



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0244TN-1 for Johnson City Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a comprehensive and coherent vision to transform its school system through the development and implementation of the Response to Intervention Model<sup>2</sup> (RTI<sup>2</sup>). This proposal builds upon the existing reforms currently being implemented within the state such as the Tennessee Diploma Project and Common Core Standards. The proposed project seeks to minimize the achievement gaps that exist among various subgroups. The application describes a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through three tiered support system. By providing intensive instruction to the groups that are underperforming as compared to their counterparts, the applicant increases the likelihood of these students meeting college and career readiness standards. The applicant does not clearly articulate what the classroom experiences will be like for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments. The applicant does not clearly illustrate or expound on what the district will do to implement its vision for differentiating instruction for the various ability groups of children. For example, it is unclear how a teacher's instruction will vary from the sound teaching practices which are currently in place to what will occur after receiving the RTI<sup>2</sup> training.</p> <p>The applicant scored in the medium range for this section</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a vague description of the process that was used to select the schools to participate. The applicant stated that all schools in the district will participate in the proposed program but no rationale was provided for determining the district wide participation. The district determined that two of the participating schools were identified as high need schools. The criteria for making the determination for the two schools were not clearly conveyed. The applicant states that these schools would receive special attention, however it fails to provide clear details regarding what the assistance would be. The narrative states the mission that the LEA has tasks themselves with to ensure that "all students have an equal opportunity to achieve and be successful while meeting high expectations". The applicant does not explicitly provide a list of the schools to participate in this section. By using the charts provided, it was determined that the eleven schools mentioned as being targeted are in fact all of the schools within the district. All traditional and non-traditional elementary, middle, and high schools were chosen to participate in the initiative. All grade bands at the elementary (PreK-4), intermediate (5-6) middle school level (7-8) and high school level (9-12) include 100% of students will be included in this reform. In addition, the total number of participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators are clearly demonstrated.</p> <p>The applicant scored in the medium range for this section.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal has an adequate plan for LEA-wide reform and change in order to meet the needs of the participating students. Specifically, by providing expert intervention specialists; strengthening technology; empowering teachers; providing targeted support to most at risk students, and reducing achievement gaps among subgroups the applicant may likely promote district wide reform and increase the possibility of having all subgroups meeting college and career</p>		

readiness standards. Additional outcomes of the implementation of RTI model will change the methods used for personalized instruction and enhance the social and emotional supports for students by providing intensive instruction with the assistance of special education gap assistances and support coaches.

The applicant has thoroughly inventoried its needs as a district to determine structures that are in place and are working properly as well as determined the areas that need attention in order to implement the proposed program with positive results. For example, the applicant has determined the personnel that will be needed to implement the program. The applicant presents a well-developed Logic Model that clearly defines the district's needs, goals and objectives and outcomes.

The applicant has not submitted a scale up model for the proposed program. Although all schools will be participating in the proposed project, it is unclear if the applicant will phase in schools during various stages of the project or if all schools will participate at the beginning of program implementation.

The applicant provides a vague timeline to outline the program implementation and key personnel and their responsibility to ensuring successful implementation. There is not a clear indication of whether the district will be able to provide adequate training in a timely manner in order to implement the proposed project. The applicant only addresses teachers receiving training in the summer of 2014 and does not mention additional training for RTI. The limited training for the proposed project will most likely impact the district's ability to have LEA-wide reform and change.

The applicant score in the medium range.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant clearly outlines a vision that is likely to result in improved student learning and performance. The district provides a narrative and tables that clearly describe its ambitious performance goals based on achievement gap performance between subgroups within the LEA and the LEA's highest achieving subgroup in reading or Language Arts and math as measured by TCAP and End of Course Achievement tests. The applicant provides an adequate number of summative assessments to identify the performance measures. The assessments include Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), Pearson Benchmarks, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next), Text Reading and Comprehension Screening (TRC), American College Testing (ACT), and End of Course Assessments (EOC's) which will likely provide teachers with vital information to determine the individual strategies needed for every student.

Gaps currently exist between the racial/ethnic student, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient students and students with disabilities as compared to their counterparts. The annual goals established for the proposal appear to be ambitious yet achievable. The applicant has set higher growth rates, known as Gap Reduction Number (GRN) rather than the state established AMOs. The applicant is ambitious in the setting its goals as their GRN is double the state's AMO. If these goals are achieved, the applicant may possibly reduce the existing gaps by 50% as planned by end of the grant period. Based on the strategies the applicant proposes, the goals for both graduations and college enrollment rates are ambitious and attainable. These goals are ambitious as they are above the state AMOs yet attainable as the goal is to increase the between 1 to 3.23 percentage points per year in each subgroup for the high school graduation rate and .85 percentage points to 3.23 percentage points per year in each subgroup for college enrollment .

