finance department to ensure compliance with the adopted fiscal policies and then adopted by the Board.

- c. Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic.

As a network of college preparatory schools, one of Harmony's primary goals is graduating students who enter college without the need for remediation. Toward this end, their overall approach embraces personalized learning that focused on mastery of content and skills, including critical thinking and inquiry.

Harmony considers a course completed and credit is awarded if the student has demonstrated achievement by meeting the standard requirements of the course, including demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter, regardless of the time the student has received instruction in the course or the grade level at which proficiency was attained. They have a system in place to move students up a grade or award credit using the Credit by Examination test developed by the University of Texas at Austin. Harmony students also participate in dual-credit courses offered by community colleges.

- d. Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.

Teachers at Harmony already use a variety of types of assessment, drawing on different modalities, to gauge student mastery of standards. Formal assessments are given on an annual, quarterly, and weekly basis and informal assessments

are given on a weekly and daily basis in all curriculum areas.

This grant will enable Harmony to develop standards-aligned rubrics for cross-disciplinary, multi-sensory projects that will integrate three core subject areas: a STEM subject of choice, social studies, and English language arts. Additionally, the implementation of a Custom Day will provide structures for students to advance at varying paces both in small groups focused on skills mastery, as well as with the support of technology tools that will facilitate mastery-based advancement targeted to individual skills gaps and at each individual's pace.

These new initiatives will build on the strong foundation of mastery-based instruction at Harmony, which to date, includes the following opportunities to demonstrate mastery:

- Locally-prepared benchmark assessments are given at the end of every six-week grading period in reading, writing, math, science and social studies. These take the form of short quizzes that mirror standardized criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests. STAR Reading and STAR Math tests, which include skills-based test items, are taken in computer classes every six weeks. They deliver reliable, automatically-scored and actionable intervention data with in-depth reports that support progress monitoring and standards benchmarking.
- Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math multiple choice assessments are given daily and provide immediate feedback on understanding directly to the student and teacher. Accelerated Math creates a 'buddy system' using objective mastery charts in the classroom, helping students to "own" their own progress.
- Teachers also engage students in authentic activities specific to the subject matter – persuasive essays, science fair project which require oral and written demonstrations of mastery, experiments, and building or designing. These assignments require students to demonstrate what they know and can do in authentic ways.
- During instruction, teachers are continuously checking for understanding in multiple ways, including with the use of hand-held clickers. Every student has a device that provides real-time data to a reporting dashboard.

While Harmony has a strong mastery-based culture, the three initiatives proposed in this grant all respond to the need for more frequent and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery, and the need for this to happen at varying times, as appropriate to each student's particular learning plan.

- e. Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

Harmony is committed to ensuring all students, including those with disabilities and English learners, have access to the resources and practices of the school.

Meeting the needs of students with disabilities

Harmony hires its own staff to provide an array of special education services so that children with a wide variety of learning disabilities and different education plans can be placed in a program that works for them. These services, which comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (as amended in 2004), include the following:

1. General Education Classroom Placement, in which the needs of the students with learning disabilities are met in a general education classroom with no additional outside help. The special education teacher monitors the performance of the student periodically and supports the general education teacher outside the classroom.
2. Resource Room Placement, in which students spend most of their day in general education classrooms but then participate in resource room programs for the other part of the day. The Resource Room includes a small number of students working with a special education teacher on reading, language, and math.
3. Special Education Placement with Part Time Inclusion, in which special education students are taught by a special education teacher for most of the day but join their peers for subjects such as physical education, art, and music. (Appendix P, an excerpt from their Education Model, describes their special education policies in more detail.)

Meeting the needs of English learners

Harmony Public Schools is committed to meeting the needs of students who are identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and to providing an equal educational opportunity by providing bilingual education (BE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. These programs emphasize the mastery of basic English language skills that enable students to participate effectively in the regular program and to master the essential knowledge and skills of the state curriculum. Educational programs for English language learners (ELLs) are based on sound theory, ensure that ELLs learn English in a timely manner, learn the same content as their English speaking peers, and have equal access to the full range of the school's academic programs and content (Appendix Q, an excerpt from their Education Model, describes their ELL

program in more detail).

The three initiatives proposed here are each designed to help teachers adapt their instruction to meet the specific individual needs of every student. This emphasis on personalization will be particularly beneficial for their English learners and students with disabilities, as teachers will improve their ability to assess and address the specific needs of every student.

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

10

9

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony has appropriately and convincingly responded to the four sub-criteria in this section and demonstrates that it has the LEA and school infrastructure that support personalized learning.

Since improving data systems and creating customized data dashboards for students, parents, and educators is one of the three initiatives in this project, Harmony presented its credible, high-quality plan for enhancing data systems with goals, activities, deliverables, and timelines in section C2 and described staffing in section D1. Therefore, they DO meet the requirement in D2 for providing a high quality plan.

In the narrative for section D2, they describe the systems and supports already provided to students, parents, and educators and explain clearly what new systems and supports will be developed during the project to enhance its support for personalized learning.

Score = 9 of 10 points. Lack of information in response to sub-criteria a about what they will do for students' families who do not have Internet access or computers at home.

Key elements from their narrative are summarized below to provide evidence of the LEA and school infrastructure already in place and how Harmony intends to modify and improve its infrastructure if their project is funded.

- a. Ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning), regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal.

Students: Key to Harmony's record of success is its history of ensuring all Harmony students have full access to content, tools, and other learning resources. Harmony believes that all students can achieve at high levels if provided with the combination of high-quality tools and resources and strong instruction. Their decade-long record of closing the achievement gap is evidence of this commitment.

The plan they are proposing brings with it the introduction of new content, tools, and learning resources, described in detail in section (C). As new initiatives are rolled out to students, the introduction of new content, tools, and resources will be carefully scaffolded by classroom teachers and others (see next section for technical support).

The design of the technology-enabled cross-disciplinary project assumes students will work on this project both in and outside of school. Students will need access to both the devices and the connectivity to enable this. Because a majority of their students come from low-income families, their plan includes providing one-to-one devices for all of their middle and high school students. An online platform such as Blackboard will provide an interactive interface for students where they can access tools and resources, post their current work, track their progress, and interact with teachers and other students around their projects. Housing project tools and resources on such a platform will ensure that students can access what they need from wherever they are – school, home, anywhere with an internet connection.

Parents: Harmony's vision is that all parents know exactly how their child is progressing toward his or her goals and understands what specifically they can do to support their child in reaching his or her goals. Currently, there is extensive outreach to parents through a variety of avenues (described in section D2). Building on this strong infrastructure, Harmony will ensure parents have access to a data dashboard specifically designed for parent users, as well as the online platform that will host the students' PBL projects. The new data dashboard will provide parents access to a broader set of inputs than is currently available, including real-time assessment data, actual work products and assignments, and non-academic information such as attendance. This new dashboard will help keep parents informed and empowered to interact with and support their child in substantive ways on a daily basis. Harmony will enrich their existing database to provide more comprehensive information, including real-time data, and more seamless customized reporting anytime and anywhere.

Educators: All teachers are currently supplied with a laptop computer, which will ensure they have anytime access to the content, tools, and other learning resources associated with this reform, such as the data dashboards and the PBL platform. To ensure every teacher knows how to use these resources, they will provide extensive professional development for teachers around content, assessment tools, data analysis, as described in (C)(2).

Comment: The consortium does not describe what they will do for students' families who do not have Internet access or computers at home.

- b. Ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning) have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies.

Participating students: The scope and sequence of the PBL projects will map out a scaffolded instructional plan for teaching students the various tools and skills they will use throughout the year for their PBL projects, including: use of the interactive web platform that will host the PBL projects, video production, and web site production. Students will also receive training in how to use their personalized data dashboard. Because the data dashboard and online PBL platform will be used daily, including during class, teachers or expert students will be able to provide one-on-one support to any student who is struggling early on in learning the new systems. To ensure students can access support anytime from anywhere, Harmony will also prepare online tutorials that provide guidance on all of the new technology (software, website navigation, dashboards, etc.) and will provide links from those sites to the tutorials, which will be hosted on the Harmony website.

Parents:

Harmony currently provides written instructions as well as in-person trainings to ensure all parents know how to use the school's database and how to interpret the data available there. The new dashboards will not only provide more data, but all data will be more accessible because the dashboards will present it in formats tailored to the parents. They will expand their current technical support for parents to include training on how to use the new data dashboards. The trainings will be available in multiple formats, including online video demonstrations that parents can watch anytime, as well as in-person workshops offered several times a year.

Educators: Harmony currently provides extensive professional development for teachers in data collection, analysis, and using data to inform instructional planning. A host of new tools and resources will be developed that teachers will need to use for their own instructional purposes and teach students to use. These new tools and resources include assessments and assessment tools and various web-based technologies that will be incorporated into the PBL projects. They will develop a skill scope and sequence for teacher professional development around all of these tools, described in (C)(2), and will include initial and follow-up training modules. Additional support will include Campus-based IT support staff will also provide support to teachers.

- c) & d) Exporting information in an open data format and using interoperable data systems

As described in (B)(1)(c), Harmony uses a performance management database, HPMD, developed in-house, which allows parents and students to export their information in an open format and use it in other systems. As one of the three focus areas of this proposal, Harmony plans to enhance this database to make it even more comprehensive and robust, and to include a dashboard that will integrate student data from all existing systems, including their college and career preparation system. All of this data is and will continue to be downloadable in open format.

All of Harmony's data systems are and will continue to be interoperable; data can flow from one system to another and is produced in a non-proprietary, open format. Student information databases include the Harmony Performance Management Database (HPMD), which is used for student records and some of Harmony's academic progress assessments (HPMD is described in detail in section (B)(1)(c); Eduphoria, for state summative tests and benchmark assessments; and Naviance, a tool for college and career planning. With funds from this grant, they will integrate the data from these three systems into one dashboard, and will also add the additional assessments described in this proposal. Harmony uses the JR3 finance database for all financial data, including personnel salaries and budget, and a HR Database is used for personnel data. Both of these platforms will feed into the proposed upgraded data system and dashboards, which will enable administrators to link teacher evaluations with student outcomes.

Harmony is already using the interoperability of their data systems to report regularly to Texas Education Agency and other local, state, and federal agencies. As a Texas public school, they perform three PEIMS submissions to Texas Education Agency in a year. The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) encompasses all data requested and received by TEA about public education, including student demographic and academic performance, personnel, financial, and organizational information.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium fully and appropriately responded in this section to all three criteria for the continuous improvement process, (1) provide timely and regular feedback on progress towards project goals; (2) opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant; and (3) strategy to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by RTTT-D, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.

Score = 15 of 15 points.

Key elements from their narrative are summarized below to provide evidence of the continuous improvement process already in place and how Harmony intends to modify and improve its process if their project is funded.

- a. Provide timely and regular feedback on progress towards project goals.
- b. Provide opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

Their process to improve the effectiveness of the activities supported by this grant will build off of several existing continuous improvement processes embedded in their culture. This work starts in every classroom and every school across the Harmony network.

