



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0443TX-1 for Idea 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:

IDEA Public Schools provided evidence of achievements obtained over the past 12 years building a network of 28 schools serving 13,000 students and the plans to implement the four core educational assurance areas. The IDEA Vision is to maximize personalized learning to ensure that all elementary school students perform at or above grade level by grade six AND promote college readiness among secondary students by accelerating student performance for college at all levels of performance.

IDEA Public Schools achievements and accomplishments include:

Evaluation Systems

In 2011, IDEA established the Rio Grande Valley Center for Teaching and Leading Excellence which was instrumental in the development of a new system of educator evaluation that will be piloted in spring 2013 and implemented in 2013-2014. IDEA provided a copy of the 2012 IDEA's CEO Performance Evaluation demonstrating a thorough and concise evaluation plan.

Preparing students for college or careers

IDEA established the mission "prepare students for success in college and citizenship – College for all Children". IDEA has an aggressive goal - to have 100% of students get "to and through" college. Educators will accomplish the goal by personalizing learning to address needs of all students whether performing at lower, middle, and higher levels. This will be addressed through the reimagined intervention period, summer institute; increase opportunities to pursue online AP and elective courses; upgrade data management system to provide student progress and available personalized paths to meet the state and system graduation requirements.

Spring 2011, IDEA established a blended learning instruction model "Better IDEA" focused on accelerating the performance of all elementary (K-5) students setting them up for success in a rigorous secondary (6-12) school.

Data System

IDEA has in place a comprehensive data portal – Lightbulb. It integrates student data sources into one system to provide the user (educators, parent, student) a concise and comprehensive report of the real-time students' data results. IDEA's goal is to upgrade Lightbulb to integrate student diagnostic and achievement data and baseline student data gathered from local, state, national assessment instruments providing a dashboard view and resources for educators to provide students with additional support.

Professional Development

IDEA plans to enrich and individualize professional development opportunities of rigorous content instruction and improving competency equipping educators with the necessary tools to provide every student with personalized instruction every day in every class. This will be accomplished by leveraging online training, training on the use of data, investment in resources to automate coaching tools and connect to TalentEd -the teacher evaluation and observation system individualizing feedback and training.

Partnership with community organizations

IDEA addresses that fact that 81% of their students are economically disadvantaged and have non-academic needs. They plan to expand its partnership with Communities in Schools.

Providing social, emotional, and behavior supports. IDEA is proactively partnering and seeking input by surveying the students, parents, educators, and leaders to identify the root causes of student persistence problems. Then they identify local

community partners to drive the necessary programming to support needs across identified root causes.

Overall, IDEA Public Schools has provided evidence of a clear and credible five-part approach to re-image teaching and learning to create an environment that closes gaps and raises student achievement while deepening student learning, and increasing the equity through personalized student support.

The IDEA five-part approach of improving quality of blended learning model at elementary level; redesigning the existing secondary instructional model to differentiate based on identified student needs; leveraging real-time, actionable data to provide personalized information and data for all students across all subject areas; develop teachers and leaders by improving their ability and empowerment to individualize the instruction for students; partnering with community organization to jointly address the identified non-academic student needs is a demonstration of a coherent and comprehensive reform vision of a plan to strengthen the core educational areas.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In essence, IDEA is proposing a five-part approach that will impact to some degree all IDEA schools in the Rio Grande Valley area as well as the one IDEA school in San Antonio.

- Improving the Quality of Blended Learning Model at the Elementary Level is estimated to impact all K-5 students in math and reading and 8700 students (grades 6-7) on campuses currently implementing Better IDEA;
- Summer Institute for credit recovery - estimated to impact 10% of students and acceleration – estimated to impact 33% of students;
- Online AP/Elective Courses is estimated to impact 15-20% of the students;
- Leverage Real-time, Actionable Data will impact all students in core subjects;
- Partner with Community Organizations to collectively address non-academic student needs estimated to impact 8 campuses during pilot and the remaining campuses in the next 3 years.

IDEA provided a detailed listing of the 25 schools identified to participate in the proposal as well as a breakdown of numbers and percentages for the requested areas describing the students and educators.

Overall, IDEA described a well-executed plan built on the track record of success of the 2011 district-wide implementation of the a blended learning approach, Better IDEA, across elementary grades and plans to expand all schools in the Rio Grande Valley area and the single school in San Antonio as well as the detailed identification and selection of participants.

IDEA proposed a plan of designing the secondary instructional model to differentiate based on student needs. The intervention period design will begin in three to five schools serving students in grades 6-12 in the areas of math and English language. The selection of the pilot schools will be based on “... principal and teacher interest, assessment of principal fit to manage a pilot and fit with school needs/objectives”.

Although it is a commendable approach for a selection process encouraging investment and support, it is unclear how IDEA will configure the selection criteria. It is unclear as to an instrument or tool that IDEA will utilize in the calculation and determination of the level of interest and principal fit in the selection of participating schools.

However, the proposal has discrepancies in the estimated number of participants to benefit from the plan. The proposal quotes several sets of numbers for participating students to be served:

- "...12,617 participating students...";
- "...IDEA Allen campus in Austin with 500 students in grades K, 1, 2, 6...";
- "...additional students who enroll after 2012-2013 estimated at 4,000 ...will benefit annually from the reforms by 2018...".

Yet, the proposal also states plans to "...scale this model to all additional students who enroll in IDEA campuses (31,000 students by 2018)."

It is inclusive from the information in the proposal as to the projected number of students to be participating in the program.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the middle of the high range.

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

IDEA Public Schools has boldly proposed what is basically a district-wide plan by scaling up to include in the proposal of reform all existing participating schools and currently enrolled 12,617 students in the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio as well as the 500 in Austin.

The IDEA proposal anticipates scaling up the reforms to help close and eliminate achievement gaps of students entering IDEA behind grade level (70% behind grade level in reading and 47% behind grade level in math); ELL, Special Ed, economically disadvantaged subgroups performing behind peers in summative exams; differences in the percentage of low-income students attaining a post-secondary degree.

Overall, IDEA provides evidence of a high-quality plan of the reform as clearly presented in the detailed logic model for achieving impact along with aligning the current situations, theory in actions, intended impacts, theory of changes concisely concluding in the ultimate goal of the utilization of the academic approaches with strong personalization of learning and rigor that the low-income students in schools in the Rio Grande Valley area and San Antonio and the single school in and Austin will succeed to and through college at rates similar to middle class students.

These will be achieved through:

- Strong college-going culture for all students;
- Blended learning model for elementary students (additional math and reading instruction);
- Secondary personalized learning model to prepares all student for college by re-imagining intervention period, enabling summer credit recovery and acceleration, and offering AP/electives online;
- Data system that integrates multiple data points and provides educators with exceedingly easy to use dashboards; Human capital pathways for educators that emphasize data-driven instruction.

The roles and responsibilities of the IDEA plan of reform are found in Work Plans throughout the proposal.

1. The Elementary School Personalized Learning Environment Implementation [as seen in Section C(1)(c)] aligns six years of activities with the responsible parties including the Director of Individualized Learning, Chief Human Assets Officer, teachers, Data Facilitators, Chief Operating Officer, and Director of Logistics.
2. The Personalized Paths for Students (AP/IB and dual enrollment) [as seen in Section C(1)(a)(v)] aligns six years of activities with the responsible parties including the Director of Secondary Personalized Learning, Coordinator of AP/Elective Courses, and RTTT-D Director.
3. The Teaching and Leading Supports for Personalized Learning [as seen in Section C(2)(d)] aligns six years of activities with the responsible parties including Director of Individualized Learning, Directors of Primary and Secondary Individualized Learning, Executive Principals, Chief Human Assets Officer, and Chief Operating Officer.
4. The Community Partnerships [as seen in the Competitive Preference Priority, Section 1] aligns six years of activities with the responsible parties including RTTT-D Grant Director, Executive Principals, Principals, Community Partners, Communities in Schools, and the External Evaluator.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

The IDEAL Public Schools clearly states that the annual goals are embedded in the school culture and the fact that they are displayed on the walls of all IDEA campus.

The primary outcome goals include:

- 90% of K-5 students will end year on/above grade level or grow 1.5 grade levels (where as enrolling students are 70% behind grade level in reading and 47% behind grade level in math);
- Eliminate achievement gaps between IDEA sub-groups & the statewide highest performing groups in K-12 math and ELA;
- 70% of 11th graders will score 21 or higher on the ACT;
- 100% of graduates will enter four-year colleges;
- 85% of IDEA graduates will graduate from college within 6 years;
- 85% of students will persist grades 9-12;
- 95% of IDEA students will have highly-effective or effective teachers and principals.

IDEA clearly provides a description, specific methodology, assessments [including national assessments, statewide assessments, DEIBELS, STAAR, PLAN, ACT] and/or end-of-course tests in math and language arts for each of the following areas: performance on summative assessment (proficiency status and growth); decreasing achievement gaps; graduation rates; college enrollment; postsecondary degree achievement.

Each of the areas are charted for grade levels K-12 and postsecondary; outlining and comparing the IDEA subgroups to state performance in a total of overall as well as breakdowns in subgroups- Limited English Proficiency, Special Education, Economically disadvantaged; using a baseline either of SY 2010-11 or SY 2011-12; stating goals for 5 years from SY 2012-13 to SY 2016-17 (four years RTTT-D grant and one-year post grant).

Overall, the applicant demonstrates the desire and vision to improve student learning and performance and increase equity through setting high goals for all students.

