Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0181NC-3 for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a narrow vision of an education reform whose goal is to prepare K-12 students for college- and career and to compete in the global economy. Although there is a brief reference in the application to developing "teacher capacity to prepare students for Common Core State Standards", it is not apparent if the district has a clear plan for integrated the state adopted college- and career based Common Core standards and corresponding curriculum. Therefore, the extent to which the applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in core educational assurance area one can not be determined.

The applicant's proposed goal to focus on literacy skill development in the primary grades is laudable. However, as presented in Table 2: Algebra 1 and English 1 Academic Achievement in CMS, 2010-12, there seems to also be a need to address the apparent stagnation of student performance in Algebra I. Therefore, the scope of the proposed vision is limited and hence not sufficient as a comprehensive reform vision.

The applicant's proposed vision for education reform includes a technology component as a strategy to ensure personalized learning through blended learning and a deepening of student learning. However, it is not clear as to the extent to how providing a computer for 15% of the total K-8 students, an iPad for every K-5 student, and Chromebook tablets for "middle schoolers", ensures a personalized learning environment or deepens student learning. The applicant states that it will explore software such as "game-based technology" to engage students. However, it is unclear if this exploration is complete. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain if the applicant has a clear and credible approach to accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning.

In contrast, the proposed *Personal Passport for Progress* strategy is promising in that the goal is to "equip each learner with a digital tool that deepens student learning, meets their individual academic interests, and enables them to complete common and personalized learning tasks. It provides a digital learning plan for each student which will enable students to define learning goals, monitor their progress, and challenge themselves to higher achievement by setting stretch goals. Notable is the opportunity for student reflection that this tool will provide.

The applicant's vision includes a sufficient strategy for developing effective teachers to support the implementation of personalized learning and developing students to compete in the global economy. Professional and Technology Facilitators will have monthly training using technology tools to advance teacher skills in all of the districts schools. In addition, the development of effective teachers will be enhanced by the applicant's goal to allow ample time for common planning time and for "extensive, job-embedded training."

The applicant presents limited evidence of a vision to recruit, retain, and reward a "premier workforce". With the recent restructure of staff at the district level, the cross-functional teams will focus on the goal of recruitment, development, retaining, and rewarding educators as a component of their five-year strategic plan. However, the extent to which this "focus" on recruitment, development, retaining, and rewarding educators is comprehensive enough to meet the need of the proposed

reform model is not apparent since limited details were provided. It is also not clear as to the applicant's vision for turning around lowest-achieving schools.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's process to select schools to participate is appropriate and decisive. Of the eight criteria used to select participating schools, three are most notable: (1) Full school team support of proposed personalized learning approach, (2) Evidence of current reform work underway, (3) Limited family and/or community engagement.

The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities. There are fifteen participating elementary schools, eight participating middle schools, and one K-8 school. Since there are no participating high schools, the extent to which the applicant's approach supports high-quality LEA-level reform that prepares students for college and career is limited.

The applicant provides sufficient information regarding the number of participating students from low-income families, who are high need students, and participating educators. Notable is the applicant's reform reach to a population of pre-kindergarten students.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a plan for the implementation of the proposed reform model. The listed five overarching goals and four implementation components are clearly stated. The applicant states that if awarded the RTTD grant funding, it would allow them to scale-up the "balanced literacy" component of their vision in only the twenty-four pilot schools. The applicant further asserts that additional funding would be needed to scale up to all elementary schools.

District wide scale of the *Personal Passport for Progress* tool is more likely to occur in that the extensive investment (planning time, expertise, human capital, technology infrastructure) required for the development of the tool will surely be capable of expansion to all schools in the district. Furthermore, the applicant has secured an initial investment of $100,000 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to launch planning for this work.

Although the proposed reform model is a part of the larger district-wide strategy to maximize student achievement, the extent to which the applicant plans to scale-up the implementation components of the proposed vision to more than the piloted twenty-four schools is not clearly stated. Therefore, the applicant presents only a limited plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled-up and translated into meaningful district-wide reform.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's methodology of using the "New Annual Measurable Objectives Targets" for determining growth in performance on summative assessments is very appropriate. It is most likely that the applicant will achieve the proposed reading targets in grades 3-8 because the proposed reform model is intensely focused on literacy skill development, particularly in the elementary and middle school grade levels. The methodology for determining the achievement gap targets is appropriate. The achievement gap targets are ambitious yet achievable for Reading in grades 3-8 in

that all post-grant targeted goals are at least a 50% decrease from baseline.

However, it is not as apparent how the proposed reform model will yield the mathematics performance and gap targets in grades 3-8 and the Algebra 1 performance and gap targets for grade 10 since the proposed reform model does not include a direct focus on mathematics knowledge, processes, and skills development. Furthermore, since there are no high schools listed as participating schools during the grant period, it is not clear how the proposed reform model will yield the English performance and gap targets for grade 10. Therefore, the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning as demonstrated by the proposed summative assessments and achievement gap targets is limited.

The proposed graduation rates and college enrollment rates are ambitious. Notable is the goal to have college enrollment targets at least 90% for most subgroups. For those subgroups whose targets are less that 90%, a reasonable rationale is presented to support their proposed targets. However, the achievability of the proposed graduation and college enrollment targets are limited since there are no high schools included as participating schools during the grant period.

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	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents sufficient evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement. Most notable is the advancement of the district from "LEA Improvement Status" under the No Child Left Behind Act in 2005-06 to meeting AYP in 2008-09. Since then, the district has continued to demonstrate success. For example, there has been an approximate 11% increase in graduation rates over the past four years. However, the extent to which the improvement in graduation rates is realized across all subgroups of students could not be ascertained since the graduation rate subgroup data was not provided.