To achieve Harmony Public Schools' goals of implementing high quality personalized learning initiatives that improve student outcomes and close the achievement gap, it is critical for educators and administrators to receive timely, relevant feedback on program and student outcomes to enable them to make adjustments and improve their programs on a continuous basis. Harmony has already established a system for capturing, tracking, monitoring, and analyzing individual, aggregate, and disaggregated student outcome data and examining these data to improve their programming on a periodic basis. However, their current database platform does not provide user-friendly or frequent feedback. With funding from Race to the Top, they will take the following steps to increase accessibility, usability, and timeliness of their data:

- Integrated data and assessment system: Create a more robust data and assessment system with more relevant statistical analysis that will shorten 6-week assessment cycles to a continuous cycle of learning, assessment, and remediation at the classroom level, and support rigorous school- and system-wide continuous improvement efforts.
- User-friendly, custom dashboards: Identify end users of outcome data and engage end users in process design to ensure development of relevant, user-friendly data dashboards.
- Support for deeper analyses: Build dedicated capacity (statistician and cluster level data analysis) to assist all educators with classroom, school and system-level data analysis of leading indicators, outcomes data, social and emotional indicators, and quality of implementation measures. At the same time provide substantial training for all end users on how to use dashboards to track and support improved student achievement.

With a strong data system in place, they will improve the functionality of their existing structures to enact a highly-responsive, multi-layered system for continuous improvement that functions at and across every key level, from the classroom to school to cluster to central office. They will leverage their existing system of regular, layered instructional decision-making meetings that ensure accountability from the classroom to the Superintendent's office. In these weekly or monthly meetings, participants will discuss custom reports generated by the dashboards and data analysts. They will be able to measure and monitor progress towards their goals and identify key factors in successes and challenges. Armed with timely, robust data, they will spot these areas of success or concern early on in the process and quickly adjust their approach when warranted.

System-wide: Their Superintendent and central office leadership will communicate their goals and the overall direction for this work and ensure programmatic coherence across all levels of the organization. Central office leadership and cluster superintendents will meet monthly to monitor progress; they will analyze data on student achievement at the school and cluster level (with support of the statistician) and assess progress against goals. Through this process they will identify best practices and ensure those are captured and shared across the organization and will also make mid-course adjustments as necessary. The central office will convene a stakeholder meeting twice a year so stakeholders can review progress and provide input into the approach (described in (E)(2)).

Cluster level: Cluster superintendents will hold monthly continuous improvement meetings with cluster level leadership and principals. Data analysts will support this team in analyzing data on the improvement efforts, including data on student achievement, behavior, and teacher practice to identify successes and schools, grades, or classrooms in need of support or intervention. This group will ensure that schools are getting the support they need from instructional leaders and are effectively integrating the social emotional and behavioral resources from the new partnership (described in section (X)).

School level: Schools will engage their School Leadership Teams (SLTs) as a primary engine for driving and supporting

continuous improvement. This team will hold the responsibility, under the leadership of the principal, to set school goals and make specific school-level plans for carrying out the vision and reforms proposed here. SLTs will track all relevant data to monitor implementation and success of the reform (e.g., leading indicators, outcomes data, benchmark data, and social emotional indicators), and make mid-course adjustments as necessary to ensure the school is on track to meeting goals. Grade level and department chairs will be responsible for ensuring that specific plans get carried out through grade level or department teams.

Harmony's SLTs already and will continue to meet weekly to review data and discuss improvements related to maintaining a strong culture of learning and a focus on equity. With the new data system and support of data analysts at the cluster level, SLTs will have the ability to monitor more relevant and timely data and to disaggregate it by various subgroups to ensure all groups' needs are being met and identify gaps in implementation. SLTs will also drive organizational learning by identifying best practices and ensuring those are shared within the school through staff meetings and grade level/department meetings and throughout the network via the layered cluster and central office meetings. and identifying what is not best practice, and adjust their strategies and plans to improve outcomes (biweekly PLCs described further in section (C)(2)(a)(i, ii, iii).

Teams will receive support to improve their capacity to do this work effectively from their chairs, who will lead the meetings using agendas and protocols they will develop to support this process. Teams will also receive support from school leaders and cluster-level instructional coaches, who will work with teams and coach chairs as necessary to provide additional support; data analysts will also support teams by preparing data reports.

Harmony provides a table in section (E)(1)(a) of the narrative that delineates the Instructional Decision-Making and Continuous Improvement Meetings related to RTT-D. It names each meeting and indicates its frequency (weekly, biweekly, monthly), participants, the reports to be discussed, and the intended focus of the meetings.

- c. The strategy to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by RTTT-D, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.

According to the table in section (E)(1)(a) of the narrative, Instructional Decision-Making and Continuous Improvement Meetings related to RTT-D. one of the topics at the weekly Cluster Meetings of principals and cluster superintendents will be "feedback on the efficacy of investments." This means they will be measuring and monitoring investments and is consistent with the statement in section (B)(2) that Harmony will have access to actual expenditure data through the enhanced data system implemented under the grant. Leaders at every level will have access actual expenditure data.

They do state in section (E)(4) that they will share this return on investment information "internally and use the information in administrative-level meetings to continue to inform the allocation of resources to continue or scale up investments with a strong return."

In section (B)(2) of its narrative, Harmony indicates that it will make information about investments public.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The consortium has described a clear and credible, but traditional, plan for ongoing communication with external and internal stakeholders that builds on existing structures but the plan does not indicate whether they plan to use social media to engage stakeholders and whether they have a process to check for stakeholder understanding of the communications and satisfaction with the quality of communication. Score = 4 of 5 points.

Key elements from their narrative are summarized below to provide evidence of communication and engagement already in place and how Harmony intends to modify and improve its communication and engagement if their project is funded.

To communicate with and engage internal stakeholders, Harmony will take advantage of their existing structure of regular internal weekly, biweekly, and monthly meetings, as outlined in the table, Instructional Decision-Making and Continuous Improvement Meetings related to RTT-D, presented in section (E)(1)(a) of the narrative. With the added support of the data analyst, these meetings will ensure that information is shared throughout their system frequently and thoroughly. Participants from all layers of the organization will be able to continuously assess needs, share best practices, provide feedback, participate in decision-making, and make necessary adjustments to initiatives specifically related to personalized learning. Their meeting structure is designed to guarantee a constant and timely flow of information between the classroom and the central office and to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment, support, guidance, and coordination.

They will share evidence of success or progress of the reform initiatives with parents and students to keep them informed and engaged in the process. They will communicate with parents through PTOs, school-wide events such as Back to School Night, and other school-level communication vehicles such as newsletters and information nights. They also have parent

representatives on the Site Based Decision Making Committees. They will share this evidence with students twice a year through homeroom teachers and seek student input at these intervals. Externally, Harmony will share aggregated student performance data publicly on their website, in annual reports, and all system-level reporting documents. They will also convene external stakeholders (e.g., universities, community organizations, and alumni organizations) twice annually to share evidence of progress and seek input. They hold two events that are attended by external stakeholders, so they will leverage these forums to engage them specifically in this work. At their annual STEM conference, they will organize a panel specifically on their Race to the Top – District work and invite external stakeholder representatives to participate. They will also convene external stakeholders at their annual school science fairs.

Comment: This is a traditional approach to communication and engagement. They do not indicate whether they plan to use social media to engage stakeholders and whether they have a process to check for stakeholder understanding of the communications and satisfaction with the quality of communication.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony has provided 13 performance measures that address all students in grades 6-12, the target population for this project. The proposed measures assess college and career readiness in multiple areas and include the required measures plus indicators of college/career readiness, performance in project-based learning, participation and performance in science competitions, PSAT, SAT, and AP, and performance on social emotional measures (attendance and discipline). The state tests, TAKS and STAAR, are counted as one measure but include assessments in reading, math, science, social studies in grades 6-11 plus EOC high school tests in Algebra 1, Biology, and World Geography.

They present rationales for all of the applicant-proposed measures and a number of these rationales include citations to the research literature. They also provide a thoughtful consideration of ways to improve the choice of measures over time and indicate that their enhanced data system, a key initiative in the project, will enable them to add new measures as the project progresses.

The targets are ambitious, but achievable, with end of project targets between 91% and 100% and close or reduce achievement gaps for student subgroups to less than 10%.

Score = 5 of 5 points.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony will measure the quality of their investments funded by Race To The Top by determining each year the increase in student performance (as described in (E)(3)) resulting from these investments (with the support of the data analysts and administrative discussions). Then, taking the dollars spent on these investments, they will calculate an increase in student performance per dollar spent metric, or, in other words, their Return on Investment. They will then share this information internally and use the information in administrative-level meetings to continue to inform the allocation of resources to continue or scale up investments with a strong return. Score = 4 of 5 points.

Comment: It is not clear that using the performance measures described in section E3 will allow Harmony to measure the Return on Investment for all of the areas of their investments of RTTT-D funds, such as the success of the enhanced data systems and dashboards in terms of usage and satisfaction or the impact of investments in professional development on teacher and principal effectiveness.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Harmony budget is within the required range, appropriately identifies all of the funds that will support the project, both RTTT-D funds and state funds through their per pupil allocations, and identifies the funds that will be used for one-time investments (equipment, technology and data system upgrades, development costs for rubrics and new personnel evaluation system) versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs. One time costs are 49% of the total budget. They provide an explanation of the line item costs and link these costs to proposed activities.

The 4 project budgets are linked to the 3 main elements in the design for the consortium’s proposal – Project Based Learning, Custom Day, and Data Systems and Dashboards – plus the Social and Emotional Learning initiative that is described under the Competitive Preference Priority.

Costs for tech devices (e.g., tablets or notebooks) for participating students and teachers are budgeted as supplies @ \$400/device and equally apportioned across the three main budgets (PBL, Custom Day, Dashboards). The number of participating teachers and students will increase from year to year.

The key personnel budgeted includes: Project director to oversee the development and implementation of grant projects, Instructional technology director to oversee the technology investments, Dashboard project manager to oversee the development and improvement of dashboards, Statistician to develop algorithms in dashboards for data mining purposes, Software developers (3 in year 1-2, then 1) to develop computer programming for dashboards, and Cluster data analysts (9) to perform data analysis for individual classrooms in schools. Personnel costs for full-time hires are allocated across the three core projects based on estimated level of effort for each project. In addition to the personnel above, the budget also includes partial time and effort of their current leadership team in developing the curriculum and assessment for the new initiatives, which is funded in-kind from State funds and stipends for lead teachers to develop PBL units and Custom Day programs.

The fourth project budget is for Social Emotional Learning. In order to effectively personalize learning for all of their students, Harmony has established a partnership with five support organizations to ensure that the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all of their students are met. This partnership will integrate needed services and supports for their students and their families into their schools and increase their staff’s capacity to personalize support to meet all students’ needs. Partner organizations include: Committee for Children, DePelchin Children’s Center, Partners Resource Network, Anti-Defamation League, and INROADS. The budget is \$957,400 in professional service fees over 4 years. This budget is included in the total budget.

There is also an optional budget presented. Harmony Public Schools (HPS) proposes to establish a partnership with North Forest ISD, a low performing district in the Houston metro area, to assist NFISD to implement technology-enabled Project Based Learning (PBL) in science classes at North Forest High School (NFHS) and provide professional development and mentorship to science teachers at NFHS.

All line items appear to be reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant’s proposal.

Score = 10 of 10 points

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony has a credible and achievable plan to sustain the project’s goals after the grant funding period by using a combination of careful investments during the grant term and State funding after the grant ends combined with other fundraising efforts as needed. The letters of support in the Appendix indicate that Harmony has the strong support of a number of state legislators. This base should be helpful in securing continued state support after the grant ends.

