



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0217FL-1 for Gadsden County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides ambitious restructuring goals that will allow the implementation and success of the project. The project focuses on early learning intervention, the creation of a STEAM school K-8, and an overhaul of the alternative education program that serves the students of the district as well as the community as a whole.</p> <p>This plan does not demonstrate a commitment to creating an approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support that is grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.</p> <p>It is unclear what the classroom experiences will be like for students and teachers who are participating in this grant.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided a list of schools that will participate in the grant activities including the total number of participating students, those from low-income families, and students who are considered high-need.</p> <p>The plan addresses early learning in the remodeling of a pK-8 school. However, this school will only serve a select population (250) of students within the district of close to 6000 students. The alternative program that is also being reorganized will also only serve a very select population. This is contradictory to the idea that this is a district wide initiative when less than 10% of the students will benefit from this proposal.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a plan that is coherent and clear on their objectives, deliverables, and key goals. The applicant's proposal outlines four major projects: Early learning instructional environments, a K-8 STEAM school, extending the school year, and building a state of the art alternative education building.</p> <p>However, this plan lacks key components that constitute a high-quality plan. They do not discuss the overall credibility of the plan or the timelines that will be used in order to manage the creation of the large building projects included in the plan.</p> <p>They do not address how the proposal will be scaled up to other schools in the district if they are indeed successful.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant provides charts that detail how they believe the project will likely result in improved student learning. However, this proposal centers around the completion of two school buildings and extending the school year by two weeks. The applicant does not provide research or evidence to support that these initiatives have proven to be solid indicators of school performance outcomes. The applicant's goals are ambitious and achievable for the population and they do address the gaps in achievement. They also address the graduation rates and college enrollment numbers. The applicant is lacking details to explain the rationale behind the goals they have set as outcome indicators of performance. Again, it is unclear how the proposed projects will actually impact the data provided.

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	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides limited information to constitute a clear record of success in the past years. The applicant does provide examples of initiatives and examples of some data, but does not provide rationale that will link the data to initiatives.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide information that addresses ambitious and significant reforms in its lowest-achieving schools or low performing schools. The applicant provides a check list of how this proposal will affect its lower performing schools. However, rationale on how the plan correlates to these expected outcomes are not clear.</p> <p>The applicant uses a data warehouse (Skyward) to house performance data. It is unclear how the applicant will use skyward to ensure that the data is available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides details on how they will meet the minimum requirements of state reporting for personnel staff that is certified. The applicant lacks the required documentation on how they will provide a high level of transparency including personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff as well as non-personnel expenditures at the school level.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Based on the documentation presented, the applicant has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions that provide them with the autonomy under state legal and regulatory requirements. The applicant provides a letter from the state department addresses the ability of the district to successfully implement the proposal with sufficient autonomy under the state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. The applicant does not address personalized learning environments in the proposal.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has presented evidence of stakeholder support from numerous state and local functioning agencies in forms of letters as in the appendix of the application.</p> <p>The applicant lacks details that provide sufficient descriptions of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engage in the development of the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant does not address the collective bargaining representation (or lack thereof) in the application. There is not sufficient evidence that 70 percent of teachers are in support.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not meet the requirements of a high-quality plan. The applicant provides details regarding their plan to increase learning at the early levels of instruction, create a STEAM school that services K-8 students, add two weeks on to the calendar year, and build a state of the art alternative education building.</p> <p>The applicant is missing key features of a high quality plan, such as timelines and deliverables. Some areas of the plan do discuss the activities with rationale such as the example of multi-tiered systems of support in the early elementary grades. However, it is unclear how these will be used to support the overall goals of the RTTD grant goals and how it supports personalized learning.</p> <p>It is unclear how students will be supported in accessing personalized sequence of instructional content to ensure college and career readiness, how they will be introduced to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches, and how they will have access to digital learning content as appropriate.</p> <p>It is unclear how the applicant will provide regular feedback frequently through individual data systems and use that data to formulate personalized learning.</p> <p>It is unclear how those students who are not enrolled in the STEAM school or the alternative education school will receive accommodations and high-quality strategies to ensure college and career readiness.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	7
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant lacks details that support a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment.</p> <p>The proposal gives details regarding professional development that is required or proposed under the state's accountability measures. It does not address how RTTD grants will support or improve upon those initiatives.</p> <p>The proposal lacks details regarding the engagement of teachers in professional teams that support personalized learning environments, adapt content and instruction, and frequently measure student progress toward college and career ready standards.</p> <p>It is unclear if all participating educators have access to, and know how to use, the tools to accelerate student learning or how RTTD monies will help improve this area.</p> <p>The proposal included basic information regarding the teacher evaluation system that is in place in the state. It is unclear how the district will improve upon these requirements to ensure that teachers are committed to continuously improve school progress toward goals.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who are the most needy with the highest qualified teachers and principals.</p> <p>This section overall does not meet the requirements for high quality plans. While the applicant mentions a goal or an activity, it does not provide a sufficient description of how each is aligned to another. The applicant does not provide any timelines on deliverables other than "ongoing professional development". There is no clear indication of who will be the responsible parties. Due to the nature of the proposal, it is unclear how credible the plan is based on the projects being implemented and the results that are being forecasted.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The proposal includes an organizing structure for the districts central office that will provide support and services to participating schools. The proposal includes an assurance statement that schools will have the autonomy needed to implement the project proposal.

Based on the plan, it is unclear how students will be given the opportunity to gain credit based on mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic or how they will be able to demonstrate mastery of standard in multiple ways. The proposal outlines a plan for student portfolios, but fails to link it to the relevance of the requirements.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal lacks details on how the district will ensure that all participating students, parents, and educators will have access to the resources brought in through RRTD funds. According to the proposal only 10% of the students in the district will actually be directly affected with the use of the RRTD monies.

The proposal does not include the purchase of technology for one-on-one devices. However, the proposal does look to build a “high tech” alternative education program and STEAM school. It is unclear how the district will ensure that these new initiatives are provided additional support over what is the norm for the district.

It is unclear how the data systems will be supported and used to house all forms of data listed in the application.

Seeing how providing new educational space is a major piece to the plan, the applicant lacks a timeline for building such buildings. To constitute a high quality plan under this section, it is expected that the applicant would provide the timelines for the buildings along with the parties they will have to be responsible for the building. A blueprint of the building to align with the narrative to support the need for the building.