The applicant fails to clearly articulate the college enrollment performance. The applicant chose to use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as the criterion to determine the college enrollment rates which may not adequately capture a true percentage of college enrollment. Completing a FAFSA form does not equate to college acceptance or enrollment.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant failed to provide four years of data as required by the selection criteria, therefore full points could not be awarded for this section. However, the applicant has thoroughly demonstrated a clear track record of success over the past two years as evidenced by the district being identified as one of the top ten ranked districts among the 136 school districts in the state based upon student performance in grades 3-8 on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) and each of the participating schools having met AYP.

Although the applicant can boast of overall high student achievement, the applicant acknowledges that there are achievement gaps exist between the racial/ethnic student, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient students and students with disabilities as compared to their counterparts. The applicant states that there was growth within some of the subgroups, but it cannot be ascertained how substantial this growth was because the applicant does not elaborate on the actual percentage of growth that occurred.

The applicant clearly evidences achieved ambitious and significant reforms in its low-performing school. During the 2012-2013 school year, the lowest performing schools showed an average increase in reading/language arts of 9.0 % and an increase of 6.0% in math as measured by TCAP. These gains may possibly be attributed to using a National Science Foundation GK-12 grant in partnership with East Tennessee State University that provided graduate level courses and staff development; individual school autonomy in decision making for after school programming; additional extended contract hours, and state Race to the Top funds that provided in-classroom academic tutors. It is likely that if the applicant combines the established efforts with the proposed project, the district may continue to see growth in areas that have struggled to achieve levels of proficiency.

The graduation rates for 2013 were reported as being slightly above the state average, noting that the Hispanic graduation rate was significantly lower while 80% of JCSD graduates enrolled in a four year college or university. It cannot be ascertained if the 2013 graduation and college enrollment data presents any significant growth or loss because no data is provided from the previous years.

The applicant has established procedures to inform students and parents of student performance in ways that inform and improve participation. The district provides student data to parents and students through PowerSchool which can allow parents and students of grades 6-12 to view their grades and reports in real time by logging on a computer or mobile device. In addition, the applicant informs parents of students' progress through conferences and provides them with strategies to assist their children. By holding conferences with parents and providing avenues for parent to have constant access to grades, parents are likely to stay actively involved with their child's education.

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

**5**

**5**

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has established a high level of transparency in the LEA processes, practices and investments because the applicant indicates that the LEA makes public, all salaries of administrators, teachers, and instructional staff via its website. The information is updated annually to reflect state and local raises and step increases.

Schools budgets are developed at each site with teacher, parent and administrative input. These budgets are incorporated into the district budget which is developed by Superintendent of Schools and the Chairman of the School Board who coordinate collecting budget data, review budget concerns and make budget decisions. By making the proposed budget available for inspection by stakeholders in the office of the Superintendent of Schools and posting it on the website and local newspapers, the applicant further demonstrates its fiscal transparency. Involving the stakeholders in the budgeting process also provides an added level of transparency to the LEA's practices. The Annual Public School Financial Report is filed and certified in accordance with Department of Education regulations and submitted to the State and both the general budget and site-based budgets that non-personnel expenditures are internally audited annually.

The applicant received the highest score for this section.

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

**10**

**10**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

It is clearly evident that the applicant has sufficient conditions and autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in this proposal. The Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) 49-2-203 – Stipulates the local school board will manage and control all public schools established or that may be established under its jurisdiction. Article XXIII of the Johnson City Charter creates a Board of Education which

has full and exclusive power and authority as trustees or directors to manage, control, and regulates the public or city schools, to elect or employ competent and qualified teachers. In addition, School-Based Decision Making states the Board shall operate its schools under principles of school-based decision making. The state and LEA statutes, laws and policies give autonomy to the applicant to implement the proposed project in order to personalize student learning.

This general statute gives districts the statutory authority and obligation to customize learning for students.

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

**15**

**11**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The narrative clearly articulates the meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. The stakeholder engagement is evidenced by:

- appointing an administrator to gather grant information, develop avenues for feedback from all stakeholders and organize the grant's development.;
- having teachers and administrators provide feedback using "Dream Big" template and being asked to provide feedback for ambitious reforms;
- having academic coaches facilitate design meetings to examine data, find academic gaps, design strategies, and identify best practices to close the achievement gaps of special population students.;
- allowing local community leaders to meet with the Superintendent to voice their support and pledge help in developing a sustainability plan that includes increased local support and the development of long term funding plans.

The applicant states that it received feedback and support from the Johnson City Education Association. However, the applicant does not provide a letter from this group to confirm this statement or provide evidence of having support from 70% of the teachers.

The applicant has demonstrated strong support by providing letters of support from such key stakeholders such as the city mayor, the city manager, the PTA and an IHE.