Harmony’s one-time technology investments (explained in (F)(1)) will lay the groundwork for a sustainable program. Their existing budget, both during and after the grant term, accounts for funds needed to fine-tune the IT infrastructure annually.

Harmony successfully grew from 7,750 to 24,000 students in the last four years. The continued expansion of the Harmony system over the next seven years by 8,000 students will generate additional revenue from the State of Texas which will enable Harmony to continue the initiatives adopted under this program. The number of new personnel hired with grant funds will decrease during the course of the grant and the remaining personnel will be captured in the central administration budget.

Harmony’s biggest investments under this grant are for technology. During the four-year grant period, they will establish a fund for maintaining and updating their hardware, software, and classroom technology supplies using the funds they would have spent on technology without this grant (\$30 per student per year for every year of the grant period). At the end of 4 years, this fund will have accumulated \$2.1 million, which will be utilized to upgrade the technology after the grants funds expire.

Although Harmony projects that the majority of funds for supporting the program’s continuation will come from state per-pupil funding as Harmony expands, they are still planning to launch a systematic fundraising effort specifically for the continuation of this program. Harmony has a proven record of success in securing additional financial resources for key initiatives.

Harmony’s T-STEM initiative has been funded by public and private entities since 2006 and has added over \$14M of funding to the system.

One of the requirements of this section is that the applicant provide a high-quality plan for sustainability after funding ends that includes goals, activities, rationale, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible. The consortium did provide a credible plan with rationale and proposed funding sources, but it did not provide the high-quality plan elements of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and parties responsible.

Score = 8 of 10 points. They did not provide all the required elements of a high-quality plan.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Harmony Public Schools presents a strong proposal for a Competitive Priority grant to fund establish partnerships to integrate needed services and supports for their students and their families into all of their middle and high schools and to increase their staff's capacity to personalize support to meet all students' needs. They have proposed addressing 7 educational results and 2 family and community results. All 9 results support the goals of the whole project to increase the number of college and career ready students and increased equity.

Harmony's responses to criteria 1-6 are well defined and complement and support the goals of their main RTTT-D plan, as described below. They describe goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties. They included a budget for this Competitive Preference Priority within their overall budget as a fourth project component. All line items in the social emotional learning project budget appear to be reasonable and sufficient to support the implementation of this CPP proposal.

Score = 10 of 10.

The numbered sections below represent the six criteria for the Competitive Preference Priority. The text in italics below indicates how partnership work against the 5 criteria will support the main RTTT-D proposal outcomes.

1. Provide a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organizations to support the plan described in Absolute Priority 1.

Harmony is proposing a Competitive Preference Priority to fund establish partnerships to integrate needed services and supports for their students and their families into all of their middle and high schools and to increase their staff's capacity to personalize support to meet all students' needs. The key supports these partnerships will provide are: 1) character education, 2) counseling and crisis support, 3) support for students with disabilities, 4) cyber-bullying and bullying prevention, and 5) leadership training. The five partnerships are with the Committee for Children -- Second Step Prevention Curriculum, DePelchin Children's Center, Partners Resource Network, Anti-Defamation League, and INROADS.

These supports from the partnership organizations will help high-needs students stay in school and meet Harmony's expectations for 100% graduating college and career ready with strong academic performance.

Currently, Harmony's Student Health and Safety Department works closely with their schools' Deans of Discipline to provide student support services. This new partnership team will build on that existing structure and add cluster superintendents, principals, and Deans of Students to the partnership team, which will be led by the Director of Student Health and Safety and include at least one member from their partner organizations. A mental health professional from DePelchin will participate in their cluster-level Deans meetings.

2. Identify not more than 10 population-level desired results for students in the LEA or consortium of LEAs that align with and support the applicant's broader Race to the Top – District proposal. These results must include both educational results and other education outcomes and family and community supports results.

For the Competitive Preference Priority Harmony proposes nine intended results listed below. These results ensure that each student will be encouraged to take care of themselves and also foster a sense of care for those around them while working towards academic achievement. These results directly support attaining the pathway to success for the RTTT-D project for these high-need students in grades 6-12.

Harmony believes that achieving these outcome results will help students stay in school, increase ownership in their own learning, increase motivation to graduate and enroll in college, decrease risky behaviors in and out of school, and increase parent support and motivation to help their children be successful.

Educational Results

1. All students will attend school regularly
2. Decreased disciplinary actions as demonstrated by decreased suspension rates and increased positive social behavior
3. Increased knowledge about substance abuse and prevention, bullying, and challenges of young parenthood
4. Increased academic achievement
5. Foster school bonding
6. Increased leadership skills
7. Students' increased awareness about own health and welfare

Family and community

8. Increased awareness in parents about substance abuse and prevention, bullying, and parenting skills
9. Increased emotional support, and individual assistance to parents with children with disabilities

3. Describe how the partnership would –

- a. Track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA or consortium and at the student level for the participating students.
- b. Use these data to target resources to improve results for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges
- c. Develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and communities in the LEA or consortium over time.
- d. Improve results over time

Harmony's ability to accomplish these tasks through the established partnerships as part of its Competitive Preference Priority will strengthen its main proposal in several ways. These tasks will make the dashboards more informative and useful by expanding the number of leading indicators for both academic performance and social-emotional well-being. These tasks will expand the range of support services available to help students get on track and stay on track. These tasks will help prepare the stage for scaling up the project to encompass all of Harmony's elementary schools.

Harmony's responses for each of the sub-criteria are described below.

- a. Track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA or consortium and at the student level for the participating students.

As part of their enhanced Data Systems and Dashboards initiative, they will create custom dashboards to track key measures for each intended result at the individual, school, and system levels by subgroup and other relevant aggregate groupings. These dashboards will report vital information from the indicators plus available school and community supports, and data from surveys measuring parent/guardian knowledge. They will work with their partner organizations to identify the best surveys for their purposes and they will implement them system wide. A table in the proposal clearly describes for each intended result, the proposed indicators for each result, and the tracking methodology for each indicator proposed.

- b. Use these data to target resources to improve results for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges

Their partnership team will monitor some results on a biweekly basis (attendance and behavior) and others as frequently as the measure is updated. School and cluster level team members will be responsible for sharing this data with their respective school and cluster leadership teams and ensuring appropriate action is taken. They will report to the Director of Student Health and Safety biweekly and meet as a team monthly to ensure implementation is meeting the needs of their students and identify where they are having the most impact and where they need to add resources and/or make changes. Students identified on the dashboard as off track will be flagged to receive support from the appropriate instructional team member at their specific school on a regular basis, with the partnerships team keeping an overall view of what support students are receiving and timeliness of delivery. Cluster superintendents will ensure programmatic and strategic coherence between schools, clusters, and the central office.

- c. Develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and communities in the LEA or consortium over time.

Their strategy for scaling their partnership model beyond the participating students is to study their results, make necessary adjustments, and assess what additional and/or different needs exist at the elementary school level. Many of the organizations in this partnership support the social-emotional and behavioral needs of younger children and

their families. This continuity will provide a strong foundation for rolling out this partnership in their elementary schools. For elementary school level needs not addressed by their current partner organizations, they will identify and vet organizations that provide these supports. In particular, they will assess these potential partners' records of success at working with elementary schools and their willingness to train their educators. They will archive trainings and share lessons learned on their website.

d. Improve results over time.

The partnership team will monitor indicators on the dashboard and the Deans will conduct regular case studies aimed at distilling promising practices as a part of Harmony's approach to continuous improvement. Cluster teams will monitor progress of each school on a biweekly basis and make mid-course corrections as needed. Specifically, the cluster level teams will track operation and efficacy of the system by measuring the percent of students who are actively receiving services and assessing improvement in student academic and behavioral outcomes. The Director of Student Health and Safety will conduct an annual assessment of progress toward goals and work with the partnership team to determine adjustments to the system. As one measure of overall progress, they will conduct an annual survey on school climate such as the National School Climate Center Comprehensive School Climate Inventory. School principals will be responsible for administering the survey and, along with the Director of Student Health and Safety and the partnership team, evaluating the results and determining adjustments based on results.

4. Describe how the partnership would, within participating schools, integrate education and other services for participating students.

Harmony's Director of Student Health and Safety in cooperation with the principals, Deans of Students, and Deans of Discipline at their schools, will oversee the partnership and ensure that services are integrated into the schools and that they are building staff capacity to provide social-emotional support to all students.

This will definitely enhance teachers' effectiveness in accomplishing the main project goals for all students.

The partnership team has layers of support at the school, cluster, and central office. School level members will be responsible for working with their School Leadership Teams to ensure that partnership resources are integrated effectively into the school and serving the broader personalized learning initiatives. SLTs will monitor implementation and ensure appropriate policies and practices are in place to enable teachers to support a positive culture for all students, including providing educators with training and web-based resources that help them understand how the social-emotional supports are useful for specific student needs..

5. Describe how the partnership and LEA or consortium would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to –

- a. Assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership;
- b. Identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant.
- c. Create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students (as defined in this notice) and support improved results;
- d. Engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs.
- e. Routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems

Harmony's ability to accomplish these tasks to build the capacity of HPS and partnership staff through the established partnerships as part of its Competitive Preference Priority will strengthen its main proposal in several ways. These tasks will strengthen the engagement of parents and community with the schools and with the students. These tasks will further enhance the effectiveness of teachers, leaders and support staff which will enable HPS to achieve its project goal of 100% of teachers and leaders are rated highly effective by 2017. These tasks will create a motivated and highly effective cadre of HPS and partnership staff who can lead scaling up the project to encompass all of Harmony's elementary schools.

Harmony's responses for each of the sub-criteria are described below.

- a. Assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership;

Drawing on the expertise of their partners, they will conduct an annual survey of middle and high school students to

determine the scope of social, emotional, and behavioral services to be provided. The survey will measure wellbeing and safety of students at home and at school. The results of the survey along with indicators such as tardiness, attendance, and suspensions will be used to determine a composite score of student wellbeing. Students whose scores are below desired levels will be flagged and the partnership team will follow up appropriately with supports or referrals. They are currently in discussion with their partners to determine the best possible survey tools for their purposes.

- b. Identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the applicant.

Currently their teachers and administrators are trained in identifying early warning signs in high-risk student behavior. They have a discipline points program that supports teachers in identifying problems at home or at school. Every school has a lockbox at the front office where students can submit information anonymously about themselves or another student. Deans of Students meet regularly in cluster-level teams, organized as professional learning communities, to discuss best practices around various incidents that arise, what works, and what doesn't. Each time they meet, they take a specific incident and use it as a case study.

They are currently in the process of researching surveys to use as needs assessment on school climate. They will survey students, staff, and parents. They are currently exploring a number of surveys that have already been vetted by American Institutes for Research, such as Perceived School Experiences Scale (for students), Pride Teaching Environment Survey (for teachers), and National School Climate Center Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (students, staff, parents, community members). They will draw on their partners' expertise to help them identify a survey that is most appropriate for their needs

- c. Create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students (as defined in this notice) and support improved results;

Their partnership team will assess the efficacy of their current decision-making process and infrastructure for providing high-quality interventions for their students related to social-emotional support. While their current structure and processes follow the model they have used successfully at Harmony, these new partnerships may require the configuration of teams to be adjusted to ensure a rigorous delivery system and integration into school programs. The team will conduct a preliminary review at the three-month mark to assess efficacy and make mid-course adjustments to processes and infrastructure.