Such bold goals based on the State targets include:

- 90% of K-5 students will end year on/above grade level or grow 1.5 grade levels (where as enrolling students are 70% behind grade level in reading and 47% behind grade level in math);
- Increase percentage of K-5 graders ending year on/above grade level in literacy and writing – from 50% baseline year 2010-11 to 90% 2015-16;
- Increase percent of 3-8 graders who meet standards on math assessment – from 87% baseline year 2010-11 to 90% 2015-16;
- Increase percent of 9-11 graders who meet standards on ELA assessments – from 87% baseline year 2010-11 to 90% 2015-16;
- Increase percent of 9-11 graders who meet standards on math assessments – from 90% baseline year 2010-11 to 90% 2015-16;
- Increase percent of students who have at least one year of student growth on summative math assessment – from 70% baseline year 2013-14 to 90% 2015-16;
- Increase percent of 9-11 graders who show growth in College and Career Readiness – from 40% baseline year 2012-13 to 90% 2015-16.

IDEA has presented evidence that the school has and can demonstrate gains that are equal to or exceed State targets.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA Public Schools provided an explanation and charts to demonstrate records of student success. The charts clearly outlined and compared the State TAKS passing rates of IDEA students to students in Region 1, Region 20, state charters, and all state schools.

IDEA provides the following student data:

- chart and description of the 2010-11 TAKS Comparison of Region 1, Region 20, state charter schools, and state results for Student Passing Rates in the areas of all tests at 86% [21% increase over others], reading/ELA at 94% [10% increase over others], writing at 96% [9% increase over others], math at 92% [21% increase over others], science at 93% [21% increase over others], social studies at 99% [10% increase over others];
- chart and description of the 2009, 2010, 2011 TAKS Student Commended Rates comparison with Region 1, Region 20, and state results in the areas of math and reading/ELA;
- chart and description of the 2009-10 and 2010-11 English-language Learners Progress Indicators comparison with a Region 1 and state results - IDEA at 90% compared to Region 1 at 76% and State at 80%;
- charts and descriptions of the 2010-11 TAKS Student Passing Rates for LEP Students comparison with Region 1 and state results in the areas of reading/ELA at 94% [9% increase over others], math at 92% [11% increase over others], science at 93% [21% increase over others], all tests at 86% [15% increase over others];
- charts and descriptions of the 2010-11 TAKS Student Passing Rates for Special Education Students comparison with Region 1 and state results in the areas of reading/ELA at 90% [13% increase over others], math at 87% [14% increase over others], science at 84% [28% increase over others], all tests at 82% [24% increase over others];
- chart and description of 2007 to 2010 College-ready graduates comparison with Region 1, Region 20 and state results in the areas of ELA and math - increase from 29% to 73% in 4 years;
- chart and description of 2007 to 2010 College-ready Hispanic graduates comparison with Region 1, Region 20 and state results - increase from 27% to 73% in 4 years;
- statement for the 2010-11 High School Graduation Rate of 95%.

IDEA demonstrates evidence of significant reform in the fact that all IDEA campuses are rated “exemplary” or “recognized” by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

IDEA provides a description and chart explaining the 2010-11 TEA Accountability Ratings comparison with Region 1 and Region 20 in which 31% of IDEA schools rated Exemplary, 38% of IDEA schools rated Recognized, and 31% IDEA schools did not rate due to not being in operation for the required length of time.

None of the IDEA campus qualifies as a persistently low achieving school. IDEA Public Schools serve disadvantaged students from regions where other schools are rated “academically unacceptable” and “schools in need of improvement”. Therefore, by serving student who would otherwise be attending chronically low-performing schools, IDEA has essentially accomplished the equivalent of turning around students of failing schools.

IDEA Public Schools provided explanations of how student performance data is made available on a regular base to teachers, students, and parents. It is clearly stated how the teachers and students receive additional support, training in the use and purpose, guidance to analyze the data in order to utilize the data to inform and guide the educational journey to and through college.

Overall, IDEA provided supporting data and description to demonstrate evidence of success in advancing student learning by improving student learning outcomes; closing achievement gaps; achieved the State rating of “exemplary” or “recognized” for all IDEA campuses to demonstrate significant reform; and make available performance data to students, educators, and parents while providing training and support.

However, although IDEA reports that they have ten years of achieving outstanding results for students and stated the achievement rating of "exemplary" or "recognized" for all IDEA campuses yet, the student data presented to demonstrate records of success ranged from one year up to four years for student outcomes.

The inconsistency of student data results presented and without providing an explanation or reason for the lack of additional years does not meet the highest level of quality as the Grant Criteria clearly states for the requirement of “...a clear record of success in the past four years...”.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the middle of the high range.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA describes the use of the IDEA website to share current school and student information with stakeholders, parents, students, and community members including financial data, annual reports, progress toward organizational goals, and progress

toward student achievement goals.

A screen shot was provided of the following items obtainable from the IDEA website: goals and current progress, previous year's budget, student demographics, enrollment and the service of translation into Spanish.

As a participant in the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) and school-level information is available both on the CRDC website and via a link on the IDEA website.

Parents, investors and other stakeholders requesting process, practice, and investment data are able to access information online.

Overall, the IDEA Public Schools have demonstrated a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.

However, it is inconclusive from the evidence presented in the proposal if and/or how IDEA makes available the school-level expenditures from State and local funds for the actual personnel salaries of school-level instructional and support staff as required and defined in the notice.

Therefore, the IDEA Public Schools scored in the low of the high range.

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

IDEA Public Schools provides an explanation that they are a charter school authorized by the Texas Education Agency. As a charter school, IDEA is monitored and accredited under the statewide testing and accountability system.

Although the state of Texas did not adopt the Common Core State Standards, it is commendable that IDEA has adopted standards and curriculum that are aligned to the Common Core as well as the state standards.

IDEA implements an ambitious personalized learning environment for teachers and students.

IDEA fully implements the data system, Lightbulb, to access summative data from state assessments to analyze and guide student learning.

Overall, IDEA has demonstrated that as an authorized charter school it implements quality personalized learning environments above and beyond the state requirements. IDEA demonstrates the evidence of having sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools provided a description and actual documents to show evidence of a meaningful stakeholder engagement, input, and support during the development of the proposal.

IDEA engaged teachers, counselors, principals, parents, students, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, local business, civic groups, and city mayors in the collaborative process of creating the proposal. A RTTT-D district webpage was established to provide stakeholders an avenue of information, input feedback, ask questions, respond to surveys, students to field test proposed opportunities and provide feedback.

IDEA conducted one-on-one conversations, meetings, and webinars.

IDEA and the IDEA Board of Directors distributed packets of information, executive summary, FAQ, feedback survey to 12 mayors as well as business community members, nonprofits, and institutions of higher education.

As a result IDEA received 90% support of participating IDEA educators and 30 letters of support from mayors, higher educational institutions, city officials, school board of directors, Boys and Girls Clubs, United Way, local businesses, nonprofit foundations, hospitals, school principals, and students.

Overall, IDEA created a strong community of engaging stakeholders in support and will assist in the implementation of the proposal.

IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools has demonstrated the ability to implement a “game-changing personalized instruction inside and outside of the traditional classroom” through the 2011 opening of Better IDEA a new primary school blended learning model.

IDEA analysis plan included a community of stakeholders who assisted in creating a strong vision, examining student achievement data daily, identifying root causes of performance gaps, interviews and focus groups to identify solutions to meet the needs of educators and students, assess the IDEA strategic plan and create the theory of action, and the revision of the proposal based on the feedback of the stakeholders.

Overall, IDEA has demonstrated the execution of a high-quality plan for implementing personalized learning environments through the new primary school blended learning model in 2011 as well as a thorough analysis of needs and gaps, identifying possible causes, feedback from key stakeholders, and assess fit with the strategic plan.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools provided evidence and a description of the robust plan to improve the quality of the blended learning model implemented in 2011 and redesign the secondary learning model enabling individualize learning.

IDEA empowers and prepares the students to experience success to and through college while empowering educators and parents as the support system and partner in the students’ educational journey.

IDEA engages and empowers students in the ownership and becoming the responsible person for their learning.

- K-5 students regularly meet with the math and ELA teachers to review progress and set goals, teachers track daily progress, students set weekly goals for academic standards.
- 6-12 students vary according to age and/or grade level appropriate curriculum, courses, activities. Students participate in college prep curriculum, learn how to plan ahead to be accepted to college, identify top choice colleges, how to apply and pay for college, set individual goals for academic performance through analyzing results of tests such as EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT.
- Students participate in college prep math, science, ELA, humanities and at least two AP courses determine by individual interest.
- Students have access to a dual enrollment program at local universities offering a range of course electives, summer opportunities, and apprenticeships with local businesses.

IDEA is proposing to expand academic opportunities supporting all levels of students to include;

- actionable dashboards to students and parents support data-driven decisions for college and career readiness;
- increase the online and distance learning AP and elective courses which will build the foundation for students to take ownership for their learning;

- expand the development of non-cognitive skills;
- re-imagine the “intervention” period to meet the individual needs of each student through additional assistance in subjects and skills via a variety of modes;
- create summer institutions for students to earn credit recovery and/or accelerate in subject mastery;
- student groups restructured bi-weekly to meet personalized learning goals and needs;
- portable computer for students to participate in online learning in the classroom;
- extend commuter hours making computers more accessible to families without internet and/or computers;
- add books to AR Zone library bringing IDEA up to acceptable standard of offering 12 books per student;
- and adding writing/reading software to learning lab.

IDEA students’ use of technology is integrated within their learning starting in K through 12 grades. The training and resources of technology-enabled tools are embedded in the daily core academics. IDEA is proposing a actionable dashboard, training, daily tracking, identify areas of need, goal setting, and planning as part of the blended learning environment.