Again, this plan is not discussing personalized learning environments, but capital projects for the district. Therefore, overall it does not meet the requirements for a high-quality plan under the RTTD funding opportunities.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for the evaluation of the implementation of the projects outlined in this proposal. The applicant does provide information on how they are going to expand on the initiatives presented in the plan in earlier sections, but they do not address a plan for rigorous continuous improvement that provides regular feedback on progresses toward the goals. The majority of RTTD investments will be the creation of buildings, thus the plan lacks a clear and quality plan that address timelines, deliverables, and rationales for how it will assess the implementation of such initiatives.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides that “a district organizer, with telephone and email contact, will be identified and a web-link will be established for ongoing communication”. This does not constitute a high-quality plan that gives details regarding the goals of communication, the timelines, the activities that will facilitate communication and the rationale behind those activities. The plan does not address the engagement of internal and external stakeholders.

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

The applicant provides performance measures that reasonable. They provide the rationale for selecting each measure and how the measure will be evaluated and improved upon. For example: the applicant has chosen a performance measure that is consistent with the extended school year: Percentage of students demonstrating regression in learning. The rationale used to support the performance measure is the less days off in summer will reduce the summer loss associated with summer vacations. Number and percent of 9-12 students who are on track to being career-ready as measured by successful completion of CTE courses. The rationale provided suggests that successful completions of CTE coursework

are indications of students meeting course requirements for industry certifications.

Overall this plan does not meet the personalized learning environment criteria, however, for the plan that is presented, the performance measures do make sense and the applicant has provided rationale on how it will be assessed and measured for implementation effectiveness.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some information regarding the how students will be monitored for “at-risk” behaviors. The proposal does not include a high-quality plan that will rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of RRTD funded activities. The plan lacks timelines on for evaluation, how the evaluations will be delivered and monitored, how the evaluations will affect the activities that are presented.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a budget that includes information on the use of RRTD funds. The budget does identify one-time investments versus ongoing investments.

The budget does not include other funds that will be used to support the implementation of the projects. Since over 50% of the budget is connected to the building of physical space, it seems appropriate that other funds would be used to supplement the building of such structures. Another initiative is the extend two weeks of school.

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

10

4

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant does provide information that suggests that it has the components of a high quality plan through a chart in this section, the application provides inadequate information to support the claim that is is a high quality plan for the sustainability of the project’s goals after the term of the grant.

The budget does not include other funds that will be used to support the implementation of the projects. Since over 50% of the budget is connected to the building of physical space, it seems appropriate that other funds would be used to supplement the building of such structures. Another initiative is the extend two weeks of school. It is unclear how the district will continue to implement this project after the RRTD grant money has ended.

This plan includes structural changes that will require additional personnel, but the plan is not specific on how they would ensure the implementation of this initiative. The applicant acknowledges that they do not have a plan on how they will sustain the plan after the grant cycle.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides information regarding a partnership with the local community health department and the local college. However, the requirements of the competitive preference priority are not included in the proposal.

The applicant does provide a coherent description of the partnership between the two agencies mentioned. These

partnerships are very important, but do not meet the requirements on tracking the indicators that were chosen for this proposal. It is unclear on how the district will scale up the model for schools who are not participating as the majority of the services are those that are already performed by these agencies before RTTD.

The applicant does not have annual performance measure goals, and plans for desired results for students as a result of the collaboration.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

While this plan was coherent in nature it does not address the requirement of personalized learning environments. The plan centers around four ideas: early learning intervention, STEAM k-8 school, extended school, and building a new alternative education building. While these ideas are ambitious and meaningful, they do not address the key component of RTTD which is personalized learning environments. The applicant fails to meet the absolute priority 1: Personalized learning environments.

Total	210	102
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0217FL-2 for Gadsden County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.

The proposal earned low points. The proposal writers did not follow the organizational structure of the RTTD application. The vision that was provided addressed a remediation learning environment instead of "personalized learning" as envisioned in the RTTD Notice. The following are specifics that illustrate why this section was given low points.

(a) Builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas (as defined in this notice);

Gadsden County Public Schools (GCPS) did not organize its proposal to respond to the RTTD expectation that it describe its work in four core educational assurance areas as defined in the notice. The proposal did not contain any of the required elements of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision required in the RTTD notice in section A. Instead information was provided on the four core educational assurance areas they wanted to focus on with the RTTD funds. Those are listed in Section E. Even those statements are not in an RTTD format, but instead, as philosophical statements.

Treatment of the four RTTD priorities was incidental as noted below:

The key statement on data systems in section E was "The District ensures schools have a variety of data to identify challenges and determine root causes and provides training to school leaders on the effective use of data to identify school weaknesses, craft appropriate strategies to improve

teaching and learning, and make decisions about resource allocation. Schools analyze a variety of sources of data and work with the faculty to use the information to improve instruction for all groups of students. The range of data used helps school leaders and teachers to identify students who are not achieving at grade-level standards or who are on a course for failing or dropping out. Data also helps to develop tiered interventions to redirect students on a trajectory for success.”

The proposal referenced information on adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy but did so in a passing manner and did not provide any details about how they would do it and did not provide the necessary components of a high-quality plan.

The only discussion of turning around lowest-achieving schools was in their goals for the redesign of the PK-8 STEAM magnet schools and the alternative learning center for non-traditional students and some philosophical statements in section E. The key statement from section E was: “Gadsden assists schools in conducting audits in challenged schools to better direct resources to measures that will improve school results. They assist low-performing schools by identifying ways to mobilize greater district and community resources to address the needs of the low-performing schools. The district gives schools greater autonomy and flexibility to use school structures, teacher assignments, and alternative systems for delivering instruction.”

There was more information about recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals especially where they are needed most. However the information was not responsive to the requirements of the RTTD notice. The following statement from section E provided another general philosophical statement that did not provide the detail required in a high-quality RTTD plan. “Gadsden invests heavily in instruction-related professional learning for principals, teacher-leaders and district-staff. Selective recruitment identifies teachers with leadership potential, a track record of teaching all groups of students to high levels and a passion for serving all students well. Gadsden provides principals with greater control over professional learning opportunities for their schools, aligned to school and district strategic plans.”