The applicant presents sufficient evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years in improving student learning outcomes in Grades 3-8 reading, mathematics, and science. Subgroup comparisons are provide that supports efforts done in closing achievement gaps between white-black-Hispanic students. However, the extent to which the closing of these gaps is significant could not be determined since the actual number of students per subgroup was not provided.

The statewide implementation of the Pearson's PowerSchool student information system will likely make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. For example, parents will be able to check students' grades, homework assignments, test results, attendance reports,and other academic information from any computer at any day and time.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides sufficient evidence of demonstrated transparency of actual personnel salaries at the school level, non-personnel expenditures, and per pupil expenditures per school. This information is made available for public access via the district's budget book. Notable is the district's provision of a searchable database on the online version of the local newspaper where any member of the public can search for the annual salary information of a district employee.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

As stated by the "Theory of Action", the balance between centralized direction and freedom of innovation in the local implementation via a culture of accountability is apparent. The applicant's state promotes initiatives (such as the adoption of the Common Core Standards and robust student data systems) that align with the applicant's proposed reform model. Therefore, the conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements are sufficient.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	**15**	**10**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides clear and comprehensive evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal. As evident by the engagement of over 500 community stakeholders and 18,000 CMS school staff via town hall meetings, *Coffee with the Superintendent*, task force group discussions, and an online survey, it is apparent that there exist a very robust system of stakeholder engagement at the district level.

Since North Carolina prohibits collective bargaining, the applicant attempted to share the proposed plan to all participating teachers. Although, the applicant asserts that 100% of the participating teachers support the proposed plan, the provided statements of support (Attachment 5) contradicts this assertion. As indicated, not all teachers were present to vote their position on support. Therefore, it is unclear if the applicant actually met the threshold of a 70 percent approval from participating teachers. Furthermore, the extent to which the teacher's understood the full goal of the proposed reform model is unclear because the affirmation statement refers only to support of the proposed grant's "focus to boost literacy."

The applicant presents sufficient evidence of letters of support from key stakeholders. Notable is the documented support from the United Way of Central Carolinas. United Way has been working collaboratively with CMS to increase the graduation rate with efforts focused in the pipeline of progress from birth to age 18 through afterschool programs, tutoring programs, and wrap-around support services.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**18**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Through implementation of the *Personal Passport for Progress*, the proposed digital individualized learning tool, students will be able to identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals. This tool also provides sufficient means for student-teacher-parent collaboration throughout the learning process.

The applicant provides strong evidence of sufficient strategies for deepening learning experiences such as Project Based Learning pedagogy, digital instructional resources to supplement, reinforce, and advance learning, and the application of the *Understanding by Design* lesson planning tool. Notable is the vision for a project-based unit structure design that deepens student learning. For example, 50% of instructional time could be focused on building procedural knowledge, 35% applying this knowledge to solve complex problems using real-world scenarios, and 15% focusing on student goal setting, intervention support, and/or complementary curriculum such as mathematics literacy. The forethought in this area is impressive and supports a sincere desire to strengthen strategies to deepen student learning. In addition, the Project Based Learning pedagogy will foster student development in such skills as teamwork, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-

solving.

Remarkably, the applicant provides sufficient evidence of strategies to provide access and exposure to diverse perspectives. Through the application of online learning pedagogy (such as video conferencing), students will be able to connect to organizations and professionals working in the fields of student interest. Students will explore and identify their fields of interest via the *Personal Passport for Progress* tool.

The proposed *Personal Passport for Progress* tool will allow for sufficient student development skills and traits such as goal-setting, perseverance, and critical thinking. In addition, school based counselors will set aside time each marking period to meet with each student regarding their progress.

It is unclear why a diagnostic assessment is given to each student at the beginning of each year to assess skill development aligned to the Common Core standards or how this assessment differs from the end of year content assessments that are also aligned to Common Core standards. However, the strategy for using content assessments, and learning surveys to determine each student's degree of mastery or deficits is appropriate. These data is needed to develop a comprehensive learning profile for the *Personal Passport for Progress* tool and hence could be use to develop personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents the components of a high-quality plan (including Activities, Responsible Persons, Time Periods, and Deliverables) for an educator professional development plan. The five educator professional development goals presented are all appropriate and aligned with the applicant's vision to improve teaching and learning by personalizing the learning environment. Most notable is "PD Goal Two" which focuses on educators' ability to identify, based on student information and data, optimal instructional strategies that best spur each student's growth. This type of professional develop will certainly prove beneficial during the grant period as educators implement the proposed Personal Passport for Progress component of the proposed reform model.

By structuring the school day to allow for "common planning time", the applicant solidifies its intent to ensure teachers engage in collaborative professional teams or communities. This is a very important component of personalized learning environments in education because there is not just one teacher that engages with a student. In professional learning communities, teachers can share instructional strategies and other best practices that would increase a student's success.

Through the *Power School*, a secure web-based student information system, educators will have access to real-time updates including grades, attendance, discipline, schedules, and assignments. With such frequent access to student performance data, teachers can modify instructional strategies to best meet the individual student need as well as the collective instructional practice for the class. Notable is that the *PowerSchool* student information system has been implemented statewide. Therefore, expertise exists from across the state that the applicant can draw from for implementation assistance.

The PowerSchool, a secure web-based student information system, provides real-time updates for parents, teachers,students, school administrators and district leaders about each aspect of student data - including grades, attendance, discipline, schedules, and assignments.

The applicant's proposal to enhance the teachers and principal practice and effectiveness by including multiple perspectives in a continuous feedback loop is laudable. The educator (teachers and administrative) evaluation system is robust and standards-based. It is very clear based on the evidence presented in this application, the the district's teachers and administrations will receive the

appropriate feedback to improve teaching and learning.