Overall, IDEA has shown evidence of a high-quality and an extensive plan to personalize the learning environment and support each individual student K-12 in preparation graduating, going to and completing college, and being career ready.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

IDEA Public Schools has outlined a vigorous plan to provide training and support mechanisms for teachers and principals as they improve the learning and instruction through personalizing each student’s learning environment supporting the journey to successfully graduate college- and career-ready.

IDEA presented the following components:

- Staff development cycle – opportunities to set and reach goals, receive feedback to reflect on teaching and managerial practices, document self and student improvements;
- embedded professional development – tailor to meet needs of teachers;
- instructional coaching – observations, walkthroughs, data conversations;
- quarterly data days – teams of teachers identify specific supports to accelerate student progress and instructional practices;
- pathway to leadership – paraprofessionals receive training and support to progress into additional educational roles;
- individualized online professional development

IDEA addressed the provision of tools, data and resources through the use of:

- Actionable Dashboards – integrated view of data;
- success forecasting – based on student data profile predict necessary additional support;
- video library of professional development – collection of best teaching practices available to educators “on demand” via school data portal system on Lightbulb.

IDEA school leaders and leadership teams plan to re-launch teacher and principal evaluation system including the factoring in student growth as measured by performance on a variety of instruments, determine placement on continuum of educator effectiveness; coaching tools – automate formative to individualize feedback and tailor professional development on data trends; and a data dashboard with school leader view.

IDEA plan focuses on recruiting and retaining highly-effective teachers for all IDEA schools especially for the hard-to-staff subjects of secondary math, science, and special education:

- Hosts a 300+ 1:1 recruiting sessions targeting high potential candidates;
- Hired 250+ new teachers SY 2012-13 and anticipates similar pace as the opening of new school to serve additional

students;

- Pay scale is adjusted for entering teachers in order to be more competitive with surrounding districts;
- Partners with Teach For America (TFA) to host corps members in the hard-to-staff secondary subjects including math, science, and special education;
- Retaining highly-effective teachers – implemented a 3-year process for a teacher career progression system moving from proficient to master teacher rankings;
- Instituting financial incentives based on teacher evaluation system and non-financial incentives to participate in professional development and take on leadership roles.

Overall, the IDEA Public Schools plan to provide training and support mechanisms for teachers and principals as they improve the learning and instruction through personalizing each student’s learning environment supporting the journey to successfully graduate college- and career-ready is a high-quality plan that is research-based providing the most current methods, techniques, skills, and strategies as well as demonstrates a strong track record of success.

The meticulous high-quality plan of the support systems to empower the teachers and principals, providing training and techniques, practice and coaching, necessary tools and resources, actionable dashboards, continuation of and strengthening the evaluation process, recruiting and retaining the most highly-effective teachers will provide all IDEA students with a personalized learning environment while supporting them to graduate college- and career-ready.

However, the IDEA plan provided documentation of the evaluation tool for educators and the CEO evaluation yet, it is unclear of a proposed plan and/or current tool in place to evaluate the principals as required and defined in the notice.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the high of the top range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools provided a detailed description of the practices, policies, and rules.

IDEA Central Office or Headquarters (HQ) descriptions, organizational chart, summary of position and job descriptions – HQ scaled up to meet rapid growth of charter school while increasing student achievement and college readiness.

The HQ will consist of:

- Chief Program Officer team and a RTTT-D director – responsible for implementing the upgraded Better IDEA, redesigning the intervention period, redesigning the summer credit recovery and acceleration institute. The RTTT-D director will lead the overall implementation of the grant, program design, budget, lead stakeholder engagement process, track progress of goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and milestones.
- Chief Human Assets Officer team – responsibilities to manage the design and implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation system, create online video exemplars to support leadership and professional development and lead the recruitment process for new positions.
- Chief Growth & Development Officer team – responsibilities to serve as advisors to the program team in the implementation of the grant components and support the RTTT-D director in grant compliance and reporting.
- Chief Operations Officer team – responsibilities to oversee the upgrade of Lightbulb, the data integration project, and creation of actionable dashboards. An Individualized Learning IT director will be hired.

The IDEA plan will provide the school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility and autonomy. Each school principal is ultimately the decision maker for school personnel decisions of performance-based hiring and retention; defining specific roles and responsibilities for school teams; creating and maintaining school-level budgets; school schedules and calendars for

regular day, before- and after-school, additional days for credit recovery and acceleration institutes.

In order to serve the needs of the students and reach beyond the typical education offerings, IDEA plan will provide secondary level students opportunities, support, and tools to earn credits based on mastery rather than time spent on topic. Students will be assisted through programs such as Accelerated Reader, blended learning labs supporting math skills, summer credit recovery courses and acceleration institutes.

In spite of the challenge of serving a diverse student population of which 20.4% (3.5% higher than state) are English-language learners and 4% qualify for special needs, IDEA’s personalized learning environments are uniquely suited to address student needs while supporting mastery rather than age-appropriate grade level.

Overall, IDEA Public Schools demonstrates a comprehensive plan with a wealth of supportive stakeholders from HQ teams to principals with flexibility to teachers, individualization learning opportunities will support student success by demonstrating progress through mastery and the provision of learning tools, resources, instruction for all students including those with special needs and English learners.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

10

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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools has provided evidence of developing an infrastructure supporting personalized learning for educators, parents, and students based on not only what is proven through research but what is practical and meets the needs of families dealing with life circumstances.

IDEA supported infrastructures include:

- Laptops or tablets furnished to principals, teachers, co-teachers to access IDEA data portal;
- Helpdesk support – 9 hours of day, 5 days a week
- IT support – campus based

IDEA proposed infrastructure plans:

- Actionable, easy access data dashboard – concise information what to and how to instruction based on student needs;
- Video exemplars of best practice instruction via IDEA data portal;
- Data coaches – analyze student data and assist in developing individualized learning plans;

IDEA is aware that a large percentage of students and families they serve are a high-need population who has a limited access to technology and broadband Internet (60+% of Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio households do not have a broadband subscription).

IDEA proposes to have:

Additional opportunities to access learning content, tools, and Internet outside of school day by opening school-based computer labs after school hours and/or during the summer;

Expand access to integrated dashboard to obtain student courses, assessment information, and adaptive math software from anywhere and anytime. As well as secondary students will be able to access AP/electives, interventions, and credit recovery/acceleration courses;

Parents and students will be able to access all real-time student data in an open data format in order to utilize information beyond daily/weekly progress, assessment performance, grades, progress to college and career readiness;

Ensure two data systems are interoperable.

Overall, IDEA Public Schools has developed a strong infrastructure supporting personalized learning and plans to incorporate improvements according to the identified needs.

However, there is a tremendous responsibility being placed on parents to provide feedback and to access student progress via

school portal, Lightbulb. It was proposed to have open access to school computers after school hours and during the summer.

In light of the shared fact that over 60% Rio Grande Valley has limited access to technology and broadband Internet, there is no evidence presented to demonstrate current or past success in parents coming on school sites and/or the level of parent participation or involvement.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the middle of the high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>IDEA Public Schools proposal is a well-organized detail continuous improvement process plan that includes collecting and addresses feedback from the “end users”; hiring a full-time Grant Director; teams and committees – senior leadership, oversight, advisory; quarterly and yearly goals/performance measures and; use of the RTTT-D website; quarterly and annual reports (summary of progress and financial) shared with the Board and on website for public.</p> <p>Oversight and Advisory committees will have the responsibilities of monitoring, making adjustments, planning and setting 4-year goals beyond the RTTT grant.</p> <p>Overall, IDEA has a strong history demonstrating the evidence of a strong track record and management capability, financially soundness, and responsibility through the implementation of 2010 i3 grant.</p> <p>The IDEA proposal demonstrated a quality plan and strategies of utilizing the feedback of the “end users”, hiring a Grant Director, oversight and advisory from senior leadership, quarterly and yearly reports, RTTT-D website tool, summary of progress to key stakeholders and public, and the methods to monitor, adjust, strengthen during the grant and 4-years beyond the RTTT-D grant.</p> <p>Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>IDEA proposal describes an ongoing plan supported by the oversight committee and grant director making decisions based on data and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders will be through a variety of modes including Dashboards with updated real time information, data and reports as well as collections of school and community stakeholders’ feedback for the Advisory Team.</p> <p>Overall, IDEA has a strong proposal to implement plans of action to for communication and to encourage the engagement of stakeholders ensuring continuous improvement.</p> <p>Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>IDEA has identified over 14 performance measures to track both formative and summative indicators which include all grade levels served, teachers and students, academics (math and ELA), FAFSA forms, on-track to graduate, college prep assessments (EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT), health/fitness, and 9th graders who graduate from 12th grade in IDEA within 4 years.</p> <p>Performance measures for cognitive and non-cognitive are extremely detailed and include a rationale for choosing each measure; explanation of how it will be measured providing rigorous, timely, and leading information tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action regarding the implementation success or areas of concern; and description of the review and improvement process over time if it is insufficient to measure implementation progress.</p>		

Overall, the IDEA detailed performance measures are comprehensive and achievable in order to provide a clear and high-quality approach to a continuous plan of improvement throughout and beyond the grant.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

IDEA Public School proposal has an extensive plan of evaluation of how well the RTTT-D investments helped to accomplish desired results. The comprehensive personalized learning strategy includes activities related to data systems and technology, human capital investments, student need-based instruction, classroom and instruction redesign, and non-academic supports.