The applicant does not clearly demonstrate how parents were involved in the plan other than the schools' PTA viewing a presentation of the proposal to garner support.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal outlines some elements of a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment which will likely provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The applicant plans to incorporate RTI<sup>2</sup> to current strategies used by the district which may provide learners with more personalized instruction while placing special emphasis on students who fall below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile on universal screenings and who struggle academically or behaviorally. The various assessments to be used should provide valuable information that will likely drive instructional decisions to assist in increasing student achievement. Parents and students will be provided with opportunities to receive training using the Enrich Assess Dashboard which will likely encourage ownership and responsibility with the learning process by helping students to understand that what they learn and accomplish will determine their ability to succeed in life after high school. Prior to the grant proposal the district established learning and development goals linked to college and career readiness standards and graduation requirements. The model outlined in the proposal will likely contribute positively to these goals. High needs students including ELL, special needs and Hispanic will have a greater level of support through the proposed project with a team consisting of teachers, academic intervention specialists and interpreters.

The applicant does an excellent job illustrating how past and current initiatives fit into the criteria of this section, but neglects to fully

detail how this proposal meets all of the criteria of this section. The narrative does not clearly convey how ongoing and regular feedback, including how frequently updated individual student data will be used to determine progress toward mastery of college or career readiness. Furthermore, the applicant could have strengthened the section by demonstrating how the students would be trained in understanding their learning through conferencing with the teachers or other interventions. The applicant does not expound on what occurs if a student is not achieving at the anticipated rate of success.

In the Logic Model and throughout the application, the applicant touts that students will have anytime, anywhere access to their personalized learning plans, but does not clearly explain how all students will have access at home to use the technology. The applicant only states that Tier III students will have the use of iPads. It is not clear if these iPads will be available for home usage.

The applicant scored in the medium range in this section.

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

**20**

**15**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant details some elements of a high-quality professional development plan and professional learning components that have already been in place and will continue in the proposed project. For example, five professional development days are built into the school calendar to focus on rigorous training on the Common Core State Standards, individualized education, data analysis, and further developing teaching strategies set forth by the teacher evaluation model Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). The academic interventionists will provide ongoing content and student specific imbedded professional development as they work along the regular classroom teacher with TIER II students. A reading specialist will be placed at each school site will provide assistance that will likely enrich instructional content and practices across settings such as ELL, Special Education, and the regular classroom. Math academic coaches will train teachers to develop student proficiencies and competencies which will likely help students' experiences in math expand to doing math using problem solving methods to solidify their mathematical skills. Enrich Assess, a new digital platform being used by the applicant, will make it possible to create and track of learning profiles for each student so that they can frequently measure progress and adapt content and instruction in response to individual academic needs and interests which will inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators.

Educators in the participating schools should be able to have access to data and other resources in order to identify optimal learning approaches to assist with responding to individual student academic needs by the incorporation of Enrich Assess. The program will house all student data, making it easier for teachers to use the information to guide the instruction needed for each child. By providing teachers with support from academic specialist during weekly common planning times, teachers will likely use the Enrich Assess in a more effective manner. Providing access to QUIA, Weebly, United Streaming, Learn360, Big Universe, Khan Academy, Study Island, and many other online resources teachers most likely will be able to find content to improve instruction and personalize learning.

By using Enrich Assess digital platform, teachers should be able receive instant feedback on student performance for frequent measurements of progress toward mastering college- and career-ready standards. This process should allow teachers to identify approaches that were successful and discontinue the approaches that have not be effective.

The new teacher evaluation model, Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) was developed in cooperation with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) and measures a teacher's effectiveness in a qualitative and quantitative manner because it combines the following elements: teacher observations, student growth, and student achievement. In addition, the applicant administers the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning Survey) to receive feedback into necessary changes, stay engaged with the improvement of teachers which will ultimately lead to student achievement. The applicant does not convey how often the survey is administered or how the results will be used to drive necessary changes. The applicant does not clearly identify the processes for providing weak or ineffective teachers will additional levels of support.

The applicant outlines the professional development practices which include five days of professional learning that are geared to district and school initiatives and academic specialists provide support for classroom teachers through providing job-embedded professional learning opportunities, modeling effective strategies and researching best practices. The LEA appears to be using an established professional development practice and not providing additional supports such as additional days or more time with specialists to ensure that teachers have enough training to implement the program at the beginning of the school year. The timeline gives a vague reference to professional development occurring during the summer of 2014. There is no reference to training teachers hired after this training or providing ongoing training to ensure the fidelity of program implementation. The narrative and timeline do not clearly demonstrate that teachers will receive enough training in the proposed project. The proposed project relies heavily on the implementation of the RTI model.