Since the primary content focus of this proposal is on "balanced literacy" and inherent to this pedagogy is independent literacy development at a student's level, it is likely teachers will be able to use appropriate processes and tools to match individual student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs. The supportive learning resources for the "balanced literacy" pedagogy will be aligned to the Common Core college-and-career literacy standards. However, evidence was not provided regarding learning resources that will be used in alignment with the Common Core mathematics college-and career standards. Therefore, the extent to which the applicant has a comprehensive plan for preparing students for college-and-career is limited.

Through partnership with local institutions of higher education, promoting and supporting different models of classroom instruction (e.g.., flipped classrooms), providing a teacher compensation model based on effective teacher performance, and providing embedded teacher training, it is certainly evident that the applicant has robust systems and practices in place that will likely increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers. Similarly, the school leader appropriate systematic practices are in place to attract, place, develop, and retain effective principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a plan (including roles/responsibilities and persons responsible) to support project implementation throughout the grant period. Notable is the 100% allocation of a project director and a project evaluator who will be solely dedicated to the successful implementation of the proposed reform model. Also, the applicant presents a vision for staffing allocation of continued support after the grant period.

Appropriate autonomy is provide to each school's leadership team to adjust school based staffing and instructional models to better support the proposed reform model. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are strategic and systemized. Hence, they will prove as useful tools to assist the school based leadership in making data driven decisions throughout the implementation of the proposed reform model.

The applicant presents exceptional options for high school students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery in multiple comparable ways. For example, the North Carolina Virtual Public School provide student access to online classes at no charge that may be used to accelerate their high school career. However, there are no participating high schools in the proposed reform model.

Although the applicant presents one example of how K-6 students could advance academically typically two to three years via the Horizons program, it is unclear if gifted and talented middle school students will have a similar opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. This is of particular concern in that the participating schools only include elementary and middle schools Therefore, the extent to which the applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by giving elementary and middle school students the opportunity to progress and earn credit is limited at best.

Limited evidence is presented for the extent to which the applicant will provide students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple comparable ways.

Although digital learning tools could allow for some variety in formative and summative assessments, it is certainly not the only strategy that could be used. For instance, the applicant does not present sufficient strategies for providing students with disabilities or limited English learners opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents sufficient evidence of how student data is accessible to parents, students, and educators via the PowerSchool data system. Wireless access is available at all participating schools. Via previous and current initiatives, students have ample access to technology during the school day. Notable is the Project L.I.F.T. and Microsoft partnership which help digitally excluded families gain access to tools and training, including affordable PC, broadband Internet access, and math and reading literacy content.

The applicant identifies commercial-off-the-shelf educational resources that could provide instructional support in a variety of educational content. However, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these resources will specifically support the proposed reform vision or if there will be appropriate levels of technical support to assist students, parents, and educators with the identified resources.

The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. Although, infrastructure has been updated to facilitate a "Bring Your Own Technology" initiative district-wide. However, it is unclear if the infrastructure includes provisions for open data format for student data systems.

The applicant presents sufficient evidence of interoperable data systems that include actionable student data such as grades, attendance, and course credits. Notable is the Instructional Improvement System which is not only linked to actionable student data but also includes useful training modules on content knowledge and reflective practice.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents some components of a high quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. Notable are the clear and differentiated responsibilities for the project director and program evaluator for the implementation of the critical elements of the proposed continuous improvement process.

Although the applicant proposes a continuous improvement process that uses SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis methodology, it is unclear of the decision-making hierarchy for determining the appropriate modifications throughout the grant period to the reform model to ensure its implementation success.

The applicant asserts that the program evaluator will work closely with school and district staff to gather feedback. However, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which all staff will be able to provide timely and regular feedback since the applicant does not provide the methodology and timeliness of the feedback process. Therefore, the application is lack key components of a high quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents some components of a high quality plan (including a variety of strategies, timing, and targeted stakeholders) for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. However, the plan seems to mostly include opportunities to report out to the stakeholders. Although the applicant asserts that a "participatory action research" methodology will be implemented to engage stakeholders as active partners in the evaluation process, it is unclear of the extent of engagement by each stakeholder.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The standards based approach to measure teacher and principal effectives is appropriate. However, since based on the applicant's assertion that baseline data for this measure will not be available until Fall 2015, it is difficult to ascertain if the proposed improvement targets for teacher and principal effectiveness is ambitious yet achievable.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (for PreK population), Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) Reading (for K-8 population), and the PreK Socio-Emotional Indicator are appropriate performance measures for the proposed reform model since it's primary component is literacy skill development. However, using the performance measure of "8th grade students who are promoted to grade 9" as an indicator for determining the students' college-and career readiness is not appropriate. There is not a direct causal relationship between being promoted to ninth grade and being ready for college and career.

The actual baselines for the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) Reading performance by subgroups were not provided (only the targets from a baseline from 2011-12 performance was provided). This makes it difficult to determine if the targets presented for the proposed grant period are ambitious and achievable.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a research based methodology, PAR, for engaging stakeholders in an evaluation of program effectiveness. However, it is unclear as to who will lead this evaluation process, the timing of the evaluation during the proposed grant period, the process of program refinement based on evaluative results. Therefore, the applicant does not provide a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top-District funded activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposed funding, as listed in the "project-level itemized costs - effective program administration" section of the proposed budget, allocated for the Project Director position is appropriate and reasonable to account for the 100% allocation of this staff member's grant related responsibilities. However, the summary personnel cost as listed in Table 3-1 on page 177 does not match the itemized cost. So it is unclear to which is the correct proposed personnel cost for effective program

administration.

The applicant does not provide sufficient details of the evaluation plan to justify a $1,000,000 investment in contractual obligations for evaluation services.

The rationale for the itemized personnel costs for "district balanced literacy trainers/coaches" is unclear. For example, proposed funding is not allocated for year 1 for "district balanced literacy trainers/coachers" personnel even though it is apparent that these coaches would need to begin capacity building at the start of the grant period.