As noted above, the proposal did not satisfactorily address required responses noted in the RTTD notice. Instead the proposal indicated that RTTD funding would be used to

- Develop research based rigorous early learning instructional environments at all elementary schools
- Extend the school year by two weeks.
- Redesign an elementary and middle school to develop one PK-8 STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) magnet school
- Redesign the District’s alternative education programs into a state-of-the-art alternative learning center for the non-traditional student.

It should be noted that more than half the budget was allocated for the construction costs associated with the magnet school (\$4,776,856) and learning center (\$6,000,000).

(b) The proposal did not articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. The proposal did provide some general statements throughout the proposal especially in sections C and D. but never with the detail required in a high-quality RTTD plan.

(c) Describes what the classroom experience will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. In sections C, D and E, the proposal provided elements of what the classroom experiences would be for students and teachers. However, those classroom experiences often described remediation learning experiences through large and small groups instead of “personalized learning” that RTTD notice envisioned.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section earned medium points for the reasons noted below.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation.

The extent to which the applicant’s approach to implementing its reform proposal (e.g., schools, grade bands, or subject areas) will support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of that proposal, including—

(a) A description of the process that the applicant used or will use to select schools to participate. The process must ensure that the participating schools (as defined in this notice) collectively meet the competition’s eligibility requirements;

The proposal stated that All 5731 students and 497 educators would benefit from the RTTD grant award. “All students, including one hundred percent of the free and reduced lunch students will benefit from the extended school year; one hundred percent of the PK-2 students (~1800 students) will participate in the rigorous early learning initiative; 700 students will be selected to attend the PK-8 STEAM academy; and the alternative learning center will accommodate 250 students annually.”

If one carefully examined those numbers, it was evident that only 2,750 students really experience significant interventions during the whole school year. The other three thousand students involvement was limited to a two week summer enrichment opportunities that cannot be considered an extensive personalized learning experience that meets the RTTD expectations. Even the 2,750 student number was questionable since in the elementary schools, almost all the interventions were targeted at K-2 students.

(b) A list of the schools that will participate in grant activities was included in the proposal. The proposal listed sixteen school sites but as noted in the previous subsection, the inclusion of all those students in the middle schools and high schools to meet the 5,000 student threshold is questionable since their only involvement is two weeks of summer enrichment.

(c) The total number of participating students (as defined in this notice), participating students (as defined in this notice) from low-income families, participating students (as defined in this notice) who are high-need students (as defined in this notice), and participating educators (as defined in this notice

The proposal indicated that all 5731 students and 497 educators will participate in the RTTD grant award. Ninety percent of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch. As noted earlier, the total number of students participating is questionable since 3,000 students involvement will be limited to two week summer enrichment opportunities. Those summer opportunities do not seem to meet the RTTD “personalized learning” criteria.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

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

The extent to which the application includes a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools (as defined in this notice), and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

This section earned low points because it did not have a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. Again, GCPS referenced its own priorities instead of those required in the RTTD notice. It devoted all the discussion to (1) Rigorous early learning, (2) PK-8 STEAM magnet school, (3) Extended school year, and the (4) Alternative Learning Center. GCPS claimed that the proposal impacted all students but as discussed earlier, and the students in the K-2 grades, the magnet school and the learning center were the only ones who had intensive experiences. The proposal did not provide a plan for how the non-intensive students would benefit beyond the two week summer school.

The applicant’s logic model or theory of change of how its plan will improve student learning outcomes was built around the idea that the as the K-2 students moved up the grades they would take with them the skills and learning strategies they had used in those early years. The same was true with students attending the STEAM magnet school.

The following two statements taken from the proposal illustrated the GCPS point of view.

“It is the District’s contention that targeting early learning deficiencies will improve students’ readiness-for-learning and capacity for academic achievement (including accelerated learning) in all academic areas. For example, acquiring literacy skills in grade PK-2 will decrease the amount of time teachers will need to spend teaching students to learn to read in third grade and beyond.”

“It is the contention of the District that early and on-going engagement in STEAM standards of practice will provide the foundation for long-term interest in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics. This interest will encourage student enrollment in high school STEM and CTE programs, while also providing the programs with students that have the prerequisites to experience success in STEM and CTE coursework.”

The GCPS view of how change will move beyond intensives students has common sense logic. However the RTTD notice expected that they would provide a more formal plan and that was not included in the proposal.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes This section earned medium points for the reasons noted below.</p> <p>(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth).</p> <p>GCPS has very ambitious projections for growth. For Black students the growth in reading would be 10 percent the first year and increases of five or six percent the next three years. This would be from a base of thirty five. For Hispanic students, the growth in reading would be 7 percent the first year and increases of five or six percent the next three years. This would be from a base of 41 percent. For White students, the growth in reading would be 10 percent the first year and increases of three or four percent the next three years. This from a base of 54 percent.</p> <p>In mathematics, Blacks are projected to show increases of 5 to 6 percent every year from a base of 49 percent. Hispanic students are projected to show increases of 5 to 6 percent every year from a base of 62 percent. White students would increase 6 percent the first year and three to four percent each subsequent year.</p> <p>GCPS provided no historical data that would demonstrate that these ambitious projections would be achievable annual goals. GCPS by its own accounts indicated that achievement gains have been flat for some time. The nature of the minimal interventions for some students made achieving those high percentage gains doubtful.</p> <p>(b) Decreasing achievement gaps (as defined in this notice).by ambitious yet achievable annual goals.</p> <p>GCPS projected that it would decrease achievement gaps by ten percent the first year for Blacks and seven percent for Hispanics in reading and then six percent in subsequent years. These from bases of 65 percent for Blacks and 59 percent for Hispanics.</p> <p>In mathematics, the achievement gaps would decrease 5 percent every year. The bases were 51 percent for Blacks and 38 percent for Hispanics.</p> <p>The same response and evidence given for subsection a noted above holds true for these ambitious but questionably achievable annual goals in decreasing achievement gaps . There simply was not any evidence that the limited interventions envisioned (two weeks of summer school) for many of the students would result in such ambitious projections being accomplished.</p> <p>(c) Graduation rates (as defined in this notice).</p> <p>The proposal projected increase of five percent every year from a base of 55 percent for all students. Those are ambitious but questionably achievable annual goals given the limited interventions for many of the students. The proposal did not provide evidence that GCPS has in the past demonstrated gains of this nature.</p> <p>(d) College enrollment (as defined in this notice) rates.</p> <p>GCPS projected 10 percent more college enrollment per year for all students from a base of 10 percent. Those are ambitious but questionably achievable annual goals given the limited interventions for many of the students. The proposal did not provide evidence that GCPS has in the past demonstrated gains of this nature.</p>		

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	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</p> <p>GCPS earned low points for demonstrating a clear track record of success. The reasons for the low score were that there was no historical information provided. Instead the proposal had general statements about what it intended to do in the future. The following are further details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. GCPS did not provide information that it had a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. The information provided did not include description, charts or graphs, raw student data, or other evidence that demonstrated that it has significant success. Instead of the required information, it provided five year averages that did not allow historical analysis. b. It did not provided information about achieving ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) or in its low-performing schools (as defined in this notice). The topic was 		

completely ignored.