The applicant scored in the medium range.

**D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal outlines a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide students and educators, with the support and resources necessary for success. The applicant provides a clear illustration of the central office organization which will most likely allow for a solid implementation of the proposed project by providing support and services to all participating schools. The likelihood of a successful program implementation is increased by adding an additional administrator to the district level for project management.

The current school leadership teams in the participating schools have clearly demonstrated their autonomy and flexibility as evidenced by the district's site based management policies and practices. The site based management should allow the schools make school specific scheduling decisions and staffing decisions that will be necessary for proper program implementation.

The applicant clearly demonstrates that it provides students with opportunities to progress and earn credit based on proven mastery, not the amount of time spent on topic because students are able to earn college credit via the Accelerated College Admission program. It is apparent that the applicant understands the need to encourage some students to earn the required minimum credits to earn a diploma by providing struggling students with options such as credit recovery labs or the Graduate on Time Program (GOT) . By offering these two programs, the applicant will likely increase their graduation rate. The applicant states that it provides the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple ways, such as projects, experiments, presentations, essays and portfolios.

The applicant has ensured that it addresses the needs of students with disabilities and English learners by providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students because RTI<sup>2</sup> mode is designed to meet individual student needs using instructional and intervention decisions based on student progress and assessments.

The section scored in the high range.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides an adequate plan for infrastructure in school. The applicant fails to clearly articulate the timeframe and responsible personnel for the deliverables listed. For example, the applicant states that it will increase technology and extend library resources, but it is unclear if the changes in technology will occur all in year one and who will ensure that the resources are allocated appropriately. The applicant outlines many resources that will be available during the school day. However, the proposal lacks the evidence to demonstrate that the applicant will ensure that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders, 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 proposal. The section could have been strengthened by establishing ways students and parents could have access to online resources such as Khan Academy and Big Universe, computers or other academic resources after regular school hours.

The applicant has a sufficient plan for ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support. Parents will learn how to access and use the Enrich Dashboard during the Parent Academies offered through PTA, Community Outreach and Parent Engagement. The technical support provided to the parents will increase the likelihood that parents will use the resource which will provide them with valuable information regarding their child's progress. Students will also receive technical support to access and interpret their own personalized Dashboards through individualized and regularly scheduled student/teacher data conferences which will place a greater emphasis on students' responsibility with their learning.

The applicant provides an adequate plan for 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 as indicated by the online parent resources such as Power School's Gradebook portal, School Net and Enrich Access.

The applicant uses multiple interoperable data systems such as PowerSchool, Enrich Assess and Electronic Information System (EIS) as required.

The applicant scored within the medium range for this section.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provides an adequate approach to continuously improve its plan by providing a continuous improvement process. The strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process includes timely and regular feedback on project goals as evidenced by the monthly progress updates from the Data Supervisor at monthly board meetings which are open to the public; weekly staff meetings with the superintendent to discuss implementation and feedback; and an annual conference with senior staff, school board and superintendent with the specific purpose to review priorities, measure success, examine initiatives, and receive feedback on Race To the Top implementation and goals. The regular meetings with senior staff, Superintendent and school board should demonstrate the commitment to the success of the proposed program. In addition these strategies should provide the applicant with multiple times to address project needs as they arise. Although the applicant outlines its plan to collect data throughout the year, the applicant does not clearly state the goals that will be monitored and all of the personnel responsible for ensuring the evaluation processes are carried out on time. Professional development is integral in the continuous improvement process. However, the applicant does not address the evaluation of the professional development to ensure that teachers have received all necessary training or that the training was of high-quality.

By using analysis of Race to the Top district data, research of effective school strategies, review of current practices, annual teacher survey of the effectiveness of additional personnel and program implementation, and the identification of possible solutions, the applicant should be able to make adequate adjustments to the plan as needed that will likely ensure solid implementation of the proposed program. The applicant will monitor and analyze school-specific achievement data to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses then provide relevant interventions when a deficient area is noted, which will likely contribute to the continuous improvement process.

The state releases district and school report cards which demonstrate the schools' and districts' academic growth each year, but the applicant does not explicitly state or clearly demonstrate how it will publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top-District other than reporting information at a school board meeting.

The applicant scored in the medium range in this section.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant adequately demonstrates a quality plan for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders as evidenced by current practices such as distribution of the semi-annual district developed newsletter, information disseminated through Parent-Teacher Associations, school and district website updates, distribution of monthly school newsletters, and phone calls using an automated system. The applicant will establish Quarterly Community Forums to discuss data, monitor progress and make adjustments to meet the RTTT-D goals. The various means of communication will likely keep all stakeholders informed of the proposed project's achievements. The applicant clearly identifies methods of communication but fails to clearly state how external stakeholders such as parents and Frontier Health, the applicant's partner, are being engaged in the implementation process of the proposed project.