- d. Engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs.

They will engage parents and families at several levels. On a case level, parents will participate in the process of determining the best course of action for support for their child and/or family and will participate in regular meetings assessing progress and making adjustments to the plan (frequency may vary depending on the severity of student needs). They will also assess progress and seek input from parents and families in an annual survey. Site Based Decision Making Committees, which include parent membership, will participate in the annual review of the partnership. They will promote extensive outreach about programs at all family engagement opportunities, as well as by sending notices home and discussing relevant resources at parent- teacher conferences. Special education teachers and cluster coordinators will reach out to parents of students with disabilities through all existing channels about the resources provided through PRN.

- e. Routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems

The partnership team will draw on the expertise of partner organizations to support SLTs and cluster superintendents in using the data available via the new dashboards to regularly assess progress towards the nine goals established as targets for their partnership efforts. They will monitor the academic and behavioral data of all students who are referred for specific services through these partnerships to gauge impact of the programs on student learning and engagement on a monthly basis. They will disseminate annual evidence about the progress of their partnership to the stakeholder community via their website and regular reporting that has been discussed in section (E) of their proposal.

6. Identify its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students.

Based on the desired goals outlined as the outcomes of these partnerships, a table in the narrative illustrates the annual performance measures that Harmony will track to understand their progress towards their articulated goals around providing social-emotional support to all students. The goals are ambitious because many of the goals target

every student in middle and high school and set high expectations for annual growth (or decline for negative behaviors) rates. The goals are achievable because HPS sees these goals as integral to helping the schools achieve their academic goals and because the organization sees this work as part of being effective teachers and leaders.

Achieving these goals will directly help HPS achieve its main project performance measures.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This is an ambitious and comprehensive proposal from a consortium of 10 Harmony Public Schools LEAs in Texas who are committed to closing the achievement gap for minority and low-income students and significantly increasing the percentage of high school graduates who are ready and well prepared for college and work in STEM disciplines.

It is an ambitious proposal because they want to redesigning and extend the school day for all of their students in all 36 of their middle and high schools, transform their approach to inquiry-based teaching and learning with technology-infused cross-disciplinary project-based learning, and upgrading their data infrastructure, resulting in a model for personalized education that can be replicated in the Nation's schools.

It is a smart proposal because it builds on their own nationally-recognized STEM program that they have successfully scaled up to 24,000 students, an energized staff committed to their vision for equitable student outcomes, students excited to be challenged and grow, and university partners providing their program with a bridge to college.

It is an exciting proposal because Harmony wants to change the vision of middle schools and high schools provide extended learning opportunities through a Custom Day program centered on personalized project-based learning that is technology and STEM infused and built on the foundation of common core standards. They want to create and implement a new system for assessing the effectiveness of teachers and principals to ensure that 100% of their teachers and principals are highly effective by 2017. And they plan to transform their data systems to create personalized dashboards for students, educators, and parents that provide real-time indicators of progress and support personalizing learning for students and adults. Their key to accomplishing these transformations is sustained job-embedded professional development for every teacher and principal to enhance their effectiveness, increase the number of students taught by highly effective teachers and principals, reduce or eliminate achievement gaps, and increase the number of graduates who are college and career ready and focused on STEM.

The consortium has appropriately, comprehensively, credibly and clearly addressed in a well-written and well-organized proposal all of the criteria for Absolute Priority #1.

Total	210	201
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	9

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Harmony Public Schools (HPS) has proposed in this optional budget supplement a clear, discrete, and innovative solution that can be replicated in schools across the Nation. It proposes to establish a partnership with North Forest ISD, a low performing district in the Houston metro area, to assist NFISD to implement over two years (2013-2015) technology-enabled Project Based Learning (PBL) in science classes at North Forest High School (NFHS) and provide professional development and mentorship to science teachers at NFHS. PBL is a major focus of the HPS RTTT-D proposal.

However they do not explain why they chose North Forest ISD instead of other districts and the process they used to identify North Forest High School. They do not provide any letters of support from the North Forest ISD superintendent or board of education or from the North Forest High School principal and the 14 teachers in the NFHS science department.

The rationale for this project is to demonstrate the replicability of the HPS design for technology-enabled project-based learning in science classes in a low performing high school and to significantly improve student performance in science and to significantly reduce the achievement gaps among subgroups.

HPS has developed a budget under \$2 million that will be adequate to support the development and implementation of activities and is appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project activities and the number of students to be served. It does not describe when the PD and mentorship support will be provided during the two year period and whether the stipends for teachers are for summer work or after school activities.

HPS has not provided a high-quality plan with activities, deliverables, timelines, and parties responsible.

Score = 9 of 15. Lack of a high-quality plan, lack of a description of the process for selecting North Forest ISD and the high school, lack of evidence of support from the superintendent and board of North Forest ISD and North Forest High School, and lack of information about what will happen each year and over the summer in terms of training and mentoring.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1051TX-2 for Harmony Science Academy (Harmony Public Schools)

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony Public Schools demonstrates evidence in the four educational areas 1) **Rigorous standards and assessment.** Harmony Public Schools instruction demonstrates rigor with STEM curriculum which show results of closing the achievement gap. 2) **High-quality data system.** Harmony Public Schools has implemented high quality data system called Harmony Performance Management Data Base. The data base features student information on logistics, culture, discipline, and academics for the purpose of tracking progress and provides adjusting plans to meet the goals.

3) **Effective teachers and principals.** The applicant has not adopted Common Core State Standards but aligns it standards with the CCSS. In the area of college and career readiness Harmony has established Advance Placement (AP) classes. The applicant does not state which students are able to take those classes, but mentions that the students should take the classes by 10th grade. 4) **Turning around lowest-achieving schools.** Effective teachers and principals help to deepen learning with high quality professional development training new teachers on the curriculum, and a data driven approach providing support. The applicant proposes that by recruiting hard to staff teachers it will ensure excellence in teaching, school leadership, and retention.

Harmony Public Schools demonstrates evidence in promoting a Personalized Learning Environment by outperforming both region and state testing serving a population of 56% low-income students; 45% Hispanic, 19% African American and 16% Asian making up 80% out of 24,000 students The applicant has received rewards from the Department of Education for closing achievement gap, and a high school was voted a best in the nation.

Finally indicators such as Project Based Learning (PBL) have been integrated through STEM an intervention enrichment program where student will receive two hours of target instruction. Also, Custom Day provides time and structure, where students receive individualized support to master skill at their pace.

This Applicant scores high 10.

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

Harmony Public Schools demonstrates a high-leverage approach to reform their schools. Harmony follows a systematic process to identify the needs and gaps that will bring about the promising strategies for reform. This includes expanding the Project-Based Learning (PBL) pilot from the STEM area to include more core subject areas. The STEM pilot is currently operating in the high schools, so it will be a natural fit to expand in these schools. The applicant will be expanding the PBL pilot to middle schools to address those students' critical developmental stage.

According to the applicant, the Custom Day initiative will be a natural fit for middle and high schools because students already know how to switch classes. These initiatives provide students the opportunities to pursue college- and career-readiness portions of their educational career.

The applicants' schools are serving grades 6 through 12, meeting the Race to the Top-District competition eligibility requirements by serving 12,240 students, with 60.1% qualifying for low-income status and 81.2% minority students.

(b) Harmony Public Schools describes that all 36 middle schools and high schools in table A will participate, which includes (c) 50% of 12, 240 students in grades 6-12. Fifty-seven percent of the students are from low-income families which includes 572 educators. The applicant decided not to include elementary students because that age group would not benefit from programs like Project-Base Learning (PBL) STEM pilot, and Custom Day.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant demonstrates a meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating school by monitoring the results and implementing initiatives in both middle and high school making continual improvements, applying lessons learned in programs and implementing project base, inquiry-driven activities. The applicant identified using building block skills for elementary schools. The applicant personalized learning in three areas: PBL, Custom Day and enhanced Data Systems and Dashboards. The PBL initiatives will improve student engagement by increasing the relevance of the learning as students choose topics based on their interest. Also students will engage in complex authentic learning activities that will deepen content knowledge and develop skills. The expected outcomes from implementing these initiatives will equip educators, students, and parents with College and Career readiness.

The applicant scores in the high range, but did not meet all specific criteria for a high quality plan. Applicant scores a 9.

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

Harmony Public Schools demonstrated how personalized learning initiatives will directly improve student learning outcomes through the Project-based learning curriculum and Texas State Standards aligned with CCSS. This will require students to use their knowledge in higher-order thinking skills. The Custom Day offers educators the flexibility to target differentiated support to create accelerated learning and ensure mastery in STEM. The baseline data and goals for summative assessments

are included in section (4) (a) of the A tables section at the end of this proposal (A Tables-3). Harmony's results from SY 2010-11 for grade level and subject level tests are included comparing the performance of students by subgroup (minority, low-income, special needs). Harmony was able to decrease the achievement gap between Harmony subgroups and white students in Texas on average by 3% every year.

According to the table (A) (4) there was an increase in Harmony's subgroup performance on the Texas State Assessment. As for closing the achievement gap, the gap is small between White students and subgroups. The margin is 1% to 3% in most Harmony Public Schools. Even though Harmony could not report subgroups, the overall student increase from 76% in 2010 to 84% in 2011, with 80% of students part of the target subgroup.

Harmony has been able to demonstrate that by decreasing the achievement gap that it will be highly personalized, student-driven inquiry projects, providing individualized support to achieve mastery of skills and ensuring that all students have access to the tools and resources they need to accelerate.

(A)(4)(c) Above all, this will allow the applicant to maintain 100% graduation rate as they expand their college-preparatory culture and continue work focusing on students who are struggling. (A)(4)(D) 100 % of Harmony students enroll in college by 2017, and 75% or more graduates choose STEMS majors.

Scoring is 10 because, even though the school does not have the CCSS, the applicant is outperforming other schools in the region.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)(a) Harmony Public School demonstrates a significant track record in the area of the student learning outcomes and closing the achievement gap by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment.

First, one of the schools, Harmony Science Academy Houston received the Title I Distinguished School Award from the US Department of Education for two or more consecutive years of exceptional student performance and closing the achievement gap. Also, the applicant was recognized by numerous national publications such as U.S News & World Report, Newsweek, and the Washington Post.

Second, Harmony has consistently outperformed other schools in all four core subject areas from 2007-08 to 2010-11 on the Texas State Assessment. For example, in the subject of Math, 89.8 % score higher than the state average, for Science, 88.9% score higher than state average.

Third, the applicant demonstrates that students in all subgroups are scoring higher than the other students in the state of Texas. For example, Special education students score 54% higher than the state average.

Also the chart shows a higher average of students participate in AP courses with better test results. A high percentage of students take the SAT (increased from 80% to 100%, increasing students' ability to be admitted into college.) The applicant uses college admission as a requirement for graduating, and 100 % of students have been accepted into college since 2005.

The Applicant monitors schools and provides immediate feedback, as well as data from the Harmony Performance Management Database (HPMD) which includes individual student's information. Also the data base is used to implement the benchmark assessment allowing teachers to view information on individual students reaching annual goals. This gives the students, parents and teachers real time data. The student and parents have access to the student's information. Parents are trained on the computer or internet and are kept informed by six-week report cards, three-week progress reports, and regular teacher-parent check point conferences.