Also, the itemized cost for the fifteen "digital learning facilitators" do not match the dollar amount listed. For example, if salary cost is based on $58,875/year for year three, then for fifteen positions the cost should be $883,125. Rather the cost listed is $791,040. Furthermore, a rationale was not presented for the proposed allocated "digital learning facilitators" personnel funding for year one and year two. Therefore, the applicant does not present a clear and thoughtful rationale for all proposed investments and priorities.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly asserts that it would evaluate the grant investments and determine which should continue after the grant period. Although the applicant plans to leverage district resources and partnerships to cover the identified sustainability costs, the applicant does not identify potential resources or partners that would be included. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant. Therefore, the applicant does not present a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**4**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Commendable is the district's work of one of their task force groups of community organizations which recommended the establishment of an English Language Learnings (ELL) Advisory Group to advise staff at targeted schools on developing a meaningful engagement program with their ELL families and on developing partnerships with commujity agencies eager to support this work. The proposed five ELL Advocacy Coordinators would assist the district in meeting the proposed "balanced literacy" reform model specifically in the ELL student population. However, the funding proposed to support the ELL Advisory Group will come directly from the RTTD grant funding, if awarded. Therefore, the applicant has not demonstrated the extent to which it proposes to integrate other resources (public or private) 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.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. However, the scope of the proposed reform model is limited in that there are no high schools included as participating schools. Furthermore, the primary focus on "Balanced Literacy" does not address other career and college standards such as mathematics. In addition, the district has already piloted the "Balanced Literacy" component of the proposed reform model last year in twenty schools. Therefore, it is not apparent that the applicant has considered a comprehensive and innovative plan for education reform whose goal is to prepare K-12 students for college- and career and to compete in the global economy.

The proposed *Personal Passport for Progress* strategy will provide appropriate tools for students, parents, and educators to collaboratively develop and participate in a personalized learning environment. It provides a digital learning plan for each student which will enable students to define learning goals, monitor their progress, and challenge themselves to higher achievement by setting stretch goals. Notable is the opportunity for student reflection that this tool will provide.

The applicant's vision includes a sufficient strategy for developing effective teachers to support the implementation of personalized learning and developing students to compete in the global economy. Professional and Technology Facilitators will have monthly training using technology tools to advance teacher skills in all of the districts schools. In addition, the development of effective teachers will be enhanced by the applicant's goal to allow ample time for common planning time and for "extensive, job-embedded training."

The applicant presents limited evidence of a vision to recruit, retain, and reward a "premier workforce". With the recent restructure of staff at the district level, the cross-functional teams will focus on the goal of recruitment, development, retaining, and rewarding educators as a component of their five-year strategic plan. However, the extent to which this "focus" on recruitment, development, retaining, and rewarding educators is comprehensive enough to meet the need of the proposed reform model is not apparent since limited details were provided. It is also not clear as to the applicant's vision for turning around lowest-achieving schools.

Total	**210**	**141**

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0181NC-4 for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a reform vision which is:

" transform Charlotte-Meckenburg Schools into places of digital learning and teaching, where students have a personalized education experience based on their interest based on their interests and skills. Our proposed plan, Personalized Learning

and Teaching for Excellence (PLTE), is designed to advance our district's charge: To provide a personalized environment of academic excellence that prepares every child, every day, for a better tomorrow.".

The applicant was asked to build on its work in four core educational assurances areas described by the Department of Education and is the first criteria. One assurance is turning around the Nation's lowest-achieving schools. This plan proposes not to work with the district's lowest-achieving, but schools who do not qualify for Title I funds. These schools are identified as having less financial resources than the lowest-achieving schools. The approach was difficult to understand as the applicant has various projects which are not seamless in approach. The classroom experience was not articulated in a matter that ensured the ability to meet their goals. The scoring in this section is due to the lack of clarity on what the applicant reform model and description of what this program will look like from the perspective of students and teachers.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will pilot 24 schools serving prek-8th serving 21,481 students with 55.4% free and reduced population. The applicant provided a process in which schools interested in participate as a pilot school had to meet certain qualifications. The applicant also collected assessment data from schools desiring to participate, but did not indicate how a final decision was made in the selection of these schools. There appeared not to be any strategic and intentional rational for the selection of these schools.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a plan which will be scaled and translated into a significant reform to support district-wide changes. The applicant will hire a full-time Project Director who will serve in a leadership position and assist in the day to day operation of the program. The plans appeared conjoined and did not appear seamless in nature. There is not a sense of intention and strategic planning with this reform program. The balanced literacy was introduced to 20 schools last year and yet it was unclear about the implementations process.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided data on summative and achievement gaps which were not clear to understand. The applicant provided data which combined 3-8 when it was unclear of the assessments per grade level. There was not any clear understanding of why the applicant chose to not included white students. The score of 5 is due to the lack of clarity on how all student will be measured.

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 applicant has demonstrated improvements such as the increase in graduation fro a four-year cohort model . which in 2011-2013 increased to 81% compared to 69,9% in 2009-2010. Their applicant describes some reform models talking place , there lacked any uniformity on what reforms were taking. The applicant is on the not making yearly progress with the No Child Let Behind Program.Currently the data program is PowerSchool for use by Administrators, teachers, students and families. This tool is not accessable by iPhone, Touch or iPad.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant utilizes traditional communication in order to communicate expenditures at the district and building level. The board approves all policies, hiring and expenditures and board meeting minutes are access able on the district website. Board meetings are also televised and community partners work to inform the public. The wording: "already makes available" does not identify by name who would be the reasonable "stakeholders". However, it has been a cornerstone for

district to want information accessible to all parents.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that the state of North Carolina provides sufficient autonomy in order for reforming schools to be successful. The state is a Race to the Top state, which provides additional assistance.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates that stakeholders are engaged and providing feedback on the plan. The use of focus groups was critical and the stakeholders had the opportunity to work on developing the strategic goals. Additionally, a 2 day retreat was conducted with over 750 participants. The Superintendent conducted several topic based workshop for stakeholders.