- c. It provided minimal information about making student performance data (as defined in this notice) available to students, educators (as defined in this notice), and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. The proposal indicated that it has purchased “Performance Matters” and the “Skyward Student Data System” but did not explain how it was used in the past or the present.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The GCPS proposal earned low points for this section. It had very minimal information on increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. It did state that the District’s salary schedules were posted on the District website and that all Board workshops and Board meetings are advertised to the public and meeting agendas and notes are published on the district website. Hard copies of meeting agendas and notes are also provided to the public during meeting times.”

The proposal did not indicate that it provided information by school, actual school level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal earned medium points because it asked for an opinion from the State Department of Education on the issue of autonomy for the proposed project and received the following statement.

“There are no concerns with the alignment of the application with state law or rule.”

It did not earn high points because the proposal did not provide information about how this autonomy would help them implement the proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	3
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal earned low points for meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal, Specifically:

- a. There was no description of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools (as defined in this notice) were engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.
- b. There was no evidence that teacher participation expectations, required in the RTTD notice, were met.
 - (i) For LEAs with collective bargaining representation, evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposals from teachers in participating schools (as defined in this notice); or
 - (ii) For LEAs without collective bargaining representation, at a minimum, evidence that at least 70 percent of teachers from participating schools (as defined in this notice) support the proposal.

(b) There were some letters of support from state and county officials, several from higher education officials and an art center. There were six letters from mayors. Unfortunately, there were no letters from the key stakeholders such as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations. There was no evidence that the proposal was modified as a result of comments in the letters they received. Most of the responses were supportive and did not deal deeply with specific content.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS earned low points for this section. It did not have a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. It is important to note that a high-quality plan, as defined in RTTD notice, "must include key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for those activities, the timeline, the deliverables and the parties responsible for implementing the activities."

The RTTD notice stated that "This plan also must include an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students (as defined in this notice) that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) and college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice) and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs."

The GCPS proposal did not address many of the requirements noted above. GCPS did not write a personalized learning proposal as required in the RTTD notice. Instead GCPS wrote a remediation, technology, and building construction proposal. It defined its response around the District's four restructuring goals noted earlier. It responded in restructuring goals paragraphs that did not reflect the components of a high-quality plan. Some points were awarded because some of the four restructuring goals did have key goals, activities to be undertaken and the rationale for those activities. The GCPS proposal did not have the timeline, the deliverables and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

The proposal did not respond to the remaining RTTD expectations except in very general statements when describing the four GCPS restructuring goals. Those general statements were not linked to the requirements in (C)(1). The one exception is (b) where the proposal did provide a sentence that might be appropriate but the proposal writers did not make that link.

Classrooms would have "appropriate use of adopted materials (e.g. leveled readers); instructional practices that are proven to be effective (e.g., centers, close reading, scaffolding, spiraling, varying student response solicitations); and engaging students with complex text. Students not only have the opportunity for personalize learning during classroom projects and activities, but also during scheduled time in the computer lab where programs like SuccessMaker, Read180, Achieve 3000, and core curriculum web-based programs assist students in accessing content at their level of learning and working toward proficiency and beyond, based on their specific learning needs."

The proposal **did not** address the following requirements in a meaningful way except as noted above.

(a) With the support of parents and educators, all students—

- (i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals;
- (ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals;
- (iii) Are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest;
- (iv) Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning; and
- (v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving;

(b) With the support of parents and educators (as defined in this notice), each student has access to—

- (i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready;
- (ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;
- (iii) High-quality content, including digital learning content (as defined in this notice) as appropriate, aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice);
- (iv) Ongoing and regular feedback, including, at a minimum—
 - (A) Frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice), or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice); and

(B) Personalized learning recommendations based on the student's current knowledge and skills, college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), and available content, instructional approaches, and supports; and

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students (as defined in this notice) to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice); and

(c) Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

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

GCPS earned medium points. Once again GCPS did not follow the RTTD proposal structure and therefore it was very difficult to find required information. The proposal did address some of the requirements of this section in a positive manner though they did not meet the requirements of a high-quality plan. In some cases, there was no information found that addressed RTTD expectations.

Teaching and Leading

- a. All participating educators (as defined in this notice) engage in training, and in professional teams or communities, that supports their individual and collective capacity to—
- i. 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 proposal did not have significant information on personalized learning environments

- ii. Adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches (e.g., discussion and collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio, manipulatives);

There was no information specifically responding to the above expectation.

(iii) Frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice), or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice) and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators (as defined in this notice). These positive strategies were used to respond to this expectation:

- Use of Performance Matters to develop assessments and obtain student learning data.
- Professional development opportunities that prepare teachers to teach to the levels of rigor and depth required to effectively implement Common Core State Standards
- Concepts from human development and learning theories are effectively and consistently used to align instruction with state adopted standards.
- District uses Instructional Focus Calendars, district developed formative assessments, and school site specific mini assessments to monitor student learning.

(iv) Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems (as defined in this notice), including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement.

GCPS had several meaningful strategies to address this subsection.

- District has purchased *Performance Matters* to develop assessments, disaggregate assessment data, and create reports to inform the instructional process.
- District has also begun the implementation of Skyward, the new student data system that will enhance all

stakeholders' capacity to access data and resources to assist in accelerating students' progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements.

- Professional development models are based on the Florida Accomplished Educator Practices (FEAPs) and student academic performance. The district's utilization of the PAEC Master Inservice Plan for training reinforces FEAPs
- Educators are trained to use the PAEC electronic Professional Development Program and PD360, which may be used for both classroom instruction and teacher training.

(b) All participating educators (as defined in this notice) have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice). Those resources must include—

See section above for related responses.