IDEA proposed to work with an external evaluator to develop a model for evaluation to include the efficacy of the Better IDEA blended learning model on 6th and 7th grade campuses; evaluate the magnitude of change in student outcomes for those attending the summer institutes for credit recovery and acceleration, the re-imagined intervention and acceleration model; and how well investments result in a more productive use of time, staff, and money.

Overall, the IDEA evaluation plan demonstrates the evidence of being achievable. The proposal will analyze the plan's personalized learning strategies for student outcome while aligning with the proposed components.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools provided an exceedingly detailed budget proposal.

The explanation of the budget includes a listing of requested grant funds of \$29,242,882 additional private funding of \$1,952,492, school budget of \$52M and how it is embedded in the structure of supporting personalized learning at the elementary level; explanations of the line items in the budget and the components it will fund; identification of the one-time investments as well as the on-going operational costs; and the goal to "create innovative models that can sustainably be replicated across the country".

Overall, the IDEA proposed budget and budget summary is comprehensive, reasonable, and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposed plan. The investments for improvement, redesign, leverage, develop, partnership all align closely with the proposal's five major parts of the RTTT-D approach to ensure elementary students are on or above grade level and secondary students can succeed to and through college.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

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

IDEA Public Schools provided in detailed a description of a sustainability plan.

The plan included an explanation of the estimated amount for the one-time investments as well as the on-going operational costs. Plans are to utilize the increased local and state funding generated by the anticipated growth of schools (from 28 to 42) which will increase approximately by 75% during the grant period.

The plan outlined a 3-year budget summary 2016-2019 reflecting the potential sources and use of funds.

Overall, the IDEA proposal presented evidence of a high-quality plan to strategically utilize the RTTT-D funds in building capacity to ensure a sustainable budget to support the project goals three years beyond the RTTT-D funding .

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools has presented a compelling argument demonstrating the needs of the students through citing statistics and survey results.

IDEA outlined a comprehensive plan to expand and scale up the partnership with Communities In School (CIS), possibly the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services as well as other potential partnerships to provide services to additional school campuses based on the identified needs of students, parents, and educators. Services may include crisis intervention, individual counseling or support groups, drug prevention assistance, basic life skills, and enrichment opportunities with the goal of re-engaging students in the classroom and providing the vision for a more productive life.

IDEA identified ten community partnership desire results that align and support the proposed RTTT-D desired outcomes. The community partnership desire results are:

- Improve student attitudes about school, themselves and future career opportunities;
- Improve daily school attendance;
- Improve student persistence from year to year;
- Improve student persistence form grades 9-12;
- Improve student health and fitness;
- Increase the number of students who say the feel safe at school and in traveling to and from school;
- Increase the number of students who say they have a caring adult at school and in the community;
- Decrease teen-pregnancy and drug use rates across IDEA campuses;
- Increase parental involvement;
- Increase student participation in extracurricular activities.

IDEA proposes to create an actionable and easy-to-use “Community Partnership Online Dashboard” to help address the identified community partnership desired results. Addressing the ten identified social, emotional, behavioral, health, physical needs of the students and parents are targeted to increase persistence and academic results.

The use of the Community Partnership Online Dashboard will track the information and collect the student data, both cognitive and non-cognitive, which will be monitored by the grant director and oversight committee.

A needs assessment will guide IDEA as to which viable partnerships are needed within the context of the local community. The community partner(s) and IDEA will collaborate to identify required changes in order to meet outcome goals and to pilot new partnerships on additional school campuses.

A partnership of community service providers, teachers, and administrators will increase the capacity in allowing the main focus and time of the school staff to support the academic needs of the students.

The partnership with the community service providers will work with the school staff in providing training and guidance while identifying those students at risk of not persisting at IDEA; assess the school needs; assess the student needs; build a community of support for the school staff through establishing relationships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, parent and volunteer organizations.

The partnership will then provide the additional and more-qualified resources in the schools to assess student barriers to learning; identify patterns of student learning gaps and needs; select the appropriate interventions for students; provide direct services to students – counseling, mentoring, free or low-cost health and dental care, locate students a safe place to live, ensure students have transportation to and from school.

The partnership with the community service providers will alleviate time teachers and administrators currently spend on improving classroom management and student behavior thus building the capacity of the school staff to ensure time will be utilized for instruction and to support student achievement.

IDEA proposes to hire Regional Site Coordinators who will be instrumental in the integration of education and other services within schools through daily oversight, management of community partnerships, and working with school staff to identify needs of students.

IDEA proposed that partnering with the community service providers to provide resources, dedicated staff, and programming for the identified student needs will enable teachers and principals to focus on instruction rather than attending to non-academic issues and classroom management. The partnership will be the capacity and focus of the school staff to support the academic needs of the students.

IDEA Oversight Committee, Advisory Committee, Grant Director, and the community partners will design an action plan that identifies and inventories the individual student needs, identifies resources required to support student needs, and provides a timeline for program implementation and evaluation.

There will be parent/student and teacher focus groups twice a year as well as continuous feedback loop available via the online dashboard.

Utilizing parent/student survey results and school data, IDEA identified ten performance measures focusing on producing positive outcomes in the areas of wellness, education, family and community, and school and community.

The evaluation process will be designed to identify procedures that are appropriate for the population served; expected outcomes of services; determination if procedures and expected outcomes were met. These evaluation results will provide knowledge and data to make modifications and build capacity to adapt instruction and classroom management practices aligning to the needs of the student population.

Overall, the IDEA Public Schools has presented a well-defined proposal to expand the Communities in School Program . Partnering with community organizations will produce results that impact social, emotional and behavioral outcomes and empower schools to meet student persistence and college and career readiness goals by providing social, emotional, behavioral, health, physical services to students and parents.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the highest of the high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools provided evidence and a description of a well-executed plan to improve the quality of the successful 2011 district-wide implementation of the blended learning model at the elementary grades to expand to all schools in the Rio Grande Valley area, selected schools in San Antonio and Austin as well as redesign the secondary level learning model to create learning environments that will empower and enable individualize learning.

The IDEA proposal provided a comprehensive and coherent plan outlining the five-part approach of improving quality of blended learning model at elementary level; redesigning the existing secondary instructional model to differentiate based on identified student needs; leveraging real-time, actionable data systems to provide personalized information and data for all students across all subject areas; develop highly effective teachers and leaders by improving their ability and empowerment to individualize the instruction for students; partnering with community organization to jointly address the identified non-academic student needs is a demonstration of a coherent and comprehensive reform vision of a plan to strengthen the core educational areas.

IDEA provided supporting data and description to demonstrate evidence of success in advancing student learning by improving student learning outcomes; closing achievement gaps; achieved the State rating of “exemplary” or “recognized” for all IDEA campuses to demonstrate significant reform for all students; and make available performance data to students, educators, and parents while providing training and support.

Overall, IDEA has demonstrated the capacity to create and execute a comprehensive blended classroom learning environment for all students while providing support tailored to the needs and goals of each student empowering them to graduate college- and career-ready.

Therefore, IDEA Public School has met the Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	205
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	14

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

IDEA Public Schools proposed plan is to increase the total number of college graduates from low-income families by 50 percent in the communities served by IDEA schools.

IDEA will provide apprenticeships opportunities for enrolled 11th graders to attend a 4-7 days "Summer College and Career Preview Program" in order to better position students to have the social capital which is less-often realized by lower-income minorities, but vital to college and career readiness.

IDEA proposes a partnership with a college to host the Summer College and Career Preview Program. Selected 11th grade students will attend the residential and academic campus.

IDEA proposal of \$1,993,130 over the 4 year period will cover the expenses:

- Stipend for director role- one teacher per school (current 7 and anticipated to be 10 at end of grant period);
- Average cost of student to attend 7-day apprenticeship program/summer workshop;
- Travel expenses

Overall, IDEA presented a quality plan for an optional budget supplement to host the proposed Summer College and Career Preview Program addressing opportunities for 11th grade students to achieve in school and beyond by participating in college-led workshops.

However, it is unclear of the selection criteria that will be utilized to select the 11th graders who will attend and participate in the Summer College and Career Preview Program.

It is unclear which of the IDEA schools will be involved and if IDEA plans to partner with additional school districts.

Therefore, IDEA Public Schools scored in the middle of the high range.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0443TX-2 for Idea 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 IDEA School Department's reform vision builds on the four core educational assurance areas to maximize

personal learning and and to promote college readiness The focus of the application is to deepen student learning and increasing equity through personalized student support.

- IDEA has developed Lightbulb, a data system that integrates many sources of data to provide educators, students and parents access to student progress. This will be broadened to link with other data systems as the plan is implemented.
- IDEA's grades K-5 are aligned with the Common Core Standards for reading, language arts, and math. Grades 6-12 are aligned to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards, Act standards, Advance Placement Standards, and English Language Proficiency Standards. Assessments are linked to these standards.
- An educator evaluation system will be piloted in the spring of 2013 and implemented in 2014.
- Currently there are no schools that meet the definition of low performing or lowest performing schools. There are students who will attend this district who would otherwise be enrolled in such schools.

The applicant has articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement and for students to track their educational progress and needs. The plan builds on a district-wide implementation of blended learning across grades and details a five-part approach to personalized learning, Data analysis is frequent and organized to allow educators, students and parents to follow student needs and progress. Descriptions of what will be offered and how it will be tracked and evaluated are provided for each component. It is scored in the high range.

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

10

9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA Public School's reform will support high-quality implementation that meet the competition's eligibility requirements.