The applicant scored in the high range in this section.

<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
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**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant clearly describes its rationale for the identified measures selected. For example, AMO's are developed by analyzing the district, individual schools, and subgroups data and the applicant then uses the AMO's to measure and tailor its performance measures for the proposed project.

The applicant also sufficiently described how the measures would provide rigorous, timely and formative information leading to it proposed plan. Due to existing gaps between the racial/ethnic student, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient students and students with disabilities as compared to their counterparts the applicant set higher growth rates than the established AMOs for the state. By striving to exceed the state AMOs in each subgroup, the applicant may possibly reduce the existing gaps by 50% as planned by end of the grant period. For example, all seventh grade students will grow an annual 2.0% in Math as indicated by the state AMOs on TCAP while the subgroups will grow increased percent of 5.33%, 3.43%, 3.71%, 4.86%, and 6.33% respectively, to reduce the existing gaps by 50% by 2018. Thus the annual goals are ambitious yet achievable.

The applicant states that it will monitor and analyze school-specific achievement data to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses then provide relevant interventions when a deficient area is noted. However, the applicant does not provide clear details as to how it will improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

The applicant scored in the high range.

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal outlines a basic plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The Gap Academic Transformation Team (GATT), composed of central office administrators, parents, district wide coaches, and intervention specialists will be responsible for analyzing formative and summative evaluation data and for regularly communicating and sharing evaluation findings to all stakeholders and making modifications as necessary. The applicant only addresses the internal evaluations that will take place. By adding external evaluations to the proposed plan the section would have been strengthened and validity added to the process.

The evaluation methods and data sources to be used include program documents, professional development, meeting minutes, data sheets, survey of all stakeholders; student achievement data. The evaluation methods appear to rely heavily on qualitative data. More quantitative data may be needed to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of investments. The applicant vaguely details how it will evaluate the financial evaluation of the program. The applicant does not outline a clear management system for collecting and analyzing data to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed project.

The section is scored in the medium range.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>

**(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The budget narrative clearly identifies all funding sources associated with the successful implementation of the proposed program which includes RTTD, Title I, local, state and private monies. The applicant has included the costs and

justifications for the following: personnel and school based support, stipends for training, technology upgrades, transportation services, and supplies.

Some of the personnel expenditures appear to excessive. For example, five additional school nurses, nine special education assistants and two additional assistant principals are being supplied through grant funding. Using a grant to pay for special education positions is the highest concern.

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

**10**

**6**

**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has provided an adequate plan of sustainability of the project goals after the term of the grant. The applicant will continue the plans put in place with the RTTD funds by teacher attrition, local funding increases, pursuit of local foundation funding and non- profit support. For example, the seventeen intervention specialists will be able to remain in place due to teacher attrition. The class -size reduction will be addressed by using Title I funds at eligible schools. The applicant makes the assumption that it along with the City Commission will be able to increase local funding to support the LEA with taxes and private support, however this is not guaranteed and cannot be considered a reliable plan for sustainability. In addition, the applicant cannot assume that the grant funded personnel will be able to secure positions through attrition. Most grant funded positions are not classroom teaching positions and may not be able to be absorbed through attrition. The district does not account for the possibility of needing more classroom teachers due to increased student enrollment and the continued need of the newly hired personnel.

The applicant scored in the medium range.

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant has developed a coherent and sustainable partnership with Mental Health professionals employed by Frontier Health. The two organizations designed a project to address the needs of safety concerns and mental health needs for the students of the Johnson City School District by implementing the **Helping Everyone Reach Optimum Excellence and Success (HEROES)** project under a five year Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant. By partnering with Frontier Health the applicant uses the awarded proposal to further educate school employees on interventions with children demonstrating at risk behaviors and provided interventions specifically designed to target the behaviors which demonstrated the ability to build capacity among faculty. The project has illustrated effectiveness, according to the applicant, by receiving national recognition. The partnership will be used to provide participating teachers with additional training on interventions that may possibly be used in the classroom with students who are demonstrating risk behaviors. By providing these interventions, the applicant may likely increase the effectiveness of the participating educators, increase student achievement, and meet the behavioral health needs of the targeted population. The partner will work with the applicant to address the following needs of the four populations by:

- providing parent support to Hispanic families and assisting them in feeling comfortable in the school environment;
- creating stronger home-school connections by providing case management services to families who have not had a successful public school experience;
- connecting homeless students with community resources through specialized case management;
- identifying and providing mental health case management and clinical services designed to assess and intervene with youth who have experienced trauma, particularly children who are in state custody or are at risk of being placed in state custody.