- iii. High-quality learning resources (e.g., instructional content and assessments), including digital resources, as appropriate, that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice), and the tools to create and share new resources

The following are positive strategies found in different parts of the proposal:

- On-going teacher training opportunities are provided throughout the school year for all teachers. include NGCARPD, Reading Endorsement, use of new student data system- Skyward,
 - Use of Performance Matters to develop assessments and obtain student learning data.
 - Use of SuccessMaker,
 - Use of Achieve 3000, classroom management
 - Professional development on Tiered Intervention, Positive Behavior Support, and the Lesson Study Process.
 - Professional development opportunities on effectively implementing Common Core State Standards.
 - Professional development incorporating strategies that address Text Complexity, Comprehensive Instructional Sequence (CIS), Close Reading and Vocabulary Development.
- iv. Processes and tools to match student needs (see Selection Criterion (C)(2)(b)(i)) with specific resources and approaches (see Selection Criterion (C)(2)(b)(ii)) to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs.

See (ii)

(C) All participating school leaders and school leadership teams (as defined in this notice) 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 (as defined in this notice) or college- and career-ready graduation requirements (as defined in this notice). The training, policies, tools, data, and resources must include:

(i) Information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system (as defined in this notice), that helps school leaders and school leadership teams (as defined in this notice) assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement;

GCPS provided the following positive strategies:

- Professional development models are based on the Florida Accomplished Educator Practices (FEAPs) and student academic performance.
- The district uses the PAEC Master Inservice Plan for training to reinforce FEAPs
- The new evaluation models encourage educators to deliberately identify areas of needed growth and participate in professional development to improve their education practices.
- Educators are trained to use the PAEC electronic Professional Development Program and PD360, which may be used for both classroom instruction and teacher training.
- The District's new teacher evaluation model incorporates students' academic performance into the evaluation process of teachers.
- The model is a hybrid of the Marzano evaluation model, which focuses on four professional domains: 1) Classroom strategies and behaviors, 2) Planning and Preparing, 3) Reflecting on Teaching, and 4) Collegiality and Professionalism.

(ii) Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps (as defined in this notice).

See (i)

(d) The applicant has a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals (as defined in this notice), including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education

The proposal noted that “as required by Florida’s Senate Bill 736, fifty percent of teachers’ evaluations are based on instructional practices (e.g.. Marzano’s Domains) and fifty percent on student performances on summative assessments. The Gadsden County Teacher Evaluation Model is posted on the District’s website. As with classroom teachers, the school leaders and non-classroom teacher evaluation model is driven by professional practices (50%) and students’ performances on summative assessments (50%).”

GCPS had the following positive strategies but not a high-quality plan to address the concerns of section (D)

- The District has a Professional Development Plan that is informed by teachers, school leaders, and district leaders input.
- Professional development workshops are posted on the District’s website.
- The District partners with PAEC (Panhandle Area Education Consortium) to offer additional professional development opportunities and to document professional development points.
- The District has implemented a Beginning Teacher program; along with an Aspiring Leader’s program. Title I, School Improvement funding, Title II, Exceptional Education, ESOL.
- Current Race-to-the-Top funding is used collaboratively to provide numerous professional development opportunities (e.g.. NGCARPD-Next Generation Content Area Reading Professional Development, Positive Behavior Support, Common Core, Text Complexity, Close Reading, Content Instructional Sequence, Writing Strategies, Performance Matters, Lesson Study, and many more).

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	7

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules

Points were taken away from this section because there was insufficient content related to personalized learning.and.because the proposal did not have a high quality plan as required. The following are positives and explain why this section earned medium points even with the problems noted above..

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

- a. Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure (as defined in this notice), to provide support and services to all participating schools (as defined in this notice);

GCPS provided a reasonable quality description of the LEA central office. The central office is organized in a manner consistent with arrangements in similar size districts. However, they did not provide any examples of efforts to promote personalized learning.

- b. Providing school leadership teams (as defined in this notice) in participating schools (as defined in this notice) 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;

The school principal seemed to have considerable autonomy so it would seem that the buildings have autonomy.However points were reduced because there was no discussion of the existence and roles of leadership teams. However, there were no examples provided that showed an effort to design schools to make them more responsive to personalized learning opportunities.

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

Points were not given because much of the proposal discussions about how students could progress and earn credit were based on mid-year or annual requirements. Some points were awarded because at times, students were given

opportunities to show mastery. The following statement noted that option. “As documented in the Student Progression Plan, portfolio mastery data may be one of the criteria used to make promotion and retention decisions. Students performing poorly on the summative reading assessment are given the opportunity to attend a summer school intervention program and are afforded the opportunity to take an alternative assessment to the FCAT in an attempt to demonstrate mastery in reading.”

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

See subsection (c).

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

Some points were awarded this section because “The District has made a concerted effort to ensure that ESE and English learners have access to the core curriculum. Where appropriate, exceptional learning students and English learners are mainstreamed into core curriculum classes and para-educators are provided for instructional support where needed. Students are enrolled in classes based on their academic abilities (e.g... honors versus college prep or self-contained) and their personal interest.” High points were not given because the proposal did not provide examples or where this is done and how the accommodations were made. Though not linked, some content from section C did address some of the expectations

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

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS earned medium points for the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. The rationale for the medium score was noted in each of the four subsections.

- a. GCPS’s earned medium points for its response to ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning), regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant’s proposal was minimal.

It stated that: “resources include textbooks, workbooks, and all supplemental materials. Textbooks are available in hardcopy, on disk, and in some cases are web based. All newly adopted textbooks have web based instructional support materials for teachers. All school and most classrooms have smart boards, LCD projectors, and document cameras that enhance instruction. All schools are equipped with media centers that contain ample books for research and computer centers for student use.”

The proposal did not address access for parents and other stakeholders. It also did not address out of school resources available to students, parents, educators and other stakeholders.