- The IDEA Public School swill build on a 2011 implementation of a five-part approach across the LEA that will provide additional opportunities for students and teachers to select that will be available throughout the grant. These include summer institutes, professional development, intervention period redesign, etc.
- All IDEA Public Schools have an enrollment of 40 percent or more students who qualify for free or reduced lunch support. Schools range from a high of 90 percent to a low of 65 percent who meet this requirement.
- Data provided shows that 28 percent are high needs students, 20 percent are English Language Learners, 4 percent qualify for Special Education services, and 94 percent are Hispanic.
- Data is included to demonstrate IDEA's approach to implement Race to the Top in 25 schools with 12,617 students.
- Names of schools to be served includes grade levels, subjects, number of participating students and numbers of students by subgroups
- As full enrollment is attained, the district will; use private and local funds to expand the program to throughout the district.

The applicant included the number of participating educators. All schools will be served and a plan to scale up the program as enrollment increases or new school open is included. Strategies to sustain the plan after the grant period have been addressed. It not clear where pilots programs will be implemented.

The plan addresses the requirements of the application in a manner that is likely to support LEA and school implementation. This section has been rated in the high range.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA Public Schools is a high-performing, open-enrollment district of charter schools primarily in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and two schools each in San Antonio Texas and Austin Texas. All IDEA schools will participate in the

reform proposal.

- Currently there are 13,000 students on a wait list to attend IDEA schools. The plan will extend to include all new students as they enroll in existing schools as well as any that may be added.
- If current results are achieved in reading and math, the summer institute will be expanded to include humanities.
- The district is interested in scaling the reform to meet the needs of a growing enrollment and to be able to replicate the model in new schools they may open. They are also interested in documenting the process to share with other districts who may be interested in implementing this kind of programming.

The IDEA Public Schools have included a high-quality plan that describes how the program can be scaled up as enrollment increases and as new schools may be added. The applicant also plans to scale up implementation across current schools over the grant period. There is a logic model describing the current situation, theory of action, intended impact, theory of change, and ultimate goal that is clear and easy to understand. One component of the plan, the person/position responsible for oversight, was not included in this section. Although it was clear in other sections, this component would strengthen the case for scaling up the program on such a large scale. This section is rated in the high range.

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

The IDEA Public School District has presented a vision that is likely to result in improved student learning and performance as required by this notice.

- Summative assessments use 2011-12 data as a baseline. Assessments are documented for each goal area with goals determined for the all students group as well as for LEP, Special Education and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups.
- Goals are ambitious and are equal to or exceed state targets. Student achievement of 90% or more is a goal for all students and by subgroups.
- Goals are established for each grade for Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics.
- Goals are established for graduation rates.
- Goals are established for college enrollment/graduation rates.
- A goal of 85 percent of graduates graduate from college within six years has been established.
- Data tables provide baseline data and annual targets.

The IDEA Public Schools goals use the Texas measure for grade level standards. There are goals to increase students progress and to decrease achievement gaps for subgroups through the assessment of student progress and methods to meet the needs of students who are not progressing in a manner that would reach their goals. Goals to increase graduation rates and college enrollment are also substantial and there are plans to collect the necessary data to have an accurate assessment of of these goals. Strategies for students to know the specific skills needed for college/career success will allow them to determine their progress against these standards. Student awareness of college/career needs would make the graduation goals/college attendance vision achievable.

The vision and goals for this section would place it in the high range.

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	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA Public School District's record of demonstrated evidence of advancing student learning and achievement include:

- Student performance on the 2010-11 rate higher than all Texas schools and charter schools on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAKS).
- Scores have increased while student enrollment has increased 28% annually over the past 10 year.

- Enrollment does not give preference to students based on race, at-risk, or disadvantaged populations.
- Students outperformed statewide assessment by up to 15 percentage points when broken out by student subgroups.
- Student achievement scores are given for 2009-2011
- The high school graduation rate for 2010 was 95%.
- No IDEA campus qualifies as a persistently low-achieving school.
- Multiple opportunities have been provided to make performance data available to students, educators, and parents through a dashboard on the website.
- College enrollment data is limited to institutions in the state university system. Private colleges are not in the system.

Data documenting a record of student success over the past four years has been provided for Limited English Proficiencies, Special Education and racial subgroups. All IDEA campuses are rated "exemplary" or "recognized" by the Texas Education Agency, The district reports that 86% of students have passed all tests taken and this compares very favorable with other districts in region. The graduation rate for 2011 was 95%. Data was provided for raising college enrollment and to allow to extend data collection to include colleges other than state schools. Plans to collect this data have been addressed and increasing these rates for all students and for subgroups is part of the vision.. The past record of success for the district has been positive showing a steady increase in student achievement.

The data shows a positive trend in student achievement but the data provided does not document progress over four years as was requested. This places this section in the low end of the high range.

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

Transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments are provided through;

- A website is available to everyone and includes financial data, annual reports, progress toward organizational goals, and progress toward student achievement.
- The IDEA School District participates in the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). This website documents expenditures for personnel salaries at the school level for instruction staff, teachers, and non-personnel expenditures.
- School level information is available on the CRDC website with a link provided on the IDEA Website.
- Data is available in Spanish
- An IDEA communications manager is available to assist with requested information that is not easily accessible on the Website.

The applicant details strategies to provide a high level of transparency through their district website and the CRDS system, The two websites are linked and district support is available if help is needed in accessing the data.

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

Conditions and sufficient autonomy are provided through IDEA's status as a charter school.

- Charter schools are subject to fewer state laws than are public schools and have the flexibility to implement school schedules and structures to best meet the design requirement for personalized learning environments. The district has flexibility to implement school schedules and structures to best meet the design requirements for personalized learning. This includes class size, school calendar, and schedule. For example, IDEA can give credit for a class even if the student is not in attendance for 90% of the days the class is in session.
- IDEA's authority as a charter affords it significant autonomy and opportunity to innovate using personalized learning environments. The district does adhere to the core assurances of standards and assessment, great teachers and leaders, and data systems to support instruction.

"The IDEA Public Schools has provided sufficient evidence to determine that it has a high rating in this section.

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

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Beginning in August 2013, the IDEA Public Schools began a collaborative process to document meaningful stakeholder support .

- 90% of participating IDEA educators indicated support for this proposal.
- An informational portal was established for the Race to the Top-District Webpage which provides program background and pertinent information regarding the application with an online comment section for all stakeholders to read, to ask questions, and to provide feedback.
- A parent and student input and feedback survey was part of the on-line portal. This contained information on the RTTTD grant, gave parents/students the primary focus of the grant and where to access resources and tools, asked for comments, and provided contact information. Teachers provided a short instruction session on this survey during class time to assist students in completing the survey.
- Multiple methods of gathering input from faculty, parents, and students were developed including, conversations, meetings, webinars, and surveys.
- Over 30 letters of support were received from business, higher education, nonprofits, mayors, principals, students and other stake holders.

The applicant created a wide range of support for this proposal including support from 90% of the educators. This will be important in the implementation and success of the plan.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has developed a high-quality plan for implementing personalized learning environments. Needs and achievement gaps were identified and used to solicit solutions.

- Student achievement data was reviewed.
- Potential initiatives were identified through discussions with educators and students. Five gap areas were identified and the potential root cause was determined.
- An action pan was developed based on the identified gaps and root causes.
- Feedback was solicited from students, parents, teachers, principals, Board of Directors, and community members.
- Initiatives were assessed based on district needs and their alignment with personalized learning priorities.

IDEA has demonstrated deliberation in creating a vision that targets the needs of the school community as the logic behind their reform proposal. This is a continuous process where the data will be reviewed again and the other gaps and needs will be identified for consideration. The analysis of needs and gaps is rated in the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has developed a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

- The central office or HQ is staffed with qualified personnel to provide services for hiring, technology, finance and other organizational issues so that principals and instructional staff can focus on student instruction and progress.

- School leadership teams have feasibility and autonomy in deciding personnel decisions, to define specific roles and responsibilities for team members, craft their own yearly budget, and to school schedules and calendars.
- Assessments are aligned with the curriculum to evaluate student mastery and progress.
- Support for principals and instructional staff is provided through executive principals and coaches.
- Students participate in groups based on mastery of topic rather than grade levels. High school credit is awarded on mastery rather than seat time. Students must pass end of course exams in core subjects to graduate
- Instruction is adapted for English language learners and for students who qualify for Special Education.
- All staff is issued laptops with access to the Lightbulb portal with technical support available at all schools through a help line.
- Because a high number of parents do not have internet access at home, IDEA makes time for them to use computers after school and during the summer so that they can review their student's progress. More access would be provided as a result of receiving this grant.
- Information is available in Spanish.
- Digital learning resources will be fully accessible to students with physical disabilities.

The applicant has addressed all components of this section and has shown evidence of a high-quality and comprehensive plan to provide a personalized learning environment and support for each student to graduate career/college ready.. Support for instructional staff and parents are sufficiently defined to place this section in the high range. Principals have been developed aligned with current strategies to implement personalized learning strategies and with those proposed in the grant. These include prioritizing data-drive, standards-based instruction; implementing a coherent assessment strategy that is clear on purpose; investing in professional and leadership development; hiring and developing strong managers to support leadership staff; common collaborative planning and reflection time across grade levels and content areas; system professional development alighted to specific staff needs; and, organization structured to provide support and services to all participating schools. IDEA will introduce more opportunities for secondary students to earn credit based on mastery rather than time spent on a topic. Texas recently replaced grade level summative exams in core subjects with end-of the course exams.

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

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

To support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready, The IDEA School Department developed the Rio Grande Valley Center for Teaching and Leading Excellence which includes recruitment, selection, on-boarding, staff development, evaluation, and career progression.