The applicant did not address what it did to engage non-English speaking families. This population unfortunately is often disengaged due to the language program and in order to truly have success with these families strong engagement is necessary. This criteria requires that stakeholders are "engaged in the development of the proposal". There was little indication that stakeholders, in particular teachers, were involved in the development of the plan.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has created a plan to improve learning and teaching with personalized instruction. For example, the school will transform with students encountering such interactions:

Adults who are viewed as trusting and advocates for the students and work one on one to create a goal and plan of their own.

Offering a Personal Passport fro Progress

The school will serve as a place that cultivates a deep, lifelong love of learning as need.

Provide clear understanding of why education success is important, and

Have access to high-quality content, frequent assessments

The applicant did not have a strong plan in place to address how the students will have access to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant created a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. Each school leader and leadership team will have all of the training, policies, tools, dara and resources to enable them to effective learning environment. The applicant beieved that a transformed classroom would look like this:

- engage ,empowers and suuporrts teachers and students in a way that trusts adn encougaes student-directed learning-thus creating a teacher-student collaborative environment that shifts their traditional role from classroom instuctor to facilitator.
- consistently builds and supports confident teachers who recognize and understand sutdents' avilities nbased on data and can implement optimal instructional strategies with agility that meet each learn's needs

In addition the applicant provides 3 other statements around what is expected from teachers in the classroom. A five prong strategic plan is created in order to meet the need of thier plan. The applicant identifies teachers expressing the need for

professional developement that is: "Job-embedded, relevant and peer-led". However, there was not a clear indication that teachers were a part of the planning or selection process in the sweeping reform. Research has constantly shown that teacher led reforms are more successful than central office programming. It was difficult to assess what type of teacher and prinicpal assessment tools will be used in additional to the state required assessment. The applicant indicates that they want an "actionable feeback for teachers and administration", but did not give further details.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will hire the necessary staff to support this reform plan including: Project Director, administrative assistant and project evaluator.All senior level staff are committed to sharing the ownership and central office is organized to support all schools. The applicant has organized the plan into three tiers: 1st tier is the primarily the learning communities with teams that are first-line supporters. The secondary tier is the central office team which has been revamped to support fully this plan. Finally the third tier consists of school based teams, principals and APs who will monitor and evaluate student performances.

Through the approval of the school board, building leaders have been granted flexibility in order to encourage successful and innovative schools. The flexibility can be in the form of staffing, adapting postilion requirements, changes in curriculum and course offerings.

The school is working at providing the needed resources for both the student and families. Currently, families have to bring their own technology within the building in order to access internet. This can interfere in the access for families who do not

have technology or the ability to come to the school building during opening hours.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan in place to provide a infrastructure to support stakeholders. The actual policy and infrastructure is in it's beginning stages. It was during the 2012-13 year in which extensive work has been completed. It was during the fall 2013 that all K-12 classrooms were equipped with technology. The main concern is the length of time it takes for any organization to have technology fully functioning and stakeholders educated on the use. The applicant did not clearly articulate the realistic time for assuring a full functioning technology server being in place.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will conduct SWOT (Strength-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats) analysis to identify any gaps in the program. The Project Director will take the lead in identifying any problems, providing solutions and informing the necessary stakeholders. Evaluation and continuous improvement is intentional and strategic. The applicant also ensures the full participation of both teachers and district staff. .

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan for communicating with stakeholders to ensure that problems are identified and quickly resolved. Communication will take place on set dates with stakeholders, board meetings and teachers meetings.The project at this level should not be reported only annually to the school board. The applicant did not appear to have a thorough plan with specifics and the score reflects the lack of clarification of this plan.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a complete and comprehensive assessment grid that identifies all performance measures and how the applicant proposes to address any areas of concern. The applicant was thorough on the appropriate assessments and measures.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to examine data gathered from the participants in this program. If indeed the data indicates positive outcomes it will work with stakeholder for possible fundraising opportunities. This evaluation lacked rigorous strategies for securing future funding. The applicant could have strengthened the evaluations required by this grant. The scores reflects the lack of continuous planning and evaluations.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a budget and narrative supporting all requests funding with rationale. All request were reasonable and support the program design and implementation, as well as ensure possible success. The score reflects the budget and budget narrative.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The sustainability plan does not articulate a plan for gathering financial support and data to inform future investments. The score reflects the lack of information on a strategic plan for sustaining the program.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is a district member of the League of Innovative Schools and Partnership for 21st Century skills. The partnership allows for a broad array of supportive services to districts in the process of reforming how their school operates on a day to day basis. The core supports align with DOE's core assurances and is based on data driven changes. This League appears to be the bridge for schools within the state and align them with the necessary support. However, the applicant did have local support with intentions for a long-term relationship.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a plan based on individualized learning, supporting both students and teachers with innovative learning strategies and equipment. The applicant core foundation is provide all students with the skills needed to successful in college or within a career.

Total	210	142

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0181NC-5 for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a)The applicant provides documentation that it has done work in each of the four core educational assurance areas. The district has adopted Common Core, states a focus on college and career readiness, uses PowerSchool as its data system to manage student information, invests in its teachers through training, and has a history of addressing persistent school underperformance.

b)The district intends to establish personalized learning through a focus on balanced literacy. Balanced literacy addresses its need to increase student reading achievement due to the 3rd grade reading mandate, and providing an ipad or Chromebook for 21,000 students in the project schools. Technology equity will ensure that all students can fully access the balanced literacy curriculum and reading resources purchased with grant funds.

c)The applicant clearly describes the personalized classroom experience for students and teachers. The Personal Passport for Progress assists students in setting goals, taking personal ownership of grades and capturing individual inspiration and aspirations. Assessment of learning will be determined by mastery and determined by performance on clearly defined standards. Students are independent, self-directed learners. Data is used in real-time to vary instruction and the learning environment is flexible.