- b. Ensuring that students, parents, educators (as defined in this notice), and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning) have appropriate levels of technical support, which may be provided through a range of strategies (e.g., peer support, online support, or local support);

The proposal response to this subsection was minimal. It noted:

- The central office and school sites maintain websites that are updated to keep students, parents, and community members informed and provide contact information for potential resources.
- Each school site is staffed with counselors, reading coach, media specialist, computer lab technicians, and program specialists to work with parents and students to ensure student learning opportunities are specific to their personal interest and academic needs.
- District technology specialists, program specialists, and school psychologists are assigned to each school to further enhance the supports that students and parents receive.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format (as defined in this notice) and to use the data in other electronic learning systems (e.g., electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores personal records)

High points were awarded the GCPS for this subsection because its proposal provided several positive examples of using

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. Some of those examples noted below and in the next section were:

- FCAT Explorer, which allows students to review concepts assessed on the FCAT and SuccessMaker allows practice on reading and math skills to improve their academic proficiencies.
- Odyssey license which allows counselors to enroll students in coursework for credit recovery or credit acceleration.
- Computer labs for reading and math intervention programs (e.g., Read 180, SuccessMaker, Go Math, Gizmo, etc.).
- In the beginning stages of implementing its new student data system, Skyward described in more detail in next section.

GCS earned high points for this subsection because it has interoperable systems that tie administrative, instructional and parental access systems together. The descriptions in the proposal are the following:

The District uses several systems to accommodate human resource (TERMS), student information (TERMS), budget (FOCUS), and instructional improvement data (Performance Matters).

The District's technology department has implemented a single sign-on system that allows educators to access the student data system (Skyward); create formative assessments and monitor student progress (Performance Matters); and document teachers and school leaders evaluation results (TERMS).

The District uses Skyward Student Data System. This system allows parents to review their student's attendance, discipline, and academic progress and history. Skyward also providing information that will assist parents in supporting teaching and learning at home.

Data between the three platforms are interchangeable and frequently used to shape the instructional parameters for teaching and learning. For example, evaluation data entered into the system is used to assign teachers and district leaders. Data from Skyward and Performance Matters allows district leaders, school leaders, teachers, students, and parents to monitor academic progress.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	3

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS earned low points for developing a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) 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. GCPS seemed to misunderstand the expectations of this section. It did not describe a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

The plan did not address how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff. The proposal did not provide a high-quality evaluation design that spoke about methodology. It did not tie specific activities to specific performance measures. It did not ask key questions. It did not provide measures of growth. It did not mention determining baseline information. It did not speak to formative and summative measures. It did not have reporting protocols. It did not talk about findings and recommendations.

Instead GCPS described how:

- GCPS data systems will provide teachers, principals, administrators and the community with information and resources needed to inform and improve instructional practices, decision-making and overall effectiveness.
- GCPS will support an instructional improvement system that ties together the Next Generation and Common Core standards, instructional processes, and assessment.
- GCPS uses data to drive decisions and to monitor/measure the need for mid-course corrections including identifying areas of needed improvement, finding research-based strategies to address these needs and monitoring the effectiveness of chosen strategies with appropriate measurable indicators of success.

- GCPS invests heavily in instruction-related professional learning for principals, teacher-leaders and district-staff.
- GCPS assist low-performing schools by identifying ways to mobilize greater district and community resources to address the needs of the low-performing schools.
- GCPS will strengthen the quality of early learning and development programs.

Points were awarded for the component that dealt with data as they had some relationship to the requested plan to evaluate the continuous improvement process.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS earned low points for its plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The response was minimal and had little substance. Acknowledging that the communication so far has been only informal, GCPS stated that:

“As soon as projects are approved and the District receives an award letter, the District will begin the process of engaging stakeholders in more formal and in-depth processes of discussion. A District program organizer, with telephone and email contact, will be identified and a web-link will be established for on-going communication.”

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

GCPS earned medium points for its ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. As positives, the performance measures had

- Rationale for selecting that measure.
- Rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan.
- Theory of action regarding the applicant’s implementation success or areas of concern.
- Subgroup breakouts.

The measures did not have strong explanations how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to monitor implementation progress.

The district listed 18 measures instead of the 12 to 14 requested in the RTTD notice but some were intended for the "competitive preference priority and so no points were taken away..

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS earned low points for this section. Like all the other subsections of the evaluation section, the response suffered from lack of a formal evaluation plan that responded to RTTD expectations. This section had interesting ideas to consider but it does not have a high-quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology. The budget does show that an evaluator will be hired and perhaps they are waiting for that person to develop that plan.

As noted earlier, the proposal did not provide a high-quality evaluation design that spoke about methodology. It did not tie specific activities to specific performance measures. It did not ask key questions. It did not provide measures of growth. It did not mention determining baseline information. It did not speak to formative and summative measures. It did not talk about findings and recommendations. It did not have reporting protocols. In short the GCPS plan, while it mention topics for consideration, it did not provide an evaluation plan to evaluate the effectiveness of district and RTTD funded activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This section earned low points for the extent to which the applicant's budget:

- a. Identifies all funds that will support the project (e.g., Race to the Top – District grant; external foundation support; LEA, State, and other Federal funds)

The budget showed only \$20,000,000 of RTTD funds.

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

The budget for all but construction expenditures appeared to be reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. They were tied to function/activity, gave a rationale for the expenditure and represented realistic costs.

The problematic expenditures were associated with construction costs for the STEAM magnet school (\$4,776,856) and the alternative learning center (\$6,000,000) noted in budget table 2-1. The rationale why only RTTD funds should be used for construction was not given nor was there rationale provided why those expenditures were necessary to provide a personalized learning environment. These issues are especially important since they represent 54% of the total four year request.

- (c) Clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, including--

- i. 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.

The budgets showed only RTTD funds. There were adequate descriptions of the uses of the RTTD funds but no other funds were noted.

- (ii) Identification of 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 GCPS budget did not distinguish between one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period.

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

10

2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS earned low points for its plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan did not include a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. It did not include an estimated budget for the three years after the term of the grant. It did include the following budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds. The District contends the restructuring projects of this grant are sustainable past the life of the grant with the continuation of tasks and positions (not specific to the grant implementation):

- Through redirection of other district resources including general fund FTE dollars, restricted dollars (Title I and II), and other grant funds (e.g. School Improvement Grant, 21st Century, future grant opportunities, and any additional State RTTT grant.
- Through continuing to incur general operation cost such as the cost for general staffing (not specific to the grant implementation), instructional materials/supplies/equipment, and facilities and maintenance cost

The proposal indicated that unless special grants were obtained, it **would not** be able to continue.

- Extended school year.
- Performance incentives

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

Available	Score
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Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**10****2****Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

Competitive Preference Priority: GCPS earned low points because it provided an inadequate plan describing a partnership it has formed with public organizations. Minimal or no information was provided for some subsections as noted below and that is why it earned low points.