(B)(1)(b)

The applicant stated that the majority of their students come from low-income households with 15% feeding in from the state's lowest-performing middle or high schools. Harmony provides a high-quality option that puts the students on the path to college

and career. In fact, Harmony holds all their school accountable to high standards of success by monitoring schools' progress and providing immediate feedback to school staff. Also Harmony does not have any low achieving or low-performing schools because all the schools in Harmony Public School District outperform the other schools in the districts and state.

(B)(1)(c) One of the ways the applicant makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services is to by providing in-house information from reporting platform called Harmony Performance Management Database (HPMD). This school data base features individual student information on logistics such as: registry, lunch records, library records, extracurricular activities, cultural, discipline and academics.

Also, the students take a benchmark assessment every six weeks by using the HPMD. The teachers use it view information student-by-student at aggregated levels by meeting in teams every six weeks to analyze the data and make informed decisions about the lesson plans, ensuring that the individual students reach their annual goals. The results are used to form tutorial study sections of similarly performing students who spend the next week with teacher/tutor on working. Harmony's central office uses the HPMD to view student achievement and study grow to guide decision-making around allocation resources and support.

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

B)(2) Harmony Public Schools demonstrates evidence that they are compliant with local and state rules, and regulations set by U.S. Department of Education regarding (B) (2). Harmony's policy is to provide information about policies, practices, investments, salaries and other expenditures upon request within 10 business days to the public Also, this includes making available actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff including teachers, as well as non-personnel expenditures at the school level. In addition, Harmony publishes the Organization-wide budget on the website along with other information. Also, Harmony Public Schools register with Civil Rights Data Collection submitting all required data.

The applicant did not show evidence that salaries are available on website. Applicant scores a 4.

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

The Applicant demonstrates successful conditions and sufficient autonomy for implementation of a) rigorous college-ready academic standards, b) student achievement metrics and c) autonomy for charter schools.

- a. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) established curriculum standards by continuously revising the standards for rigor to increase funding for dropout prevention and career-readiness and ensure the development of more meaningful assessments tied to the standards. Texas legislation set the ground work and pilot online professional development courses 2011, focusing on how to teach content to students, adolescent literacy, algebra readiness, science and End-Of-Courses success.
- b. Texas has a track record in measuring and tracking data around student's learning in order to measure individual progress towards college-and career-ready standards. Texas requires 35% of teacher evaluations to be based on student outcomes measured through assessments. Also the state of Texas uses the Data Quality Campaign (DQC) initiative, which evaluates data to increase student achievement.
- c. Harmony Public Schools has been operating as a Charter School since 2000 and has success in the area of autonomy because of the flexibility to determine how to appropriately allocate their budget. In addition, Harmony Public Schools have been able to outperform other schools state wide on the Texas Assessment Test by having open-enrollment, complete autonomy over budget, staffing and curriculum. The State of Texas supports autonomy.

Applicant scores 10

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Harmony Public School demonstrates strong evidence in engaging stakeholders to participate in the development of the plan. According to the applicant, a Design team was established composed of the Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Secondary Curriculum, Director of Elementary Curriculum, Heads of STEM, Social Studies programs and Director of Technology.</p> <p>Teachers and principals received an online survey on September 11, 2012 that described the initiative and asked for feedback on the details of the plan (Information is in Appendix G for the description of the initiative and the accompanying survey).</p> <p>Although Harmony emailed the survey to all 1,637 teachers, the applicant only received 606 responses (37%) from teachers and 30 responses from principals (79%). The applicant stated overwhelming commitment to the success of the program since 94% of teachers from participating schools expressed support for the plan. The participation of parents was done at different levels: at Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, a survey online, Wednesday folders, parent teacher conferences.</p> <p>Also, students were given information in homeroom and asked to write an essay. Then, the design team collected feedback from the stakeholders and identified common themes from the feedback. Each stakeholder addresses the needs of PBL, Custom Day and Data Systems and Dashboard.</p> <p>For instance, teachers wanted to use technology to scaffold support for each student and differentiate to meet unique learner needs. Also, the teachers wanted more technology in class and middle school courses to be aligned with the high school course to better prepare students at earlier age. Parents wanted easy access to lessons and classroom activities, improved resources to track students' goals and performance. The parents wanted to know right away if their child is struggling.</p> <p>The students wanted access to technology in classroom and beyond school hours. Principals wanted tools and technology to help identify why a students are not mastering specific concepts, and technology to support differentiation. They wanted to a specific person on campus to coordinate instructional technology.</p> <p>Harmony Public Schools had significant support from the community and provided 107 letters from various organizations. The letters from the students were eye opening in how Harmony Public Schools made a difference in academic life.</p> <p>Applicant scores a 9 because there seems to be a discrepancy between the survey with only 606 responses, leaving 1,031 teachers not responding, even though efforts were made to seek teachers feedback at faculty meetings and one on one interviews. It was later discovered that 94% of participating teachers support the proposal.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Harmony Public Schools provides evidence for a high- quality plan through goals, activities, timelines and responsible parties in implementation but recognizes there needs to be some improvement in two areas: college readiness for all students and student achievement across subgroups. Only 61% of the students are college ready as measured by Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) definition.</p> <p>Harmony Public Schools have been improving learning outcomes for students through project-based learning, by providing online resources and personalized support. In evaluating these efforts, Harmony uses a mix of data (TAKS results, AP, and SAT results college acceptance and matriculation, extracurricular STEM participation) to look at trends within student group, and the results were that Harmony students outperformed state averages and closed the achievement gap on TAKS summative tests, AP participation rates, and scores. Scores and passing rates are rising for all students faster than state averages with minorities outperforming national averages. The applicant focus begins in two critical areas: college-readiness for all student and student across all of our student groups. The current initiatives include STEM-related initiatives, including afterschool STEM projects, science fair projects, science Olympiad teams, STEM-internships and university partnerships, a robotics program and engineering programs, two STEM career pathway programs, AP Courses and state dual-credit program approaches to personalization in classroom instruction, including project-based learning and inquiry-based learning.</p> <p>Harmony Public Schools identified four areas where gaps still exist in college-readiness for all students and student achievement across all subgroups.</p> <p>Engaging students in deeper learning- Many teachers still focus on one-size-fits-all pedagogy and pacing. Many teachers, driven by a focus on End-of Course Exams, are still focusing on coverage of material with a one –size-fits-all</p>		

pedagogy. Efforts to expose students to college and professions and implementation of inquiry-based approaches engage students in deep learning.

Differentiating instruction for individual and student needs-Data on college readiness and the achievement gap and the success of other intervention supports suggest that the applicant could better support all students by offering more intervention, enrichment or elective courses tailored to student's individual needs.

Integrate data systems and improves usability-By integrating multiple databases, student trends around individual and subgroup performance will be easy to recognize. In addition, more meaningful dashboard displays of this integrated data would better support remediation and advancement and system level improvement.

More frequent targeted assessment- Harmony Public Schools uses a 6-week benchmark but feels the assessment needs to be more frequent to provide actionable information to educators and more closely target college-and career-ready skills to drive tailored, rigorous instruction.

For this reason, Harmony Public Schools evaluated the initiatives and decided to build on existing strengths which would have the greatest impact to move subgroups to college-readiness and student achievement.

The Applicant is moving in the right direction therefore scoring a 5.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- a. At the present time , Harmony has established a high-quality plan that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner with support through the initiatives of Project-based learning (PBL) , Custom Day, Data System and Dashboards
- 1. Harmony Public School reports it is out performing other schools in the statewide assessments since 2005. The applicant has strong examples of narrowing the achievement gap but did not meet its goals with sub groups in college-readiness for all students and student achievement across all subgroups. Because of these issues the applicant has implemented strategies that will help engage and empower all learners in different activities in order to help the parents, educators and all students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. Some of the activates includes:

Where we are: A focus on college and career success is central to Harmony's mission. This takes three forms: creating a college culture, where every student has the mindset of attending college, making a link between a strong STEM foundation and success in career, and engaging students in setting tangible goals and tracking progress towards those goals.

Where we are headed: The applicant demonstrates that they had a 100% college acceptance rate and they exceed state levels of achievement on summative assessment and other measures of college-readiness. The applicant indicated that they are not satisfied with the level of preparedness of all students for college. Based on the State indicator for College-Ready Graduates, only 61% of Harmony students are prepared to succeed in college. By engaging students in the process of setting their own goals, developing a plan to achieve those goals, and monitoring progress along the way, it will help students achieve specific goals they have identified and empower students to act on their own behalf and take ownership over their own learning.

(b) The applicant has established a strong track record enabling all students to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college-and career-ready by using the latest technologies and supporting personalized learning to advance individual students' progression in math and reading. Accelerated math programs software, used in grades 6-12, helps teachers personalize math practice by creating math assignments that are tailored to each student's current level and provides ongoing feedback on student's daily practice. The applicant will implement the Custom Day Schedule to address the need for more differentiation to accelerate the learning of all students in math and English language Arts depending on the individual student's need. Two hours a day will be devoted to intervention, enrichment, or elective courses.

Harmony Public Schools already have in place the latest technologies to support personalized learning. The Accelerate Reading program personalizes independent reading recommendations and quizzes to target reading skills. The applicant is currently targeting intervention support as well as enrichment in small groups and Gifted and Talent programs to meet the

unique needs of the individual. In addition, each student receives ongoing feedback through assessment to identify each student's individual skills.

(v) The applicant demonstrates that by conducting cycles of evaluation and assessment on an annual, quarterly, weekly, and daily basis in all curriculum areas, teachers can use a variety of assessments to identify each student's individual strengths and weaknesses and specific skill gaps and use this information to guide planning and instructional decisions that are geared toward ensuring each student is on track to college and career readiness. The teachers use a variety of formative assessment strategies-collaborative activities, response logs, practice presentations, and graphic organizers as well technology-based assessments on a daily and weekly basis. The applicant realizes that data will provide real-time information to users, including students, through customized user-friendly dashboard. This will enable teachers to monitor student progress and place students in the Custom Day class most suited for their specific needs.

(c)

Harmony Public Schools currently is training and supporting students around tools and resources on a class by class basis. Generally teachers help students understand the learning goals they need to achieve for the year and their progress toward those goals based on various indicators. Students have access to the data system to track their progress but do not use it frequently. The key activity will be used to train teachers to use Blackboard, video production, web site production, learning programs, and Data Dashboards. Harmony will identify staff including the school's IT coordinator, computer teacher and teachers of records to train in technology.

I score this section a 20.

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

The applicant has described a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching. The model that the applicant uses is called 5 Es: engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation. This model assists teachers in each area to step out of the role as the teacher and reflect, design, and implement professional development training modules. The key activities include:

- o Data Dashboard and data analysis
- o Student assessment and other input to student learning profiles
- o PBL environments including instructional strategies and assessment technique
- o Teachers will collaborative and work together to agree on lesson objective.
- o By-weekly grade level meeting for teachers review student data and examine student work.