- IDEA supports the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready through a staff development cycle that provides multiple opportunities to set and reach goals,.
- Professional development on the implementation of the "Better Idea" personalized learning model is provided at the beginning of the year.
- Ongoing instructional coaching is provided to teachers at least two times a month throughout the year.
- Quarterly data days are held where grade level and subject specific teachers meet to review data.
- School leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment through teacher/principal evaluation systems, automate tools to support observation, a vision available on an easy-to-use dashboard.High-potential candidates are sought through ambitious recruiting using advice from Teach for America.
- Predictive competencies have been determined as part of the selection process.
- On-boarding is used to train new hires.
- Staff development is provided monthly to all teachers/administrators to meet specific needs in implementing personalized learning plans.
- A teacher career progression to move from proficient to master teacher ranking is in progress.
- Staff have access to training, tools, policies that support high-quality personalized instruction.

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.

- Actionable dashboards will be developed to provide data with recommendations for instruction that are role specific and available to parents.
- Success forecasting provides teachers with appropriate instructional programs known to accelerate students learning based on predictability of success.
- Video teaching exemplars are available to teachers on demand as they are pertinent.

IDEA has developed training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress.

- By 2014, the teacher/principal evaluation system will expand from teacher actions to include student growth based on formative and summative criterion and norm-referenced instruments. Compensation will be linked to this evaluation.
- An "app" will be used in educator observation for principals and coaches to individualize feedback to teachers and tailor professional development.
- A dashboard will be created to create a school leader view of the implementation of personalized learning.

A high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education) has been developed.

IDEA believes that the area is one where it is hard to recruit and maintain high quality educators especially in hard-to-staff subjects.

- \$1.5 million annually has been provided to adjust salaries to be more competitive with surrounding districts.
- Financial incentives based on the teacher evaluation system will be implemented by 2014.
- Non-financial incentives include opportunities to become instructional coach.
- There are no statistics to provide a clear description of the need for teacher recruitment and/or retention. This would be especially important given the anticipated increase in enrollment.

These examples rate the IDEA School District in the high range. Significant work has been done regarding the implementation of personalized learning through implementation of professional development, aligning teacher salaries with those in the area, identifying and tracking student need, and progress. Specific tools are available assist in adjusting instruction when needed. The district vision for all students to graduate career/college ready and for all stakeholders to have what is required to accomplish this vision is provided in a high-quality plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has developed a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

- The central office or HQ is staffed with qualified personnel to provide services for hiring, technology, finance and other organizational issues so that principals and instructional staff can focus on student instruction and progress.
- School leadership teams have feasibility and autonomy in deciding personnel decisions, to define specific roles and responsibilities for team members, craft their own yearly budget, and to school schedules and calendars.
- Support for principals and instructional staff is provided through executive principals and coaches.
- Students participate in groups based on mastery of topic rather than grade levels. High school credit is awarded on mastery rather than seat time. Students must pass end of course exams in core subjects to graduate. Details on how students who are not making progress needs would be met included providing extra time, summer school, Accelerated Reader instruction, blended learning labs, or accelerated institutes.

- Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparative ways.
- Instruction is adapted for English language learners and for students who qualify for Special Education.
- All staff are issued laptops with access to the Lightbulb portal with technical support available at all schools through a help line.
- Because a high number of parents do not have internet access at home, IDEA makes time for them to use computers after school and during the summer so that they can review their student's progress. More access would be provided as a result of receiving this grant.
- Information is available in Spanish.
- Digital learning resources will be fully accessible to students with physical disabilities.

The applicant's response scored in the high end range because it demonstrated a high-quality plan to put in place practices, policies, and rules to facilitate personalized learning. It addressed how learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students will be provided. Given the focus on English language learners in this application, this element is extremely important. The applicant made very clear that it has already begun taking steps to instituting these policies and practices and has wide support at the LEA and school-level to do so.

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

- The district recognizes the need for parents to have computer access and has a plan to make computers available after school and during the summer.
- Each school has technical support staff available daily.
- An open data format to make the data available to parents and students is part of this application.
- Lightbulb is the currently the primary data system. Part of this proposal is to integrate human resources with a TalentEd program to make it interoperable.

The applicant has described a high-quality plan to support personalized learning. The plan includes technology and a dashboard system to provide this data in an easy to read format with sufficient technical support to ensure that all participating students will have access to the key components of the plan. Other strategies include the ability to learn from video exemplars and assistance from data coaches. Technical support is provided to ensure access to tools and resources needed. This places this section in the high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

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

- The proposal details leadership time, two stakeholder committees, and a grant manager to oversee effective management and implementation of the grant. The roles are detailed and resumes of senior staff are provided.
- Goals will be posted on the website, progress shared and feedback will be solicited.
- The LightBulb internal data system provides a central location for all performance data so that it can be maintained, reported, and used for analysis of effectiveness.
- The grant provides a list of ways that continuous improvement could be approached. A RASI (Responsible, Accountable, Support, Inform) decision matrix to ensure that all responsible parties meet timelines and deliverables for implementation. A Dashboard will be developed with indicators that identify potential issues so that mid-course corrections can be made.

- The applicant is interested in using its plan to assist others who would like to replicate the plan.
- The applicant has a plan for staffing and management of the plan and for continuous improvement that will remain in place during and after the grant period has ended.
- The website will be used to post annual and quarterly goals, dashboard summary results, action plans for continuous improvement, emerging perspectives on best practices and other pertinent information.

The IDEA School Department has developed a well thought out plan and comprehensive strategy to ensure continuous improvement with sufficient strategies in its planning to monitor, measure, and publicly share information. The management teams at the district and school level are in place and a strong data system can be used to implement the necessary analysis and reporting requirements. The plan includes descriptions of measurement tools, rationale for selection, and how rigorous and timely information will be used to make needed adjustments and how it will be measured overtime to ensure implementation. The strategies are rigorous and places this section in the high range.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School District has a high-quality plan with strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders to inform stakeholders of progress toward goals and to solicit feedback.

- Stakeholders will be informed through the website portal which can be accessed any time. Notifications will be sent to alert them to updates.
- Other communication will be provided through annual reports, e-mail, and newsletters.
- Feed back will be solicited surveys and working with community partners.
- The Advisory Team will engage school staff and community members through focus groups, feedback at faculty meetings and with parents interaction events, and online surveys. This group meets quarterly.
- A feed back portal will be available to all stakeholders.

The IDEA School Department has a communication plan to inform stakeholders of progress against grant goals and to solicit their feedback. Structures are in place to provide up to date implementation through the website. The dashboards will inform stakeholders on current status and historical trends. Meetings and electronic forms of communication provide opportunities to continuously improve the plan. The applicant has presented a well-conceived and thorough plan for ongoing communications with stakeholders.

All major stakeholder groups are addressed in the plan and the applicant has considered unique communication strategies for each type of group. Given this plan, it is likely that the applicant will continue to communicate effectively with stakeholders throughout the grant period. As a result, the applicant's response has been scored in the high range.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has provided ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures.

- The applicant has included the required performance categories and number of measures.
- The rational for selecting each measure is based on research or best "scholarly" thinking. Tests to be used include a description of what will be measured and why it is important. Strategies for how the data will be reviewed and used to improve the measure over time if needed is provided. For example, Interventions are included for students not meeting the "on-track to graduate" measure or interventions such as health care, electricity, food, and a safe home environment for students not meeting the high school persistent measure

The IDEA School Department performance measures are based meeting the personalized learning standards of their plan. They set high standards and recognize the needs of their students. Measures will be reviewed and interventions

are available for students not progressing at the expected level. The applicant's performance measures are ambitious in the sense that they represent significant expected increases over the grant period for very challenging measures. They also seem to be achievable, based on the applicant's past record of success. This plan would rank this section in the high range.

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

The IDEA School Department has developed a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities through evaluating student outcomes and assessing productivity in the use of time and staff.

- Use of the data system provides teachers with recommendations allowing them to spend more time on instruction.
- Predictions regarding additional support students may need will assist teachers in selecting appropriate materials with a predicted success --- forecasting.
- Existing structures will be used beyond school ours to better serve students and the community.
- Ineffective instruction will be eliminated to avoid waste of time and funds.

The applicant has provided a plan for evaluating its Race to the Top work. It has set forth a plan by which it will analyze impacts of the RTTTD funded activities for a more productive use of time, more productive use of staff, and a more productive use of money. Strong evidence on how this work will be conducted has been included and it is linked to the vision for reform.. This section is rated in the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department's budget is well defined.

- The budget includes all sources of funding including RTTTD that will be used to support the proposal.
- The budget is sufficiently detailed in the use of staff positions, staff development, technology purchases to support the proposal.
- The rationale for investments was thoughtful and provided sufficient detail to document how they would be used to implement the program.
- Private funding of almost two million dollars has been secured from private funding sources.
- The applicant has a history of private funding.
- The grant will support the current personalized learning model that is funded at approximately 52 million dollars for 2012-2013. This funding would expand and accelerate this initiative. .
- 40% of the funding will be used for one-time investments of software, and training for pilot programs that will provide infrastructure and provide a highly trained staff.

The rationale for investments was thoughtful and clear. The expenditures are based on expanding the current curriculum in the implementation of personalized learning for its students. Purchases of technology and software

support the project in building infrastructure to organize, review, and distribute information on student progress. Professional development is included to build capacity within the school to enhance teaching and evaluation strategies. The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support these components of the plan and places this section in the high range.

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

10

10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals.