(1) Gadsden County Public Schools collaborates with the Gadsden County Health Department to deliver health care and health education programs to families and youth who are at risk at three levels of intensity:

Comprehensive

The Health Department provides comprehensive health care to ten District schools noted in proposal. Comprehensive health care includes basic health services and student health management, interventions and classes to reduce risk-taking behaviors, violence and injury prevention, and services to reduce teen pregnancy and promote return to school after giving birth.

Full

The Health Department provides full service health care to students enrolled at East Gadsden. Full service focuses on underserved students in poor, high risk communities needing access to medical and social services. Full service schools provide all basic school health services, in addition to the coordination of medical and specialized services, such as nutritional services, job placement services, parenting classes, counseling for abused children, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and adult education for parents.

General

The Health Department also provides immunization services to all district schools; hearing, vision, scoliosis, and BMI screenings; and among other things, facilitates Health Fairs at district school sites.

District's partnership with the Gadsden County Health Department has determined two desired results for students enrolled in the District.

- Ensure that students are emotionally and physically able to focus on the learning process.
- Assure that students receive preventative care that may result in fewer school absences.

The proposal did not earn high points for this subsection because it seemed to be a limited partnership that left both organizations accomplishing required responsibilities largely independent of each other.

(2) GCPS identified performance measures 5, 7, 13, and 18 were directly impacted by the partnership. The following measures taken from the proposal show the measure, rationale, value and review/improvement timeline.

5. Percentage of PK students demonstrating socio-emotional readiness for school as measured by absences from school. The numbers of days students are out of school impacts student achievement. Informs the tiered intervention process.
June

7. Percent of K-3 students demonstrating socioemotional readiness for school as measured by absences from school. The number of days students are out of school negatively impacts student achievement. An increase in students' academic performance in reading, math, and science. On-going/June

13. Percent of 4-8 students demonstrating socioemotional readiness for school as measured by absences from school. The number days students are out of school negatively impacts student achievement. An increase in students' academic performance in reading, math, and science On-going/June

18. Percent of 9-12 students demonstrating socio-emotional readiness for school as measured by absences from school. The number of days students are out of school impacts student achievement. Increase in students' academic performance. Decrease in dropouts and Increase in graduation rates. On-going

The proposal did not earn high points because the measures were largely educational and not family/community support.

(3) Describe how the partnership would –

(a) Track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA or consortium and at the student level for the participating students (as defined in this notice);

See above for measures. The proposal in Appendix G suggested that the information would be reported only at the aggregate level.

(b) Use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students (as defined in this notice), with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty (including highly mobile students), family instability, or other child welfare issues; The following were noted:

- GCPS receives annual reports such as the Gadsden 2012 Annual Health Care Comparison Report (Appendix G) from the Health Department.
- Health Department able to informally look at health services provided during year and make decisions about educational needs and trainings
- Formative data allows the District and the Department to collaborate on needed student and parent education trainings and workshops

(c) GCPS earned no points for this subsection because it did not develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students (as defined in this notice) to at least other high-need students (as defined in this notice) and communities in the LEA or consortium over time; and

No information was provided for developing a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students

(d) Improve results over time;

No information was provided for improving results over time

GCPS earned no points for this subsection because so much information was missing.

(4) Describe how the partnership would, within participating schools (as defined in this notice), integrate education and other services (e.g., services that address social-emotional, and behavioral needs, acculturation for immigrants and refugees) for participating students (as defined in this notice);

GCPS earned Zero points because no information was provided on how the partners would integrate education and other services

(5) The proposal did not describe how the partnership and LEA or consortium would build the capacity of staff in participating schools (as defined in this notice) by providing them with tools and supports to do any of the following:

(a) Assess the needs and assets of participating students (as defined in this notice) that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports (as defined in this notice) identified by the partnership;

No information was provided.

(b) Identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports (as defined in this notice) identified by the applicant;

No information was provided.

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

No information was provided.

(d) Engage parents and families of participating students (as defined in this notice) in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs; and

No information was provided.

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

No information was provided.

GCPS earned zero points for this subsection because the required information was not provided.

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

The proposal referenced the measured noted earlier and described the following desired results for students from this partnership include but are not limited to

- Increased opportunities for Gadsden students to take advanced level coursework;
- Exposure to college matriculated STEM and CTE opportunities;
- Orientation to the postsecondary learning experience;
- Opportunity to earn both high school and college credit simultaneously.

The proposal earned medium points for this subsection because it provided adequate but not great responses to both performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:		
<p>GCPS did not coherently and comprehensively address the requirement laid out in the RTTD notice. In sections A, B, and C, the proposal writers did not respond to the required elements and instead wrote a proposal focused on its four “restructuring goals.” The proposal addressed personalized learning as defined in the notice only minimally. It was never the focus of the vision, plan or of the implementation.</p> <p>The proposal was not developed in partnership with key stakeholders. The proposal did not meet the very specific requirements of teacher involvement. The budget was problematic because more than half of the funds were allocated to construction costs without providing rationale why such a high percentage was necessary to fulfill a “personalized learning” grant or why the construction costs had to be funded exclusively through the RTTD program. The proposal suffered from not having a completed evaluation plan. The GCPS proposal did not meet the “Absolute Priority Requirements.”</p>		

Total	210	70
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0217FL-3 for Gadsden County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant sets forth a clear and coherent vision meant to restructure the learning experience of students starting with the pre-school student and expanding through Career Technical Education and post-secondary learning opportunities. The applicant’s proposal is built around Restructuring the district in the following ways; developing a rigorous early learning instructional environment at all elementary schools, extending the school year by two weeks, developing a single Pk-8th STEM Magnet School, and building a state of the art alternative learning center for non-traditional students. The vision is creditable however does not address how the proposal comprehensively builds on the core education assurances areas of RTTTD or how the proposal will create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of education. The proposal does not address personalization of education at all, this is a critical component of the criteria.</p>		