The applicant recognizes that providing extensive professional development to teachers in key areas of personalized learning and using data will help teachers to better analyze the impact of efforts to close the achievement gap. The approach to professional development has several levels of support, including professional development (PD) days before and during the school year, regular meeting of teachers in professional learning communities (PLC), and additional support teams with the help of instructional coaches. To support strong culture of data-driven inquiry, the focus is on ensuring the teachers are trained and practice data analysis and how to use data to drive instructional planning to meet yearly goals.

For this purpose, all teachers receive initial professional development from a combination of curriculum specialists and consultants focused on how to understand student achievement data from summative and formative assessment measures and indicators of student engagement. During the year teachers meet bi-weekly in teams to discuss and modify instruction based on the sharing of ideas and analyses. Current teachers have data analysis meetings every six weeks to analyze benchmark data and adjust instructional plans to meet end-of-year goals.

Teachers meet in grade and subject groups to examine the data and draw inferences about practice and determine next steps. For example, if students did not do well in certain areas this might be an indication that teachers need support in this area.

Another area where teachers and principals receive feedback is through evaluation. The applicant will redesign their evaluation systems to align with personalized learning approaches and include frequent feedback intervals, thus providing a formative tool for professional growth, as well as evaluation. The areas of design will include.

- o Incorporation of specific practices described in the instructional framework
- o Formative feedback cycles that support growth toward long-term goals
- o The use of multiple measures of student achievement, including standardized assessments and PBL measures of deeper learning, as both a feedback and accountability mechanism.

The applicant will develop rigorous systems of support for teachers and principals aligned to the new evaluation system. Also, mentoring will be one of the key activities providing one-on-one support. All educators will learn how to use tools, data and resources such as HPDM systems. New teachers will be trained on how to use the data from this system.

Not only will teachers be trained, so will the leaders (principals). They will be trained in the areas of analyzing data and the impact it has on effort to close the achievement gap. Increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teacher and principals include providing incentives for hard-to-staff subjects (math, science, computer/technology applications, bilingual/ESL and special education) providing financial assistance to Harmony teachers to obtain a Master's Education degree or principal's certificate and grooming them to become Harmony school leaders, supporting the pursuit of subject-based advance degrees for Harmony schools leaders, and providing ongoing high-quality professional development to current staff.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony demonstrates a clear track record of success in practices, policies, and rules since opening the first school in 2000, serving 200 students, 38 schools serving over 24,000 students across the state and especially low-income and minority students.

The applicant is well structured to provide support for all of its school to implement its personalized, STEM-focus, college-preparatory approach by:

- Harmony governance structure resembles traditional school district but is a 501 c3 non-profit organization.
- Harmony's 38 schools are organized into ten regional clusters that are led by superintendent.
- Led by Superintendent of Schools who is accountable to HPS board, who reports to Texas Education Agency
- Central Office management team consists of Chief Academic Officer, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer.

Not only does the applicant provide a list of the roles and responsibilities of the existing personnel, but it stresses the roles of each school and how the central office supports those schools.

Since Harmony Public Schools resembles a traditional school district with a central office, all funds will be managed by the lead LEA, Harmony Science Academy. The applicant complies with state and federal laws, regulations, and standards for financial management systems.

In addition, the central office management team sets strategy (mission, vision, and intended impact), growth goals, training and recruitment. The applicant also states that every school is responsible for implementing the Harmony model allowing the School Leadership Team (SLT) to have autonomy and flexibility to set school schedules and calendars. Harmony encourages innovation by allowing principals of these schools to make personnel decisions to hire, retain, and fire teachers and assistant principals.

Harmony Public Schools practices, policies, and rules give students opportunities to progress, earn credit, demonstrate mastery, enter college without the need for remediation, move up a grade, and participate in dual-credit courses offered by community colleges.

Another way that Harmony Public Schools demonstrates mastery of standards at multiple times is by using variety (types of assessment), drawing on different modalities. Formal assessments are given annually, quarterly, and on weekly basis along with informal assessments. The Applicant use six-week benchmarks, STAR Reading and STAR Math through programs called Accelerated Reader and Accelerated Math.

Harmony Public Schools is meeting the needs of both students with disabilities and English Learner Students by providing services that comply with Individuals Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by providing a special education teacher who monitors the students learning. Also, English learners participate in bilingual education until the student is able to master the English language through programs such as ESL.

The applicant scores a 15 because of its ability to support these criteria.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony Public Schools infrastructure supports personalized learning by ensuring students, parents, educators and other stakeholders will have access to content, tools and other learning resources both in and out of school according to the implementation of the proposal.

The applicant stated that they have a history of ensuring all Harmony students have full access to content, tools, and other learning resources. Harmony believes that all students can achieve at high levels if provided with the combination of high-quality tools and resources.

The applicant proposes that all students will be introduced to content, tools, and leaning resources that were described in detail in section (C).

Students will be able to have access to new content, tools, and learning resources including technology-based devices. Also, an online platform called Blackboard will provide access for tools and resources to post their school work, track their progress, and interact with teachers and others outside the class. Blackboard is one of many online tools used at the college level, and students attending college will be familiar with this tool.

Harmony Public Schools demonstrates an active role in providing avenues for parents to participate by providing a school handbook, access to his/her child's records in school's database, receiving report cards every six weeks, two parent-teacher conferences a year, one home visit a year, family literacy night, and classes for the parents to help them access information on the data dashboard about their child's progress.

In addition, Harmony Public Schools demonstrates that educators will access students' data in the PBL platform by providing laptops and extensive professional development for content, assessment tools, and data analysis.

(b) The scope and sequence of the Project-Based Learning projects will scaffold the instruction plan by using the strategies provided to the students to have technical support, including interactive, one-on-one support, and online tutorials by using the data dashboard. Also, parents are provided with written instruction and in-person trainings on how to use the school's database.

(c) Harmony uses a performance management database, HPMD, which allows parents and students to export their information in an open format and use it in other systems. Harmony has three focuses, Positive Based Learning, Custom Day, and Harmony Performance Management Data Based (HPMD) in which Harmony plans to enhance the data to make it more comprehensive and will integrate student data from all existing systems, including our college and career preparation system. All the data is and will continue to be downloadable in open format.

(d) All Harmony's data systems are and will continue to be interoperable; data can flow from one system to another. Student information databases, including the Harmony Performance Management Database (HPMD), will use state summative tests and benchmark assessments as tools for college and career planning.

The applicant states that the funds will be used to integrate the data from three systems into one dashboard. The database will be used for all financial data, including personnel salaries and budget and personal data such as evaluations and student outcomes.

At the present time, Harmony Public Schools regularly reports to Texas Education Agency and other local, state, and federal agencies.

In conclusion, the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through the school infrastructure which supports personalized learning by ensuring all participating stakeholders are informed.

The applicant scores a 10 on this criterion

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There are several issues the applicant considers in addressing the elements in this section. There are some controlling and common studies as to what strategies are effective and will be implemented to provide a continuous improvement process. Harmony Public Schools has established a system that will able them to provide timely, relevant feedback on programs in the area of student outcomes by capturing, tracking, monitoring, and analyzing individual, aggregate, and disaggregate student outcome data and examining the data. The applicant does admit that the current database platform does not provide user-friendly or frequent feedback. Although this may be true, the Applicant feels that the funding from Race to the Top will help in the area of increasing accessibility, usability and timeliness.

Harmony Public Schools has demonstrated that they have the ability for continuous improvement by creating 38 schools in a twelve year period, outperforming other schools state wide, and accelerating the closing of the achievement gap. Also, the applicant has demonstrated that it has a strong data system in place, and will continue to provide a system-wide communication system from the superintendent and central office. Leadership will communicate the goals and overall direction for this work. Central office leadership and cluster superintendents will meet monthly to monitor progress and analyze data on student achievement. Central office will meet with stakeholders twice a year to revise progress and provide input.

At the cluster level the superintendents will hold monthly continuous improvement meetings with cluster level leadership and principals. With this in mind, Harmony Public Schools' data analysts will support this team in analyzing student achievement, teaching practices, and identifying the successful schools, grades or classrooms in need of support or intervention.

In Section (B) (2) of its narrative, Harmony describes what information it would share with the public. The Applicant explains that it is Harmony's policy to provide information about policies, practices, investments, salaries, and other expenditures upon request. Information requests are directed to and managed by the Director of Communication, who will provide the information within 10 business days.

In addition, schools will engage their School Leadership Teams (SLT). The responsibility for this team is to set school goals and make specific school level plans because Harmony Public Schools will continue to meet weekly to review data and discuss improvement related to maintaining a strong culture of learning and a focus on equity. With this intention, classroom-level teachers will use real-time data to drive instructional decisions and improvement in delivery on a daily basis, and continue meeting biweekly in PLC to collaboratively examine data and identify what is working.

In the final analysis, Harmony Public School has proven that their ability to continue to improvement in monitoring, measuring and providing feedback will be successful.

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

5 5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Harmony Public Schools stated ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders through an interoperable data system called the Harmony Performance Management Database will ensure that information is shared frequently and thoroughly. Stakeholders, including the superintendent, principal, educators, parents, and students, will be able to continuously assess needs, share best practices, provide feedback, and participate in decision-making and adjusting initiatives. Overall, the applicant shows evidence in the area of communication with parents though PTO's, school-wide events such as Back to School Nights, newsletters, and information nights.

The applicant scores 5.

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

5 5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performances measures

Harmony Public Schools demonstrates a commitment to develop high-quality measures of performance of continuous improvement for student achievement, including track indicators such as 6- week benchmarks, Star Reading and Math. Also, Harmony's instructional approach strives for equity by providing rigorous, challenging assessments throughout the years. The results indicate that Harmony is on the right track to accelerate student achievement and narrow the achievement gap.

a. and Rationale and how will provide rigorous, timely, formative leading information:

Harmony will use performance on the State summative assessments as one track indicator. Harmony Public Schools stated that Texas is in the process of switching state assessments from TAKS to STAAR; students took the STAAR exams in spring 2012, but Harmony could not provide any data because it was not released at the time of the grant. Harmony sets a higher benchmark indicator using proficiency as the benchmark due to limited access to more nuanced data. The areas of the STAAR assessment measure included Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies.

c. Improving the measure over time

With funds from this grant, Harmony will purchase the College Board's ReadinessStep assessment as an additional indicator for 8th grade students because it is aligned, by design, to the ultimate indicator, the SAT. ReadinessStep was developed by the College Board. The applicant stated that they will use ReadinessStep's College Benchmark Indicator score as a benchmark for on track 8th grade. Also when the applicant accumulates enough data, they will conduct a statistical analysis of longitudinal student data to map SAT scores back to ReadinessStep to ensure that the College Board's Benchmark indicators are aligned.

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

Evaluating effectiveness of investments

Harmony will measure the quality of their investments funded by Race to The Top by determining each year the increase in student performance. They will take the dollars spent on the investments, and calculate an increase in student performance per dollar spent on the return investment. The applicant will share the information internally and use the information in administrative-level meetings to continue to inform the allocation of resources to continue or scale up investments with a strong return.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a. sustainability of project goals

Harmony Public Schools has designed the project budget to ensure ongoing sustainability of the program goals. After the grant term, sustainability of the project's goals will be ensured by a combination of careful investments during the grant term and State funding combined with other fundraising efforts. All funds will support the project. The applicant is requesting for this proposal \$38,699,744.