- Enrollment is increasing so that an increase of 75% is expected in local and state funding.
- The anticipated budget for three years beyond the grant period shows an increase of funds for the grant projects that are not one-time investments.
- Much of the grant will be used to support on-time investments that will require little or no additional funding.

The district introduced began their personalized learning environment prior to applying for the RTTTD grant and key elements of personalized learning environments are already built into the on-going financial model. The grant will provide infrastructure in technology and professional development that will be important in sustaining the plan. The IDEA School Department plan has provided sufficient budget details to indicate that the program could be sustained after the grant period. This section is rated in the high range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has described the need to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students

- The IDEA School Department provides a description of a needy area of the state. Annual income is well below the state average. The number of students living in poverty has increased 8% since 2000. Living conditions for students living in the *colonias* are less than ideal. Other poverty indicators show the same trend.
- Student mobility is a challenge. The applicant has data to support that students who persist in attend the IDEA School Department have a significantly higher graduation rate.
- The applicant has set a goal of having 85% of students persist in their enrollment at the district and will partner with the necessary supports to improve social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. The plan is to expand and to scale up the partnership with Communities in School and other agencies as needed to meet the needs of students.
- Partnerships will identified to meet educational, wellness, and school and community needs. Partnerships include dropout prevention programs that provide school-based services to assist students arrive at school ready to learn and student wellness programs to provide students with nutritional strategies. Ten results have been determined that align and support the outcomes of the RTTTD vision.
- A work plan for community partnerships has been developed to list activities, timelines, and responsible parties. Desired results have been identified and outcomes developed.
- A Needs assessment survey will be conducted by 2014. New Community partnership programming will be launched in 2016. The program will be expanded following the pilot year.
- Regional Site Coordinator will ensure community partnership resources are appropriately targeted to meet student need.

- Goals include improved school attendance, improved student health and fattiness, decrease teen pregnancy and drug use rates, increase parental involvement, and increase student participation in extracurricular activities.
- IDEA has detailed partnerships with community services to provide resources, staff, and access to programs to students who need these services which frees teachers and other educators to focus on instructional needs.
- An evaluation process will be designed with procedures to identify services appropriate to student needs, expected outcomes for these services, and determination of outcomes. Results from this evaluation will be used to made modifications if needed and to build capacity for staff to match instruction and classroom management practices that align with student needs.

The applicant has provided a work plan for community partnerships with goals and timelines. Partnership goals/outcomes are ambitious and are based on student persistent and student progress. A data system will be used to track and measure the desired result indicators and to scale to identify new partnerships and to expand services. Staff capacity building will include knowledge of programs and referral processes. A plan for continuous monitoring has been developed. The partnerships are designed with a special emphasis on students facing significant challenges caused by poverty, a highly mobile lifestyle and other welfare issues. The district has a history of such partnerships which indicates that the partnerships will be coherent and sustainable and will meet the ambitious goals for students and families. The applicant's plan is comprehensive and integrates education and other services and has a high rating.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department has coherently and comprehensively addressed a plan to build on the educational assurance areas to increase student achievement to high levels in grades K-6 and to build on this concept throughout the program to align with college and career ready standards. The plan includes appropriate measures to evaluate achievement levels and to personalize the learning of each student. Students and parents are informed on student progress throughout the process. Educators would have access to support through coaches and professional development. There is significant community support from city officials, business leaders, and private agencies documented through letters of support, partnerships with high education and businesses, and foundation funding of over one million dollars annually in tier four year budget.

The IDEA School Department has articulated a plan that with adopted standards and assessment to prepare them for college and the workplace has appropriate data systems to measure that progress and to inform students/parents/community about that progress. They have documented a plan to make the district attractive to highly qualified teachers in this high poverty area and have adjusted salary scales to make them attractive to the kind of employees that would assist in implementing their plan. Their principal/teacher evaluation for effectiveness is on schedule. They have documented a history of academic achievement for students and have not had schools identified as schools needing to be turned around.

Total	210	202
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The IDEA School Department is requesting additional funds to operate a Summer College and Career Preview Program designed to increase the total number of college graduates from low-income families by 50%.

- The plan is consistent with the applicant's goals.
- The applicant has budgeted for student participation in the program and for staff to manage it. Costs have been detailed and are reasonable for the number of students to be served.
- The plan is designed to provide opportunities for low income students to have access to college by attending 10 week-long, skill based work periods where they will be matched with local businesses or universities to support day-to-day operations, and to gain a skills in a career path of student interest.
- This activity was chosen because research indicates that a high rigor education combined with extra-curricular activities increase motivation and determination for students to attend college.
- In 2011 several IDEA campuses partnered with Texas Tech and principles from this project were used to create a reasonable and sufficient budget based on previous experiences.
- it is not clear that the applicant planned to implement this project aacross two or more LEAs as requested. It is clear that it would be implemented across all of the IDEA schools.

The applicant has provided a high quality plan to provide extended learning through summer programs. The proposal represents a clear solution for high poverty and Hispanic students to realize work/college experience that would increase ambition and confidence in advancing their horizons. The applicant provided a strong rationale for choosing these students and how the experience would be beneficial. The plan will be carried out throughout the IDEA schools in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The proposed budget is based on actual costs and is adequate to operate the program.

The optional budget supplement would enhance the grant and provide opportunities for low income students to support the implementation of their personalized learning experiences placing this in the high range.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0443TX-3 for Idea 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 applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision as evidenced by ambitious academic goals for all students. The vision builds on extant work in four core educational assurance areas of:

- accelerating student achievement
- personalized learning environment
- increasing equity through personalized student
- deepening student learning, and support

The district articulates a clear and credible approach to reaching their goals, therefore this section earns 10 points.

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

10

10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has designed a comprehensive strategy that targets grade bands with critical needs and will support implementation of proposal goals.

1. All schools will benefit from one or more of five reform strategies.
2. List of all schools is provided
3. The total number of participating students is included,
 - o number of participating students from low-income families,
 - o participating students who are high-need students,
 - o participating educators.

The district presents a well targeted approach to implementation and is awarded 10 points.

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

10

10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district has a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change for all schools and grade levels in the district.

The plan outlined in the application, which uses a logic model that incorporates a theory of action and a theory of change will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

10 points are earned for this section.

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

10

10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has specified goals and targeted outcomes across summative assessments, achievement gaps, graduation rates, college enrollment rates; and postsecondary degree attainment. Primary outcome goals include:

- 90 percent of K-5 students end year on/above grade level or grow 1.5 grade levels
- Eliminate achievement gaps between IDEA sub-groups and statewide highest-performing groups in math and ELA for grades K-12
- 70 percent of 11th grade students score 21 or higher on the ACT
- 100 percent of graduates enter four-year college
- 85 percent of IDEA graduates graduate from college within six years
- 85 percent of students persist grades 9-12
- 95 percent of IDEA students have highly-effective or effective teachers and principals

In consideration of these high and ambitious goals, 10 points are awarded here.

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:		
<p>The LEA has demonstrated a remarkable record of success as evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86 percent of IDEA students passed all tests taken; • 94 percent passed reading/ELA; • 96 percent passed writing; • 92 percent passed mathematics; 		

- 93 percent passed science; and
- 99 percent passed social studies.

These results include the state-wide accountability tests. Improvement is trending upwards and across all populations. The district expresses its interest in moving all student groups to even higher levels of achievement.

The applicant has multiple data resources available to them through IDEA’s teacher/principal evaluation and appraisal software, TalentEd Perform. Through the LEA’s Guideposts of Excellent Teaching (GET) rating system, IDEA leaders rate each teacher and input data into Talent Ed. The dashboards used in this system automatically color-code ratings so leaders can see at a glance which teachers or competencies need additional focus. This powerful rating system allows for individualization of training, increasing the effectiveness of school based and district-wide professional development sessions. IDEA managers (school leaders, teacher leaders, and others who supervise instructional staff) and those they supervise use this data to work together to identify areas of individual focus, freeing everyone to concentrate on the highest-impact areas for their own professional development.

All 15 points are earned for this section.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant provides extensive data on its Internet site. Salary information is organized by classification of employee. However, actual school level data are not apparent. Two points are assigned for this section.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant is a charter school dsitric and as such has extensive flexibility to implement the personalized learning environments described in its proposal.
 This criterion is clearly met and 10 points are awarded here.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 A clear description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback is include in the proposal.

1. 90% of educators in the district support the proposal.
2. Parents and students were surveyed.
3. An extensive list of supporters, with copies of letters is provided. Even David Robinson "The Admiral" and NBA all star sent in a letter of support!

The district has done an exemplary job in reaching out to stakeholders and earns 10 points.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 The LEA presents a clear and well defined plan for an analysis of the applicant’s current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within the applicant’s proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

This includes:

1. creating a vision for IDEA’s ideal implementation of personalized learning environments,
2. evaluating current status,
3. seeking input on opportunities for improvement,
4. developing a vision,
5. assessing initiatives, and

6. seeking feedback on their proposals.

All five points are gained in this section.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has 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. The plan includes approaches to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements, and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs. Plan is divided into two broad categories, Elementary and Secondary.