The applicant's response to this selection criteria is in the high range.

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

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a)The applicant chose 24 high-poverty schools that fell below the cutoff for Title I funding but still had a high percentage of students from families with low income. Gaps in reading achievement and technology resources, funding gaps due to limited supplemental funds.

b) The applicant clearly lists the 24 schools involved in the project. The schools are PreK-5, K-5, and 6-8 grade configurations.

c)The project will serve 21, 481 students, 11, 631 of whom are from families with low income. The project 12, 100 high-need students and 1395 educators will participate in the project.

The applicant's response to the selection criteria scores in the high range. The applicant clearly indicates how schools were selected and provides data on its participants.

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

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan that details how the project will advance in years one through four. The plan includes goals, activities, a timeline, and persons responsible for executing activities. The activities reflect priorities stated in the narrative such as 1:1 technology, student Personal Passport for Progress, and professional development. Scale-up activities will eventually involve all elementary schools. Project teachers will be trained during the pilot and remaining district teacher training will be phased in until all are trained in balanced literacy and use of technology tools to encourage student engagement. The integration of other district-wide instructional reform efforts into the proposed project is a strength of the application. Performance- based learning and varied formative assessments (i.e., mClass Reading 3D, PALS, Words Their Way, MAP) will likely improve teachers' efforts to present seamless instruction that tailors instruction using multiple strategies and resources. The applicant does not, however, provide numeric benchmarks for outcomes and impacts noted in the plan. The absence of benchmarks may limit the district's ability to assess if stated outcomes and impacts are achieved.

The applicant's response to this criteria scores in the high range. The elements of a high-quality plan are clearly presented and reflect the district's intent to scale-up the project. The lack, however, of numeric benchmarks in the plan weaken this section of the application.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a set of ambitious and achievable annual goals for the project. Based on data from other schools currently implementing Balanced Literacy, the likelihood of similar impact in project schools is strong. The applicant includes all required subgroups and has performance goals for summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation and college enrollment rates. However, the narrative does not clearly align the proposed project's focus on reading and writing performance (i.e., Balanced Literacy) with the inclusion of middle and high school math goals and high school reading goals as performance measures. The ability of the Balanced Literacy program to improve performance in math, as well as its impact on high school reading performance is not clearly discussed. The same concern exists when considering its impact on closing noted achievement gaps in high school reading and middle and high school math.

The response scores in the middle range. The lack of a clear discussion detailing how a program for elementary and

middle grades reading and writing would impact high school reading performance and performance in middle school math and Algebra I weakens this section of the application.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides convincing data that the district has a history of advancing student learning and achievement, and increasing equity.

a)The narrative provides evidence that the LEA realized improved student performance. Performance data provided on reading, math and science data from 2008-2012 shows consistent, albeit incremental increases, at each grade level. The graduation rate is increasing for both 4-year and 5-year cohorts. The 4-year cohort posted a marked increase from 69.9% to 81% between 2009 and 2013. The applicant does not, however, clearly provide four years of data on college enrollment rates.

b)The district has a history of turning around persistently underperforming schools as evidenced by its removal from the list of districts in Improvement status. The narrative chronicles the district's progress through reform efforts that led to the removal from the list of schools in District Improvement status. However, the lack of data citing a specific school's turnaround weakens this section of the narrative. The names of schools that have received services as a result of reform efforts is provided, but no data that illustrates the degree of improvement is discussed.

c)Parents, students and educators can access student performance data via PowerSchool. Each stakeholder group can access the software in ways that are unique to their needs for the data. Students are able to view grades, state test scores, teacher feedback and school announcements and can submit assignments online. Parents can also check grades, view homework assignments and attendance reports, and communicate with teachers. Teachers can access a gradebook, create lesson plans, upload assignments and look at student performance across several indicators.

The applicant's response to this selection criteria scores in the middle range.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA provides evidence that its processes, practices and investments regarding school-level expenditures are transparent. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school and district employee online via the local newspaper, The Charlotte Observer. In that all salaries are made public via a searchable database, actual personnel salaries for instructional and support staff, instructional staff only, and teachers only are available. Actual non-personnel expenditures are routinely released through district financial reports and the district's budget book contains an accounting of revenue and expenditures. Also, the district releases its data for the Civil Rights Data collection process that includes expenditure data. Aggregate salaries at the school level are also released with a formula for how the school salary allotment was derived.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides ample evidence of how its autonomy over school programming, structure, curriculum, grade level configurations, and staffing has been realized. The implementation of various programs and school structures (i.e., early college, magnet schools, family school models) is evidence that, as noted in the narrative, flexibility varies by school and structure. It is also clear that the state supports initiatives that have the potential to improve student performance and there is evidence of support for components of the proposed project. For instance, North Carolina has a state Comprehensive Reading Plan based on a balanced literacy framework and the state has a NC Read to Achieve. The narrative briefly notes that personalized education plans are required by North Carolina law and that the state has a longitudinal data system. However, specific statutes, regulations or legal authority are not included in the narrative.

This response scores in the high range. The narrative describes the LEA's autonomy to conduct this project. However, the

narrative does not clearly indicate specific citations regarding statutes, regulations or legal authority.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	11

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides evidence of stakeholder engagement and support for this project. The impetus for personalized learning began with the district's strategic redesign process. Support for this specific project was garnered from students, teachers and IHE partners. The appendix includes letters of support for the project from community and civic partners. The appendix includes a Teacher Support form from each participating school indicating that the majority of teachers at each site support the project. The narrative notes that 100% of faculty expressed support. However, Teacher Support forms included in the appendix exclude the total number of teachers employed at each site. It is therefore, not clear if 100% of teacher support was received. The absence of this assurance weakens claims regarding 100% teacher support.