The Applicant states that Standard and Poor's March financial rating reported strong standing. The monies will be spent on:

- Technology- the amount \$6,742,448 will be used to acquired technology supplies. Technology devices will be for the student and teacher including IT infrastructure upgrades in participating schools
- Professional Development – the amount \$8,312,108 will provide requisite training in implementation of new initiatives in classroom including curriculum and assessment materials and updating teacher and evaluation system.
- PBL Classroom Supplies-\$6,650,042 is used in the Project-based learning which includes supplies for the students.
- Critical Personnel-\$4,303,200 for personnel investments to hire teachers to establish the foundation necessary to successfully implement the program.

b. Is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of applicant' proposal

The grant budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and the implementation of grant activities such as

- Technology devices (tablet computers or notebook computers) per each student and teacher in the middle and high schools.
- Online platform (Blackboard) user licensing fees for our PBL initiative.
- Software licensing fees for educational software that will be used in custom day classes to support remediation, advancement, electives.
- IT infrastructure upgrades in participating schools to support increase technology usage.
- Data storage and servers to support dashboards.
- Software licensing fees for software developers to create sustain dashboards, and Data linkages (APE) fees to bring content from various databases and content providers to dashboards.

The applicant stated that they will also pursue outside funding for sustainability goals. This criterion was score 10.

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

According the evidence, Harmony Public Schools will have sustainability of project goals because the applicant ensured careful investment and also the reliance on State funds.

The applicant details the information below:

1. Technology Investments- Database is a onetime purchase.
2. Expansion Harmony System- The population of the students keeps expanding, and will bring additional revenue from the State of Texas by enrollment.
3. Establishment of a IT and Technology Device Fund-Will establish a fund for maintaining and updating hardware, software, and classroom supplies using the funds spent on technology without the grant. The Applicant estimates \$30 per student accumulating \$2.1 million after 4 years.
4. Fundraising efforts- Harmony Public Schools has a proven track record of securing additional funds by public and private donors and as added \$14 million to the system.

Another area shows Harmony Public Schools grew from one school with 200 students to over 38 schools with 24,000 students suggesting that they will continue to expand over the next seven years with 8,000 students, and will generate additional revenue from the State of Texas that will allow new initiatives for the organization.

Harmony Public Schools has shown evidence of a LEA that understand the process of maintaining its ability to be a successful school.

The applicant scores a 10 in this area.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority

Harmony Public Schools recognizes that in order for students to be successful the students need social, emotional, behavioral support. The applicant established partnership with five external support organizations to integrate the service and support for all students. The partnership includes:

1. Committee for Children which deals with peer pressure, substance use sexting, bullying and cyber-bullying.
2. DePelchin Children’s Center which deals with prevention, early intervention, and child welfare services and provides group sessions.
3. Partners Resource Network supports families of children with disabilities.
4. Anti-Defamation League- which builds bridges of communication understanding respect among diverse groups of people.
5. INROADS- provide leadership training for underserved you by placing them in mentorships and internships with local corporations.

The applicant population-level desired goals are all students will attend school regularly, decrease disciplinary actions and suspensions and increase positive social behavior, increase knowledge about substance abuse and prevention, bullying, and challenges of your parenthood, increase academic achievement, foster school bonding for 6-12 grades.

Tracking selected indicators that measure each result at aggregate level will be done by the Data System and Dashboards and will help to measure the individual, school, and systems levels by subgroup and other aggregate grouping. The dash board will report information on attendance rates; suspension rates; participation in mentorship and internship.

The partnership will monitor some results on biweekly basis by reporting to the Director of Student Health and Safety biweekly and meeting as a team monthly to ensure implementation. Strategy for scaling the partnership model for the participating students is to study results, make necessary adjustments, and assess what additional/or different needs exist at the elementary level. The partnership team will use monitor indicators of dash boards to improve results over time. Teacher and administrators will be trained how to identify high-risk behavior.

Applicant scores 10

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrated coherently and comprehensively created learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready or college- and career-ready graduation requirements accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers in four core educational assurance areas

1. Rigors standards and assessments through the instructional approach challenging STEM curriculum to serve all students, focus on formative assessment, and a culture of high expectations and support.
2. High-quality data system by providing a program called Harmony Performances Management Database (HPDM) will be able to aggregate student information on logistics, culture and discipline, and academics.
3. Effective teachers and principals- by hiring the best, and hard to staff teachers.
4. Turning around lowest-achieving schools Harmony does not have any school that are performing low.

The applicant describes the process of creating meaningful reform to support district-wide changes by monitoring the results as they implement initiatives both the middle and high school continual improvement, more complex lesson for elementary schools so they can be prepare for the work in middle school and high school. Providing an enhance data system at the elementary school level.

In addition, the applicant demonstrates evidence in the area of Theory of Change which includes

- o Increase the percentage of students graduating from Harmony school college and career ready.
- o Improve student's outcomes by engage in deep core content.

Total	210	207
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	8

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant makes a significant case for additional funding. However, there are some concerns regarding the request for additional funding.

Harmony Public Schools will be collaborating with the science teachers at North Forest High. In doing so, the teachers at North Forest High School will received 15 days of professional development on effective instructional strategies, content knowledge, implementing PBL in the classroom and integrating technology in the classroom, 100 day of mentorship from science consultants, \$3000.00 annual stipend for attending trainings.

Also each teacher will received twenty-five notebook computers for the classroom to engage students in the Project Based Learning, classroom supplies and \$2,500 travel so that teachers can attend AP institutes. The additional funding will provide a Director to manage and supervise the grant with fidelity, and also for equipment. Compared to some of the schools in Harmony Public Schools 10th grade science show the average African-American students score high in 10th grade science. In some school as high an average of 80% to 90% whereas North Forest High School average score is 48%. Hispanic students average 80 to 90% too, and North Forest shows Hispanic students at 53%.

However, there was no letter from the North Forest High School administrator or teachers indicating if any of the teachers supported this proposal. Not knowing if the teachers wanted to be a part of the proposal may affect the teachers' instructions if there is no buy-in to the proposal.

Scoring the criterion an 8.

The Applicant makes a significant case for additional funding. However, there are some concerns regarding the request for additional funding.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1051TX-3 for Harmony Science Academy (Harmony Public Schools)

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The outstanding vision articulated in this plan is comprehensive and builds on the four core educational areas as follows: Aligns programs to state standards and Common Core State Standards in advance of a state requirement to align to CCSS. The proposed reform builds on the LEA's existing STEM curriculum requirement for all students by developing cross-disciplinary, multi-sensory, technology enabled Project-Based Learning (PBL) curriculum that integrates STEM, Social Studies and English Language Arts (ELA). It is inquiry-based, student centered and emphasizes mastery of 21st Century skills; and integrates personalized intervention and enrichment programs by instituting a Custom Day schedule whereby students receive two hours of targeted instruction tailored to their needs in one of three areas; remediation and extra support in math and ELA, Math or ELA advancement, or pursue electives in areas of interest.

A customized SQL-based data system provides individual assessments, analysis and remedial feedback with benchmarking every six weeks. Data is aggregated across classes, schools and the network providing system-wide performance measures to guide resource and support allocations as required. This will improve the existing data system by making it more robust. Develops data tracking for the proposed PBL curriculum and the Custom Day schedule and designs Data Dashboards, that will provide end-users with real-time feedback for continuous individual student improvement. Integrates PBL effort and Custom Day into the LEA's existing Human Capital Strategy for teacher and principal professional development. The existing strategy is comprehensive, including developing individualized career paths for teachers and providing incentives through tuition assistance to graduating students to become certified in the hard-to-staff subject areas and return to the schools to teach.

Continues to successfully integrate up to 15% of new students from lowest performing middle and high schools and outperform regional and state averages across all four core subject areas. This LEA serves 24,000 students, 80 % of whom are non-white and 56% are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

Applicant proposes a clear and credible approach to its reform vision that is consistent with the goals of the RRTT- District goals. As key program reforms, the PBL curriculum and Custom Day are straightforward and address college and career readiness via inquiry-based and student focused approaches, placing it in the highest rating.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The approach to implementing the proposed reform is reasonable, specifically identifying the grade band of 6-12 as the target group. The rationale appropriately centers on implementing reforms for students closest to graduation to ensure they are college and career ready and to impact middle school students who are at a critical development stage, better preparing them for success in high school and beyond. The applicant provides tables that include each participating school and corresponding school site demographics that collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The data requirements of the notice including participating students from low-income, high-need, participating schools and educators are all supported in the table provided.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Though the applicant identifies the target of scaling as the elementary schools, this section lacks minimum components necessary for a high-quality plan to accomplish this. The Theory of Change model developed in this section lacks specificity as it does not clearly articulate the individual activities and rationale associated with each reform; rather the applicant restates broad goals of the reforms. Outcomes are generalized to include statements like, "increased interest in STEM careers," and, "higher levels of individual support," but there is no specific actionable steps or timeline that highlights progress toward key goals.

Career- readiness is not addressed in this application, which is in favor of college bound by including an impact of "100% college enrollment by 2017."

The insufficient development of the plan places this response in the high part of the mediam range.

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

10

9

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has done a good job addressing ambitious yet achievable goals for improved student outcomes in this plan.

The applicant establishes a minimum proficiency status for Math and Reading of 91% on summative assessments including TAKS and STAAR EOC's by 2017. The tables show incremental growth projections by grade, within subgroups, and tracked by school year as progression toward the goal. Baselines in several cases are projections or have an N/A and though the reform targets middle and high schools in the LEA, the applicant has included summative assessment data and goals for grades 3 – 12 and has provided non Math and Reading data. The applicant has not summarized the data to provide evaluators with a better sense of the total potential impact of the proposed reforms on the target population nor the degree of

difficulty in attempting to achieve the 2017 goal through better analysis of the gap between current student performance and the proposed 2017 goal. For example, at the Harmony School of Excellence, economically disadvantaged students currently perform at a baseline of 94% proficiency in Grade 7 Math and the stated goal of the reform is to be 91% proficient in Math, likewise at the Harmony Science Academy – San Antonio, economically disadvantaged 7th Grade Math baseline is projected at 92% proficient. The applicant raises the 2017 proficiency rates for student subgroups currently performing above, at or near the reform goal of 91% but does not discuss an approach, rationale or the population of students to be impacted.

Using performance of white students across the state, the LEA establishes a goal to decrease the achievement gap between the white students and subgroups identified as minority and low-income students but does not provide evaluators with information that would inform the level of effort required to achieve this goal. As in (4) (a), the applicant has provided tables with information but lacks analysis and a summary.

The LEA currently achieves 100% graduation rates therefore it is difficult to give full credit for the goal of maintaining 100% graduation rates. This goal is certainly ambitious and most likely achievable given the history and commitment of the applicant to serve the needs of every student.

College enrollment rates for this applicant are at 74 percent and the LEA has established a goal of 100 percent by 2017. The applicant's focus on STEM expansion as part of the reform translates into a goal of 75 percent of graduates choosing STEM-related majors. The applicant's reform efforts targeted at college and career readiness can partially be tracked by a third goal of 85 percent of graduates go on to complete college with a postsecondary degree by 2017. Taken together these goals support successful development and implementation of the stated reforms and the college-ready component of this notice.