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's narrative outlines that all the 16 school sites within the district meet the competition's eligibility requirements and have been chosen for implementation of the proposal. That is a total of 5,731 students who will be impacted through implementation. Further, the applicant provides a table A2 identifying the schools as well as the number/percentage of participating students and educators. The narrative and accompanying table meet the necessary requirements of all the attributes however with deep reading one realizes that not all students will be impacted in that Pk-2 students at the elementary level will be impacted (1800 students), and the proposed STEM Magnet School will impact 700 students, while the Alternative Learning Center will impact on a small portion of the total student population (yet this center will take 50% of the budgeted funds). The proposal does indicate that 100% of students in the district will be impacted by the extended school year.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presents a rationale for the proposed reform and change. This rationale does not include any of the high quality plan attributes necessary to describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. Again the current proposal vision states that all students in the district will be impacted by only the extended school year, the other three key goals of the reform proposal will only impact small portions of the total students body, therefore the applicant missed an opportunity to describe (anywhere in the proposal) how all students would be impacted (other than the extended school year which the applicant indicates may not be stainable after the grant funds run out).</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's narrative indicates some ambitious achievement goals. The applicant does provide charts and raw data evidencing current low rates of student achievement along with some rigorous projections for improvement. The lack of explanation for the difference calls into question the ability of the overall vision to result in increased equity of all students. There are tables for performance on summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's narrative provides a record of little success in the past years. There is no evidence of any grades closing the achievement gap. The applicant reports an overall slight increase in Graduation Rate. There is no discussion in the proposal concerning reform in the persistently lowest achieving schools. The applicant indicates that the Performance Matters program has been purchased which will allow educators to create assessments and evaluate students' performance to adjust instructional practices. Parent and students will have access to the performance data as well from Performance Matters.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant includes a description of a mostly high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investment. The applicant (in another section of the proposal identifies that Florida is a Race to the Top state, however does not address what that fact means for their level of transparency) does post salaries on the district and state websites. Additionally, all Board workshops and meetings are advertised to the public and agendas/notes are published on the district website. There is no evidence that non-personnel expenditures at the school level are made transparent to the public.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative included is brief and indicates that the district provided the Florida Department of Education with the narrative of the grant application. The applicant indicates that the Florida State representatives provided reflective input, however there is little actual description or evidence of conditions and autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

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

15

9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has some evidence of stakeholder support as evidenced by numerous attached letters of support from political and community based organizations and post-secondary institutions. The applicant has engaged district and school level stakeholders by gathering input for the key focus areas of the grant during curriculum and district level meetings. There is limited evidence of student and families participating in the development or providing feedback on the proposal. There is a critical lack of evidence in the form of educator support there is no evidence of teacher support or buy-in. This is a crucial component in determining the overall success of the reform.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	6

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plan for improving learning through a multi-tiered Response to Instruction model focusing on PK-2 grades, an extended school year, developing a PK-8 STEM Magnet school, and building a new Alternative Learning Center. However the applicant does not address how the proposal will personalize the learning environment for students nor is there any mention of building the proposal around the four core educational assurances areas required in the Race to the Top District Competition . The applicant did not identify an overall District plan for monitoring student achievement nor any mechanisms to provide training/support to students to ensure their understand of how to use the tools/resources provided in the proposal in order to ensure that all pieces of the proposal meet expectations. The proposal does not present a High Quality Plan, thus making the general proposal not actionable. These are critical areas to ensure systematic reform.

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

20

7

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's narrative has limited evidence of planning to engage educators in the training necessary to support system wide change. There is a noticeable lack of specific details concerning how training will be developed to ensure actionable information to help educators identify optimal learning approaches. Ultimately, the proposal does not detail any high quality attributes necessary to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment . Finally, there is no evidence that the applicant has a plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and high quality teachers and principals. These critical components of the proposal have not been given sufficient in depth thought which result in the educational staff not having the tools or support needed to ensure massive systematic change.

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 proposes to centralized and streamline the Central Office staff and to create four new positions using the requested funds to provide support and services to all participating schools. The narrative outlines that School leadership teams will have flexibility and autonomy over most school level staffing factors. The proposal loosely supports giving students some and diverse opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards and to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has a generalized plan to ensure that the LEA and school infrastructure supporting Response to Instruction Tiered Model. The plan does not necessarily outline how RTI will articulate into true Personalization of Learning for all students. The applicant does outline the different interoperable data systems currently in use in the school system.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has a weak strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process to provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals/opportunities for ongoing correcting/improvement during and after the term of the grant. The applicant includes much detail about the overarching beliefs the system has about continuous improvement process, however, there is no systematic plan (high quality or other wise) provided in the proposal to identify an actionable method of following through. Additionally, there is no evidence in the narrative that the information will be shared with the public.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a generalized plan to implement ongoing communication and engagement after the proposal is approved. There is a vague statement in the proposal which states that the District program organizer will, "with telephone and email contact, will be identified and a web-oink will be established for on-going communication." Thus, there is no high quality plan for ongoing communication nor engagement with internal and external stakeholders.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has a high quality plan that evidences thought and specificity in the aligned Indicators for College and Career-Ready program. The required tables are filled out, and the narrative/chart outlines the rationale for selecting each measure; as well as how the measure will provide formative information tailored to it proposed plan of action and how each measure will be reviewed to gage implementation progress.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: The applicant includes a set of topics which might be used to evaluate the proposal, however does not clearly and specifically outline a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the proposed activities. The applicant did not address how the effectiveness of investment would be evaluated, this is especially concerning as approximately 50% of the requested funds would be used to build a new Alternative Learning Center. This is a critical component that ensures the overall stability of the proposal in that modifications may need to be made to ensure the greatest impact for all students.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a budget that describes the use of funds being requested. There is no description of any other funds that the applicant will use to support the implementation of the proposal. The applicant does not include any rationale for using approximately 50% of the requested funds to build an Alternative Learning Center. Thus the applicant does provide a		

budget just does not provide a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to sustain the restructuring projects by making use of general funds, Federal funds, and future grant opportunities. The applicant falls short of a commitment to continue the extended school year reform (the only measure which will impact all students in the district) as funds may not be available. For this reason the applicant hesitated to outline a comprehensive plan of sustainability for the proposed reform. The applicant clearly does not have a high quality plan to sustain this proposal.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a targeted coherent sustainable (though not particularly innovative) partnership focused on the identified population. The narrative addresses effectiveness by collecting aggregated data and sharing with the community partners in such a way as to make the data useful in improving results for participating students. The narrative does not address how the partnerships would integrate education and other services for participating students nor how they build capacity of staff in participating schools.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's proposal does not build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environment that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators. The current proposal is designed around creating opportunity by providing PK-2 RTI, Extending the School Year, developing a STEM School, and building a new Alternative Learning Center. No where in the proposal is Personalized Learning Environments address with depth or breath of explanation.

Total	210	110
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