The partner has established clear methods for collecting and analyzing data to measure the effectiveness of its program. To evaluate the HEROES program, the partner reviews data and tracking logs monthly in order to making modifications; assess the impact of the social/emotional support programs by having students complete surveys annually; and administer school climate surveys to stakeholder and impact surveys to teachers.

The applicant does not clearly describe the methods it will use to evaluate the partnership. Most of the data that will be reviewed are qualitative and will occur annually which does not clearly demonstrate how it could possibly make modifications in a timely manner if need be.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>
<b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant clearly meets the criteria for absolute priority 1. The integration of the priority is embedded throughout the proposal. The applicant provides a comprehensive plan for implementing the proposal and has systems in place that will complement the proposed project. The overall responses provided in the proposal detail plans to close the achievement gap by setting ambitious yet achievable goals and personalizing learning. There is strong evidence that the initiatives will result in improved student progress based on the district's previous track record of success. The applicant clearly articulates meaningful stakeholder engagement and support in the development of the proposal by appointing an administrator to gather grant information, develop avenues for feedback from all stakeholders and organize the grant's development; having teachers and administrators provide feedback using dream big template and being asked to provide feedback for ambitious reforms; and allowing local community leaders to meet with the Superintendent to voice their support and pledge help in developing a sustainability plan that includes increased local support and the development of long term funding plans.</p>		

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>156</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0244TN-2 for Johnson City Schools

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Johnson City School District (JCSD) shared a comprehensive and coherent vision.</p> <p>(a) The applicant provided evidence that their current and past work within the district met the four core educational assurance areas. The district adopted the Tennessee Diploma Project in 2009, the Common Core State Standards in 2011, and the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program in 2012. The district has a data system known as Enrich Access designed to monitor student achievement. The district makes a concerted effort to hire teachers of the highest quality. They work with the local colleges, host two job fairs, and advertise online. The district has a high retention rate: 93% after year one, and 85% after year three. They have a process in place to support "hard-to-staff" positions. This support involves observation, feedback</p>		

and staff development to increase teacher capacity. In another section of the application, the applicant shared some data that supported the increase in student achievement, but they did not provide explicit data that supported turning a school around. The applicant did share that one school was a Blue Ribbon school. This is an indication of significantly increasing student performance.

(b) The applicant provided information pertaining to the impact of the proposed RTI2 Model Framework for JCSD. The applicant shared how this project would increase student achievement by:

1. Preparing students for career and college readiness through embedding the Common Core curriculum
2. Closing the achievement gap
3. Building teacher capacity
4. Monitoring student achievement through a data monitoring tool
5. Assisting families who are homeless
6. Increasing graduation rates for the students

(c) The applicant outlined the goal to create an individualized instructional environment for students and the staff. High quality staff would need to be hired to ensure that the needs of students are being met in this environment. However, the applicant neglected to explicitly share a description of the personalized learning environment and the types of experiences the students would have as members within this environment.

Overall, the applicant scored in the medium range for this section. The applicant clearly and cohesively incorporated the importance of preparing all students for career and college readiness via specific measures as shared via the goals of the 3-Tier Model. The applicant neglected to provide a clear picture of the personalized learning environment.

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

**10**

**7**

**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided the criteria that they used to identify the schools in the proposal.

- (a) The applicant clearly provided data to support the rationale for implementing this program district-wide. The applicant noted that priority attention will be placed on the schools with the highest needs (Free and Reduced Meals and At-Risk data). The applicant noted that “special attention” would be given to these schools, they did not share what tenets reflect “special attention.” The composite percentage of students who are below the poverty line meet the criteria. The applicant neglected to provide the process used to select schools.
- (b) The LEA is comprised of eleven schools. The applicant shared that eleven schools were targeted for this grant. Although the applicant did not explicitly list the name of each school in this section, they did list them in another section of this application.
- (c) The applicant detailed information regarding the number of participating students who have been identified as high need and low-income. The applicant also shared the number of participating educators. The applicant did not share how many students and teachers will be impacted at each specific school.

Overall, the applicant scored in the medium range for this section. The applicant neglected to share the criterion used by the selected school panel to identify the participants.

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

**10**

**7**

**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant shared some evidence of their plan describing how the reform proposal would meet the needs of targeted students, staff, and families.

- The applicant explicitly shared how the district has been recognized for making gains in student performance

achievement. The applicant shared that students in the homeless demographic group had an increase of 36% in progress over the past 4 years. The applicant did not share any other specific data that reflected a positive trajectory over time.