The response scores in the middle range. The application contains evidence of support from multiple stakeholder groups. However, the inability of the teacher support forms to justify 70% of staff support for the project weakens the application.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan that details activities, responsible persons, time period and deliverables.

a)The applicant provides evidence that the proposal will create a personalized learning environment in which students are accountable for their learning, identify goals through the Personal Passport for Progress, engage in deep learning experiences through literacy instruction, have access to other cultures through varied reading materials, and master critical content through digital resources unique to their needs and interests.

b)The use of the Personal Passport for Progress will allow each student to create a sequence of course and instructional content that addresses goals, gaps, strengths, and interests coalesced in the online Passport. The six components of balanced instruction (read alouds, guided reading, shared reading independent reading, word study writing) exhibit the variety of resources and activities students will use in the balanced literacy classroom. The use of ELL Advocacy Coordinators and supports already embeded in district schools provide an adequate level of support for high-need students. The lack of additional detail regarding how supports suggested in the narrative will be integrated with strategies unique to Balanced Literacy weaken this section of the application.

c)The district has several strategies for ensuring that parents and students receive the supports the need. Student and parent orientations, train-the-trainer and peer support experiences, and the Parent University are sound outreach strategies to ensure that students and parents can manage the tools and resources provided through the project.

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

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a high-quality plan that includes PD goals, PD activities and tasks, responsible persons, time periods and deliverables.

a)The applicant has developed a sound plan to train teachers to deliver instruction in a personalized learning environment. Areas of focus are using data in instruction, adapting instruction through instructional strategies and resources, balanced literacy, and blended learning.

b)The district provides a roster of actionable information teachers can use to adapt instruction. The chart's inclusion of available data sources, data ranges and software names clearly indicate that educators will have the tools, resources, and data needed to advance student learning. The resources are both standard sources of data and advanced sources of data. The use of the personalized learning environment to assist with the identification of student needs and selection of interventions or resources is a strong practice.

c)The narrative provides ample evidence that teachers will receive appropriate training and have access to appropriate

resources to guide students in a personalized learning environment. Student performance data will inform teacher and administrator evaluations and decisions regarding educator effectiveness. Training will be job-embedded, include technology resources available to teachers, and be self-sustaining after cessation of funding.

d)In that the teachers participating in this project are already assigned to high-need schools, the applicant has addressed how the project will increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers. The applicant's intent to recruit qualified teachers and coaches to serve in these schools is another best practice. Student performance data will be used in teacher evaluations and facilitate the identification of additional training needs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	**15**	**11**

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a)The amount of district funding allocated to support the project and the allocation of human resources is evidence that the district has organized its resources to support the personalized learning environment described in the project. The district has already committed resources to support technology upgrades in the district and the addition of 1:1 computing provided by this proposal will further its commitment to increasing and improving instructional technology.

b)The narrative states that the School leadership teams has the authority to make operational and programmatic decisions regarding staffing, budgets, and personnel. Classroom structures and teacher grouping/allocation are also under district control. The district uses the School Improvement Plan as a planning tool to ensure schools are operating effectively and all programs are aligned with a district focus.

c)The narrative provides evidence of its commitment to mastery learning environments across the district. Virtual options noted are particularly suited to allowing students to engage curriculum in varied ways and demonstrate what they've learned through varied assessments. Several schools noted in the narrative as using mastery learning also use a virtual/blended learning framework and a flexible learning environment that facilitates teacher ability to make assignments and test understanding using various methods. However the degree to which mastery learning strategies are being used in project schools is not clearly indicated.

d)The applicant's use of varied assessments (teacher-made, MAP, balanced literacy, etc.) and online/blended learning environments allow students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways and at multiple times. The district's use of learning plans in other frameworks and constant data analysis through the Personalized Progress Plan will also facilitate the teacher's ability to assess student progress and make adjustments to instruction based on data. The narrative provides examples of formative test to be used in the project, but does not clealry indicate how they will facilitate mastery learning. For instance, the narrative does not sufficiently discuss how teachers will apply the data received from targeted assessments to personalize learning in reading and writing (i.e., using the Balanced Literacy approach). General descriptions of instructional modifications are noted but a discussion of how mastery learning will look in a classroom using the Balanced Literacy approach is not clealry described.

e)The use of digital learning resources will clearly support the applicant's intent to make learning accessible and adaptable. The Personalized Progress Plan, IEPs Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol and trained teachers are a few examples of strategies implemented by the applicant to ensure students can access the project as described in the narrative.

The response scores in the middle range. The applicant describes mastery learning across district schools, but does not provide sufficient detail regarding how mastery learning and the Balanced Literacy approach will be integrated in this roject.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**8**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's use of 1:1 technology for students is a strong indicator that students will be able to access content, tools and resources in and out of school. Continued access to district resources, such as the International Center, and district personnel will ensure that students and parents have the supports they need.

b)The district's Parent University is a cornerstone component of families' ability to access district resources. Bilingual training, information and supports are available to increase the likelihood of engagement. Access to the parent portal in PowerSchool and Connect-EDs ability to disperse messages quickly are also important resources for parent engagement

used by the district.

c)The adoption of the PEP and parent access to PowerSchool open virtually all student performance records to parents and students. The ability to access this data ensures that parents have real-time access to information regarding student performance. A holistic picture of student performance is also available for teachers and administrators through the same resources. Classroom and administrative adaptability will be improved based on these systems.