Specifically at the elementary school level, the applicant will:

1. Expand access to blended learning spaces for families: Students and families express interest in being able to use IDEA computer labs to log-on to the blended learning software to make progress toward their weekly goals after school and/or on the weekends. Students and parents can access a personalized dashboard view of data that summarizes student progress on the individualized learning software and a unique log-on that enables them to use the adaptive math software from home (see example parent and student dashboard view in Appendix C(1) -8, p. C-33). However, access to high-speed Internet is quite limited among IDEA families. Under this proposal, IDEA would extend computer lab hours after school and/or on weekends so that students could log-on to the adaptive math software one to three additional hours/week. By making computers more accessible to families, IDEA will engage parents more deeply in student learning.
2. Provide wide range of leveled books for student use in AR Zone: Students in the AR Zone first identify their reading level by taking diagnostic assessments. They then meet with the AR Zone facilitator to set personal reading goals. Educators encourage students to select books that meet interests from a range of fiction and non-fiction titles that are at the right level for them. Books are available in the AR Zone library and are color-coded by level. For example, students know that they should select an "orange" book or a "blue" book. Students read the books, and then take an online AR quiz to assess comprehension. The quizzes help teachers and students understand when students have mastered a given color level of books and are ready to move up to the next level. Teachers and students then receive real-time feedback on reading level and comprehension very limited list of titles from which students can select. Under this proposal, IDEA would add 42,000 titles to meet the "acceptable" standard for school libraries' collection, which is 12 books per student.
3. Pilot new approach to the Better IDEA model by adding writing/reading software to the learning lab: As a Race to the Top District, IDEA will pilot a new approach for English Language Arts instruction in the learning lab by using adaptive learning software for the first time (right now, students read offline and then complete quizzes online using Accelerated Reader). In the last two to three years, a number of providers have introduced high-quality adaptive reading software. IDEA will pilot this software in 2-3 campuses and compare student performance results for students who use the software versus those who use Accelerated Reader. If performance results using adaptive reading software exceed results from offline student reading, IDEA would scale this approach across all schools at the conclusion of the grant period.

At the secondary level the applicant will:

1. Reimagine the secondary "intervention" time to better meet the needs of students at every level by using a range of modalities of learning:

All students in grades 6-12 participate in a 60 minute intervention period. Although the vision for this time is that students will have the opportunity to focus on subjects or skills where they are behind, in practice the use of time varies widely across schools and is sometimes used as a study hall. As a Race to the Top District, IDEA would identify 3-5 principals with interest in piloting the following approach to intervention period during spring 2013 and then scale this model up to all participating schools during the grant period:

- Weekly formative assessments and quarterly interim assessments provide data to identify biggest gaps (focus on math and ELA);
- Lightbulb data system provides actionable recommendations about how to group students according to needs and identify appropriate modality for learning (online tool, small groups, large group, etc.);
- Student groups restructured bi-weekly (once every two weeks) to fit the students' personalized learning goals and

needs, while meeting the daily individualized needs students in the instructional settings; and

- Computer carts allow some students in classroom to complete online learning programs, while other students receive small group or 1:1 instruction from teachers.

2. Launch a summer institute that provides students with additional supports to reinforce subject content for students requiring credit-recovery and/or help students to accelerate subject mastery: As of 2012-2013, IDEA students must pass Texas ?end of course? exams to graduate from high school. Pass rates on the first year of exams were lower than expected. At the same time, there are some IDEA students who could easily accelerate their math performance by a year (completing algebra over the summer and moving to geometry during the next school year) if they can access high-quality math instruction during the summer. To address learners at either end of the spectrum, IDEA will launch a summer institute for students who do not pass end of course exams and/or who are identified by educators as being prepared to launch ahead a year in math. The institute will use online adaptive math software to support both kinds of learners. In addition, teachers will provide 1:1, small group, and large group instruction, flexibly re-grouping students throughout the summer depending on learning needs. This blend of expert face-to-face instruction, adaptive software and our ability to flex the use of time during the summer will allow our students to make rapid advances in learning.

Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Student are engaged in using these tools from Kindergarten on. A detailed chart of activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties is included in the application.

The applicant presents a comprehensive plan of action in this section and is awarded the full 20 points.

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

The applicant presents 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. The plan includes multiple approaches to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs

(a) All participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity through the following approaches:.

Recruitment: Through the IDEA i3 grant, Teach for America (TFA) provided substantial advice to IDEA on structuring a recruitment and selection process to yield the most-qualified teachers. IDEA hired 250+ new teachers to support eight new schools before the start of school year 2012-2013 and anticipates needing to continue hiring teachers at a similar pace as IDEA opens additional schools to serve more young people. To fill these spots with highly-effective educators, IDEA held an ambitious and wide-reaching annual recruiting process in which it targets high potential candidates by hosting 300+ 1:1 recruiting sessions.

- Selection: The selection process for teachers is based on our evolving understanding of predictive competencies (skills and behaviors that lead to success at IDEA). In addition, IDEA partners with TFA to host corps members in hard-to-staff secondary subjects, including math, science, and special education.
- On-boarding: IDEA hosts summer training institutes for new teachers annually. For example, last year the Elementary Teaching Academy introduced all new elementary school teachers to the "Better IDEA" model. Modeled on the Teach for America Summer Institute, new teachers led IDEA's summer school for elementary school students, using the same personalized learning model that we use in all elementary schools during the school year;
- Staff development: Teachers participate in monthly professional development sessions designed by principals to meet the specific needs of teachers within their buildings. School leaders participate in monthly sessions managed by executive principals. In addition, teachers receive ongoing instructional coaching throughout the year, including support at least two times/month via observations, walkthroughs, or data conversations to help educators use data to identify individual student needs and adapt content and instruction to develop optimal learning approaches for all students.
- Teacher and Principal Evaluation: IDEA is in the middle of a three-year planning process to implement a teacher career progression system in which teachers move from proficient to master teacher rankings, modeled after highly-successful progressions at Achievement First and YES Prep Charter Management Organizations. The combination of teacher actions (as measured by a rubric, teacher reflection and goal-setting, achievement of those goals, twice monthly

observations, and principal or manager rating that considers all of these inputs) and student results (as measured by performance on a variety of formative and summative criterion- and norm-referenced instruments over an entire school year) will determine an educator's placement on a continuum of educator effectiveness. Placement on this continuum will, in turn, determine a range of rewards – including additional compensation, PD opportunities, organizational recognition, leadership opportunities (as a reward for demonstrated educator effectiveness) and inform human capital decisions as educators move through the teacher school leader pipelines.

- Career Progression: IDEA hosts a number of leadership institutes for new and emerging leaders, including year-long leadership pathways programs for new instructional leaders. These programs are designed to build critical skills and provide non-financial incentives for teachers and leaders to stay at IDEA.

(b) The district has plans for 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. The outlined plans seem ambitious yet achievable.

c) The applicant has a plan for all school leaders and school leadership teams to have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The training, policies, tools, data, and resources are also planned. Current practice in this regard looks good, but proposed plans will greatly enhance these efforts.

(d) The applicant presents a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education). The plan includes a relationship with Teach for America, models for teacher retention, and Teacher Institutes.

The district puts for a detailed and credible plan for recruiting, developing and deploying high quality teachers and leaders. They report that 250+ teachers were hired to staff eight new schools. This level of growth is a challenging aspect of the district. A relationship with Teach for America is noteworthy, but a broader recruitment pool is apparently available to meet their demand for teachers and leaders. It is not clear how quality recruitment occurs in these cases. The applicant meets most of the criteria in this section and is awarded 19 points.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed.

The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by—

- (a) Organizing the LEA central office to provide support and services to all participating schools;
- (b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools 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;
- (c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic;
- (d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways; and
- (e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

The applicant meets all required areas in this section and gains 15 points.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. However, the district serves a high poverty area and many families are not able to access available student data or school district resources. The application includes strategies for overcoming this situation. The district does have strong policies in place and infrastructure for most students and educators. Eight points are awarded here.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The strategy addresses how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, that include investments in professional development, technology, and staff. They have divided responsibility for continues improvement among senior leadership, an oversight committee, an advisory team, and a grant director. The district has a clear plan for monitoring progress toward grant goals. All 15 points are awarded.

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

The applicant presents strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The strategies include A Dashboard access able to all stakeholders, an Advisory Team, an Oversight Committee, and a Grant Director. Five points are awarded for this element.

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

The applicant lists an extensive and detailed set of measures appropriate to all populations to be served. This includes multiple measures and rationales for pre K - 12 students. All subgroups are accounted for, and trend data for these populations are nonintegrated. Five points are earned.

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

The District presents detailed plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, that include professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time, staff, money, and other resources in order to improve results, through such strategies as improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and structures that address service delivery, school leadership teams, and decision-making structures. All five points are awarded.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables—

- (a) Identifies all funds that will support the project including Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds;
- (b) Is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal;
- (c) Clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities,
 - (i) The budget includes a description of all of the funds (e.g., Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds) that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these sources; and
 - (ii) Identifies the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period, as described in the proposed budget and budget narrative, with a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments

The budget is clearly linked to established goals and strategies outlined in the proposal and presents a plan for sustaining funded projects beyond the grant period. Therefore 10 points are awarded.

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

The applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan includes support from State and local government entities and financial support. The plan includes a budget for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds. 10 points are earned for this section.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a limited picture of existing partnerships that integrate public and private resources in partnerships designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. However, their plan gives highest priority to students in participating schools with high-need students. The applicant's proposal does include a modest plan to provide student and family supports that focus on a subset of these needs for high-need students. The community served by the district is highly impacted with an array of socio-economic needs and the applicant puts forth a reasonable plan for identifying priority areas for attention. Eight points are awarded.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the 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 and graduation requirements. The applicant describes how it will 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. The applicant meets the Absolute Priority.

Total	210	202
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The district presents a stand alone plan that will not adversely effect the Absolute Priority if not funded. The plan has a clear, discrete, and innovative solution that can be replicated in schools across the Nation. Goals, activities and resource needs are delineated. An adequate and reasonable budget is included that aligns with project goals. 15 points are earned for this element.