- The applicant presented a comprehensive plan reflecting the specific actions that will be taken to ensure the success of the program.
- All eleven schools are involved in the proposal. Therefore, the opportunity to scale-up this plan is not applicable.
- The applicant neglected to share a detailed timeline regarding the deliverables of this proposal.
- The applicant's timeline did not share: the frequency of the implementation of the professional development plan for all staff who would be responsible for implementing the components of the proposal, the frequency of technology training for staff and stakeholders, the plan for installation or maintenance of the technology, or the frequency to support increasing student and parent capacity to appropriately access information.
- The Logic Model shared by the applicant clearly conveyed current gaps and needs, detailed the goal outcomes, and addressed long-term outcomes.

The information provided is reasonable and manageable. However, the plan does not fall into the High-Quality range based on the fact that the timeline for implementation did not specifically address the professional development involved in this proposal in detail.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant conveys ambitious yet achievable goals for student achievement, as evidenced on state standardized assessments. The applicant also identifies ambitious yet achievable goals related to graduation rates and career and college readiness.

The applicant provided a graphic organizer that reflects a model framing the logic behind to project goals.

- The applicant explicitly shared the data related to the school system's performance over the years. Although the data on achievement for each school was shared, the data did not reflect a positive trajectory for the three years shared for grades 9-12 English and Algebra. The third year composite score decreased. The applicant neglected to share the cause for the decrease in the composite score.
- The applicant explicitly shared the rationale for the targets identified for the 50% gap reduction goal. They also shared that the gap reduction defined in the plan surpasses the reduction expected from the state.
- The applicant conveys an ambitious yet achievable goal for increasing student graduation rates. The applicant shared an innovative program, known as Graduate on Time Program, designed to support students to reach their goal of graduation from high school within a four-year period.
- The applicant graphically shared the quantitative targets for the career and college readiness. However, the applicant used the FAFSA form completion as evidence of student enrollment into college. The completion of a FAFSA is not a concrete data point to monitor students' enrollment into college.

Overall, the goals outlined in the plan are achievable. However, the data provided did not give a clear baseline to support the projected targets.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>

**(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant neglected to provide four years of previous data required for this criterion. The applicant only shares two years of data from the 2011-2013 school years.

a. The applicant describes how several student groups reflected increased areas of student achievement, as measured on standardized state assessments, American College Testing, and IBO Courses in preparation for college readiness. The applicant shares that they recognize that some of the gains are nominal and that continued work needs to be done in subgroups, like: ELL, Special Education, etc. The applicant neglected to share specific previous data as it related to the Biology and Algebra I testing. The applicant shared limited information pertaining to students who were accepted into colleges. The applicant shared that the Hispanic subgroup and the Pacific islander subgroup made significant gains regarding their graduation rate but neglected to supply the reader with previous data to make the comparison.

b. The applicant clearly states that "low-performing" schools were highlighted by the state for their progress. One school won a National Blue Ribbon Award. The applicant also noted that there were performance gains, as measured on the state standardized test for "all minority sub-groups, students living below the poverty line, ELL groups, and students with disabilities." However, a specific number of students at each grade level were not provided in the chart. As a result, there is not a clear understanding as to the performance impact on the student population at large.

c. The applicant provided specific examples of how they shared student performance with various stakeholders, including:

- Parent Conferences, regularly, and the provision of strategies to support the parents/guardians.
- Data meetings
- Opportunity for students and parents to monitor grades via a system called PowerSchool
- District in-services

As a result, stakeholders will have the information to make informed decisions regarding the academic growth and development of the child. This will also empower parent stakeholders with strategies to work collaboratively with the school administration and teachers to support the learning process for the child. Although the applicant mentioned that parent conferences would occur regularly, the frequency of these meetings was vague.

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

**5**

**5**

**(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

a.) The applicant shared that LEA processes, practices, and investments can be found on the website and shared in the newspaper annually. The evidence that the applicant shared did reflect a high level of transparency for all stakeholders. The applicant noted that all schools develop individual site-based budgets with the input of teachers, parents, and administrators. The applicant noted that school budgets are developed collaboratively and are vetted through members of local and state agencies. The district superintendent submits monthly reports to the board, state, and other agencies. The applicant shared that teacher salaries are posted on the district website. The applicant provided a evidence of the teacher salary schedule.

b-c.) The district members' salaries are posted on the district website.

d.) The non-personnel expenditures are shared quarterly. The salaries are audited annually, and the information is made public at local and state levels.

The processes were explicitly shared, and a transparent process was detected.

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

**10**

**9**

**(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's reflection provided information related to the district's implementation of the proposal. For example, the applicant shared information regarding the regulations that must be adhered to by the state:

1. The district did an outstanding job framing providing a historical framework on how the district was established as an independent system. The city provides the board of education with the power needed manage to school system. Leader stakeholders are encouraged to be involved in the policy-making process. Principals are given autonomy to manage and govern their school according to individuals school needs. It is up to the principal to share the policies and regulations shared by the superintendent and the board.
2. The applicant gave the overarching information pertaining to their state support and increased level of autonomy to run their district. Principals and other administrators are able to decide on the best program to meet the needs of the students in their schools.