d) The applicant does not provide a clear description of how PowerSchool interacts with the NCEd Cloud's Instructional Improvement System and its resources. In that PowerSchool contains the data and IIS contains the resources, the ability of these systems to interact is necessary and would facilitate instruction. More detail on the interoperability of these resources is needed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not present a high-quality plan for the improvement process. The lack of a clearly delineated set of goals, rationale for goals, timelines, and deliverables. The absence of a high-quality plan may hinder the project's ability to monitor, measure and share progress. Limited information is provided on what will be monitored to determine the project's continuous improvement. While the applicant intends to use SWOT to assess progress, deliberate activities to assess improvement efforts articulated in a high-quality plan ensure accountability and transparency.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**1**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lists several strategies to ensure on-going communication with internal and external stakeholders. Quarterly focus groups, progress summaries at district meetings, yearly reports to the Board of Education, and media releases to the public are planned. These strategies will likely facilitate sharing of project progress. However, the elements of a high-quality plan are not clearly indicated. The absence of details regarding rationales for activities, a timeline, deliverables and persons responsible weaken this section of the application.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a list of performance measures that are ambitious and achievable. Required measures and applicant-proposed measures are included. Anticipated increases in performance are reasonable and likely based on the level or training provided to teachers, the planned personalized learning environment and supports for students and families. It should be noted that the applicant has nine performance measures, not twelve to fourteen as noted in application guidance. The narrative also does not explain why data for the economically disadvantaged subgroup is noted as TBD in indicators addressing number of unexcused absences.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	**5**	**1**

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not present a high-quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of investments. The narrative includes a brief overview of the evaluation process, including use of the participatory action research process to engage stakeholders, feedback from program partners and data collection. However, project partners are not listed, specific data collection targets are not identified, a timeline is not provided and persons responsible for executing this phase of the project are not specifically noted. The absence of this data weakens this section of the narrative in that text provided does not fully describe a rigorous evaluation process.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget is reasonable and sound for a project serving 24 schools. All funds used to support the project are clearly delineated. Line item expenditures are clearly delineated and reflect priorities and activities expressed in the narrative. One-time investments are identified with yearly expenditures. The amount of funds from other sources totals $2,655,256 over all grant periods.

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

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant several strategies for sustainability. The applicant will leverage current financial resources, allocate district funds, and seek partnerships. All anticipated areas of additional support are noted in the budget. The narrative states that the applicant will continue its commitment to support positions for initiatives noted in the application (i.e., Balanced Literacy Facilitators, Digital Learning Facilitators, ELL Advocacy Coordinators). Intensive professional development planned for teachers will also facilitate sustainability efforts in the classroom. However, the narrative does not include several components of a high-quality plan. The lack of clealry defined rationales for strategies noted, a timeline, specific deliverables and persons responsible for carrying out sustainability efforts weakens this section of the narrative. There is also little detail regarding plans to use feedback to inform a post-grant budget

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a comprehensive description of its proposed partnership with community organizations interested in providing supports for Limited English Proficient students. This partnership will yield ELL Advocacy Coordinators who provide the district with strategies to connect with ELL families, develop partnerships with other agencies who support ELL families and build family capacity to use district resources and participate on district parent activities/committees.

1)The ability of the ELL Advocacy Coordinators to solidify the connection between home and school for ELL students will also likely improve the impact of educational learning plans. The Personal Passport for Progress will be enhanced by a greater ability of parents and families to support students college and career preparation.

2)The applicant clearly describes 6 population-level results for the partnership. Two are Educational results and four are family and community supports results. The results are aligned with activities described in the district' s application link to evaluation and assessment tools in the project (MAP, EOG reading scores, surveys, etc.).

3)The applicant clearly states how the partnership would operate. The district and target schools would collect data from stakeholder group and performance databases. The data would then be used to create a list of high-need ELL students. The criteria for student selection is clearly delineated and objective. The information would subsequently be used to direct service and resources toward these students and other ELL students in target schools.   The data would also serve as a test for the effectiveness of the ELL Coordinator position and provide guidance on how to improve the function of the ELL Advisory group. Over time, feedback from this initiative would provide the district with guidance regarding the allocation of resources and personnel.

4)The list of supports provided by the ELL Advocacy Coordinators is clearly delineated and supportive of the purpose and activities stated in this application. The assessment of family and student needs, the schools' capacity to address needs specific to ELL families, connecting families to outside support agencies, and working with staff to collect data and highlight successful will provide a positive enhancement to other strategies identified in the project.

5)The strategies used to build the capacity of staff in project schools to serve ELL students and families are clearly stated in the narrative. ELL Advocacy Coordinators will receive quarterly school-collected data drops to provide timely guidance to school and district personnel on strategies and resources available to ELL families. Access to community agencies with available resources to support ELL families will be collected and shared with school staffs through an inventory maintained by the coordinators. Any feedback will be shared with the district's ESL Department and the Learning Community Team to facilitate joint decision making concerning resources and supports for ELL families. As a result, a vetted list of services and service providers will be available to ELL families, the impact of which will be likely realized in increased levels of parental

engagement, access to district and school resources and improved levels of communication.

6)The applicant clearly identifies ambitious and achievable goals for the partnership. The results are clearly delineated. The academic results reflect performance expectations in the narrative. However, three of the family and community support results do not contain quantitative benchmarks. The absence of quantitative benchmarks will likely inhibit project evaluation of expected improvements.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant intends to create a personalized learning environment based on Balanced Literacy. There is evidence in that narrative that each of the core educational assurance areas are included in the proposal and represent areas of focus for the district. The district has evidence of work in assessments/standards (Common Core adoption), data systems (use of Power School data management system), and investing in teachers (advanced PD). Although the evidence presented for its work in turning around low-achieving schools did not include data from a specific school site, the district's satisfying NCLB requirements to progress out of Improvement status is evidence of addressing underperformance across schools. The focus of personalization in the district's plan is 1:1 technology for students and personalized learning plans. The narrative also expresses its intent to increase college and career readiness by using these strategies to accelerate achievement and decrease achievement gaps. Advanced professional development for teachers who will facilitate learning in the proposed project demonstrate the district's commitment to increase educator effectiveness and increase student access to effective educators.

The applicant meets absolute priority one.

Total	210	159