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	15
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a clear and consistent record of success having received numerous national and state awards and recognitions based on exceptional student performance and successfully closing the achievement gap. The LEA has an 80 percent non-white population with over 56 percent eligible for free or reduced price lunch and continually outperforms regional and state averages in all four core subject areas. The applicant has demonstrated success particularly with STEM curriculum and successful student outcomes. Student participation rates and scores in AP courses have steadily increased since 2007, SAT scores have steadily improved over the same timeframe and college matriculation rates are at 74 percent compared to a statewide rate of 55 percent.</p> <p>The applicant states that 15 percent of all new students come from the lowest performing middle and high schools demonstrating a solid track record of successfully integrating lower achieving students into a high achieving school culture.</p> <p>The LEA utilizes a customized relational database developed by in-house information technology personnel. It includes an integrated assessment bank and associated data analysis and remediation feedback in addition to standard features of school-based information and accountability databases. Individual student information and aggregate class, school and LEA information is available. Notable is that the applicant provides basic parent training for those unfamiliar with computers and/or technology.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA conforms to legal disclosure requirements; however they require specific requests be made for information and have a protocol in place for responding to requests. This does not constitute a high level of transparency as defined in (B) (2) of this notice. They do follow local, state and federal rules and regulations by including all required salaries of school-level instructional and support staff, as well as non-personnel expenditures, and they are prepared to make information available and for this reason the applicant receives a score of 3.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Despite lack of state adoption of CCSS, this applicant has aligned curriculum with state standards and CCSS and has the autonomy to implement reforms as established in their charter with the state. The applicant's plan includes support for rigorous standards, high-quality data systems, robust student achievement metrics, and charter school autonomy. In addition, the applicant explains that Texas has just launched an online personalized tutoring and remediation program (Texas SUCCESS) and policy analysts expect to see more investment in digital, personalized learning from the Lone Star state. These conditions combine to create a state context that is supportive of personalized learning environments and charter school innovation.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has done an excellent job demonstrating evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant utilized multiple formats for engaging students, families, teachers and principals in the proposal development including surveys, meetings, and informational pieces. The LEA secured 94 percent teacher approval for the proposal and over 100 letters of support from stakeholders groups including elected officials, community groups, parent-teacher organizations, private sector and higher education institutions.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does a thorough job of identifying the gaps this proposal looks to fill; the key goals being: a 61% college-ready graduate proficiency as measured by the AEIS definition of College-Ready Graduates, and closing the achievement gap between whites and minority and low-income students.</p> <p>The applicant explains the rationale for the proposed activities with a review of student performance along a variety of metrics to produce an understanding of successful educational strategies as well as areas for improvement. The deliverables identified in this proposal build upon successful strategies already supported by the LEA by incorporating deeper learning, differentiated instruction for individual student needs, and integrated data with more frequent and targeted assessments. Several staff are included throughout the proposal as the parties responsible for implementing the activities. This constitutes an excellent plan earning this response a 5.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does an excellent job describing a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.</p> <p>To accomplish this, Harmony will implement three primary strategies across all middle and high schools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a cross-disciplinary, multi-sensory, technology-enabled project-based learning (PBL) curriculum that integrates STEM, social studies, and English Language Arts (ELA) 2. Institute a Custom Day schedule whereby students receive 2 hours a day of targeted instruction on three flexible paths: receive remediation and extra support in math and ELA; choose math or ELA enrichment; or pursue electives in areas of interest 3. Develop and build out Data System and Dashboards to provide educators and administrators real-time access to meaningful data to inform the first two strategies and to support parents and students in setting goals and creating personal learning plans. The plan includes 11 goals and provides a current status and future direction for each goal, timelines, key activities and responsible parties are also included. The goals are aligned to the RRTT-district goals and the applicant has carefully addressed all criteria in this response. Their plan is ambitious and achievable. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has described an outstanding high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching. Each criteria is addressed completely and includes a section explaining the LEA's current status as well as future direction, key activities and performance measures. The applicant's approach to improving teaching is research-based thoughtful, multi dimensional and ambitious. For example, one goal states:</p> <p>All participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and</p>		

collective capacity to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems, including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

The "Where we are" section following this goal states: Harmony's teacher and principal evaluation systems were developed by our academics department based on the Texas Professional Development and Appraisal System. Our evaluations include walk-through protocols, six week report cards, and a formal evaluation rubric. Teachers receive individual feedback at the time of evaluation on areas for improvement around professional skill.

The applicant includes activities for this goal that include high-quality learning resources, including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and the tools to create and share new resources. The applicant states " Harmony will develop dashboards for their data system that will be customized for each end-user group. The dashboards will display real-time information about mastery and progress toward college- and career ready goals in understandable displays. Data dashboards will become a common reference point for conversations about student progress."The applicant works to attract highly-effective teachers and principals to their schools in several

Ways: Providing incentives for hard-to-staff subjects (math, science, computer/technology applications, bilingual/ESL, and special education); providing tuition assistance to Harmon alumni to attain a teaching certificate and return to a Harmony school; providing financial assistance to Harmony teachers to obtain a Master's of Education degree or principal's certificate and grooming them to become Harmony school leaders; supporting the pursuit of subject-based advanced degrees for Harmony school leaders; providing ongoing high-quality professional development to current staff to increase the number of students taught and led by highly-effective teachers and principals.

This high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching in order to provide all students the support to graduate high school college- and career-ready contained in this application is ambitious and achievable placing this response in the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant appropriately fulfills the central office and governance structure requirements as defined in this notice to provide support and services to all participating schools. Governed by a board, the LEA effectively functions as a traditional school district with central office management and uniform curriculum standards across all schools. Centralized structure ensures reform implementation across all schools, simplifies funds management, contract execution and procurement processes.</p> <p>Organizational structure of the applicant appropriately departs from the "district-like" model at the school site level where School Leadership Teams have the autonomy to set school schedules and flexibility allows for highly individualized instruction to meet the needs of individual students.</p> <p>The applicant allows students to demonstrate mastery consistent with the requirements of this notice through demonstrating achievement by meeting standard requirements of a course including Credit by Examination, benchmark assessments, on-line assessments, authentic activities including persuasive essays, and scientific experiments. Accommodation for the needs of students with disabilities is appropriately identified and commands individual staff and an array of special educational services. Similarly, English learners receive targeted instruction, which the LEA has demonstrated is effective given their student population, new student demographics and high educational attainment rates across the LEA.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant clearly identifies the key stakeholders and addresses uniform access to content, tools, and other resources via one-to-one devices for middle and high school students with interactive interfaces, outreach, education and technical training, as appropriate, for parents, laptop computers for teachers to ensure anytime access as desired. The proposed PBL includes a highly interactive component and appropriate technology consideration is included by the applicant with consideration given to the need for interoperability, seamless interface and user-friendly development of the proposed Data Dashboards.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)



	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed expansion of the applicants existing database that captures appropriate metrics but falls short of being optimally effective will improve the usefulness of the data in support of a continuous improvement process. Frequency of student performance data and relevancy and usefulness of metrics are requirements for a continuous improvement process and those shortcomings of the applicant's existing reporting network are resolved as proposed. The Instructional Decision-Making and Continuous Improvement Meetings table recognizes the need for multiple educational stakeholder participation continuously to identify issues early on and develop appropriate steps for resolving the same.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Communication is encouraged across and throughout the applicants' organization and is defined as necessary to the overarching goal of continuous improvement. Information is also shared in more traditional settings including Back to School Night and Newsletters and parents participate on a Site Based Decision Making Committee. The applicant lacks a more regimented communication and engagement campaign and rather relies on existing channels of communication to various stakeholders. Furthermore, the communication planned is one way; it would be more informative if two way communication engaged stakeholders. For this reason it is scored at 4.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has done an excellent job establishing ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets. The applicant has previously defined the overarching goals of the reform as college and career readiness as measured by the AEIS definition of College-Ready Graduates. In this section on-track indicators by grade and within subgroups are defined. The rationale, methodological approach to measurements and measurement evaluation are all plausible and consistent with the requirements of this notice and the goals of the applicant's plan earning a high score.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant proposes to calculate a Return-on-Investment as the means to evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D investments; a progressive and business-centered approach. The return will calculate the increase in student performance per dollar invested (spent) based on student achievement data. This is only one element of the plan. The applicant does not propose a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development activities or the new technology included in the grant. Hence, this response is a 4.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This proposal contains an excellent budget and budget narrative.</p> <p>The applicant's budget, includes a budget narrative and tables that identifies all funds that will support the project (e.g., Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds); and is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal; and clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities.</p> <p>The application explains that the Harmony Public Schools' have a robust financial standing. The budget separates one-time investments (49% of total project budget) from ongoing costs. The applicant also explains funding for the sustainability of project goals and fundraising efforts they will pursue.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

Costs associated with sustainability are less than the annualized cost of this proposal due to the nature of one-time investments in technology - dashboard development and PBL integration - , equipment, and teacher and stakeholder training. Investing the savings in a Technology Fund for future use is commendable. On-going costs include technology maintenance and upgrades as required and are expected to be covered through a Technology Fund and external fundraising. The description of plans for external fundraising are not fully explained. The majority of funds for the sustainability of this program are expected to be generated from future per pupil state funding as the LEA expands. All elements of a high quality plan are not included in this response; it contains a rationale and a partial timeline, but not activities, deliverables and people responsible.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents an excellent proposal for a Competitive Priority grant to establish partnerships that integrate services and supports for students and their families in middle and high schools and to increase their teacher's capacity to personalize learning for all students. The applicant will establish partnership with five external organizations to integrate the service and support for all students. The applicant's new position: Director of Student Health and Safety will monitor results on a biweekly basis to ensure implementation.

They propose addressing seven educational results and two family and community results. All nine results support the goals of the plan to increase the number of college and career ready students and increase equity.

The applicant's responses to criteria 1-5 are well substantiated and support the goals of their plan. They include goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and responsible parties. They included a budget for this Competitive Preference Priority within their overall budget. All line items in the social emotional learning project budget are reasonable and sufficient to support the implementation of this CPP proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has done an excellent job coherently addressing how the consortium will build on the four core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards, accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic and social/emotional needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate high school prepared for college and careers.

The vision articulated in this plan is comprehensive and builds on the four core educational areas. Providing college and career-ready standards and assessments and using data systems to improve instruction are addressed in the first of eight reform elements: instructional strategies including curriculum alignment, assessments and standards adoption. The development of pacing guides and weekly formative assessments in grades K-12 is ambitious and achievable.

Developing great teachers and leaders is addressed in the application's reform for number six and seven: teacher/principal recruitment and teacher/principal /superintendent evaluation. Working with local colleges and universities to recruit high-quality educators, along with providing career development opportunities for future educators currently enrolled in grades nine through 12 in the districts provides an opportunity for the districts to grow their own great teachers and leaders.

Total	210	197
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

While this optional budget supplement contains an excellent idea, it does not meet the requirements of the criteria:

(1) The rationale for the North Forrest ISD mentions that it is a low performing district with a diverse student population, although no mention is made of the commitment on the part of the North Forrest participants in this application. No letters of support are included from the superintendent, principal and/or science teachers in North Forrest ISD. The process for selecting this district is not explained.

(2) A high-quality plan is not explained. Specifically, activities, timelines, responsible parties, etc are not included in this portion of the plan.

(3) The proposed budget is very general and does not include a narrative that explains the purpose of each expenditure insofar as how the applicant would manage the project.

For the above listed reasons this is a low range response.