The applicant explicitly shared how the school level administrator has the autonomy to implement the goals set in the proposal. However, this level of autonomy may lend itself to increased variability inclusive of program implementation, stakeholder training, and the specifications of an individualized learning environment. This variability among the schools in the district may threaten the implementation of the project.

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

15

11

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant shared the investment and involvement of stakeholders related to this district and the proposal.

- The applicant described that the proposal had strong input from principals, central office, teachers, academic coaches and parents. However, the applicant did not provide specific numbers of the teachers who were involved in this process. They noted that the teachers were provided with a “Dream Big” survey to complete. However, outcome data was not provided. The applicant also noted that they had the full support of the teacher union (JCEA) and that a letter of support was attached. Although several supportive letters were provided, the applicant neglected to add the JCEA teacher union letter of support. However, the president of JCEA signed the application assurances form.
- The applicant did an outstanding job sharing and providing evidence of the stakeholder involvement via letters. The applicant shared letters from parents, city agencies, local businesses, school personnel, chief of police, city manager, and the mayor.
- The applicant shared the steps that the school system leaders took to ensure that feedback and input was solicited from all of stakeholders

The applicant failed to explicitly share how stakeholders contributed to the development of the proposal, and to identify the actual number of teachers involved in this decision-making process.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant conveyed how the plan will support all tenets outlined in the *Learning* selection criteria.

- The applicant shared that it is important to send key messages about learning to students by creating individualized learning environments for all students. The applicant shared the steps they would take to assess students to determine their needs and to empower parents by providing them with training and opportunities to ensure they are able to access student performance data via the Enrich Access database.
- The applicant provided many examples that would support students on the pathway for career and college readiness. The main approach to bolster career and college readiness reflected the implementation of the rigorous standards reflected in the CCSS. The applicant also shared the Tennessee Diploma Project to increase standards and prepare students for their future, and they incorporated online distance courses. The applicant identified a differentiated approach to support students and prepare them for their future.
- The applicant shared explicit information pertaining to how the students would receive differentiated instruction, and social and emotional support through the offering of various programs. The applicant provided a strategic pathway for the reader to connect the project to student achievement. This project will make sustainable and measurable growth for students.

The applicant shared the specific efforts developed by staff and parents to ensure that students have access to performance data.

- The applicant shares the importance of having high-quality teachers and administrators. The applicant shared the importance of building teacher capacity and data access.
- The applicant incorporated a plan to integrate technology into the learning experience. The examples given were relevant, and resources will bolster the learning process and provide students with meaningful experiences.
- The applicant shared specific strategies that will support high need students.
- There were specific opportunities to explicitly communicate with parents and increase their knowledge regarding their child's progress and increased strategies to support their children.

Although the applicant provides a credible plan that ensures that students will learn through a personalized learning environment, the timeline shared vaguely address the explicit and timely professional development that will be needed to ensure that the students are meeting the needs and fostering their own student learning and achievement. In addition, they did not make the connection between the provision of this training and how students would use extrapolated data to inform their learning.

The applicant's timeline does not provide a clear framework of they will ensure that students would receive the strategies needed to ensure that they are able to achieve their goals for graduation and college enrollment.

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

**20**

**15**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

- a. The applicant identified opportunities for professional development for the staff members who will be involved in meeting the needs of students. The applicant shared the type of training that the teacher would receive at the school level. Although there was some evidence of the training that would occur over the life of the proposal, it was not explicit. The applicant noted that five days of training would be provided to teachers/staff to learn or bolster the skillsets as it pertains to the implementation on the RTI. Although the applicant shared that they will take differentiated approaches to teaching and learning and planning with the CCSS in mind, they did not provide explicit details as it related to meeting the individual needs of students once they mastered these set goals.
- The applicant shared that the evaluation system that is currently in place will provide teachers and administrators with the feedback needed to increase their ability to meet the needs of the students and increase their teaching practices. It is inferred that the evaluation system will also address the needs of underperforming teachers and administrators.
- b. The applicant explicitly shared how teacher professional development is differentiated and designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. Teachers will plan collaboratively to create lessons that are engaging and integrate technology. Although the timeline reflected opportunities for staff to engaged in a gap analysis training, technology training, and RTI training, the goals of each training were not explicitly identified, and the frequency of each training was not supportive of full implementation during year one. Although "intensive" teacher and principal training begins during the first summer of the proposal, the applicant does not divulge the number of days hours involved in this training. Other key program implementation trainings occur during the second and third year of the proposal. As a result, there is a question of staff responsible for the implementation of this program will be knowledgeable to implement with integrity, as proposed.
- c. The applicant shared that staff would receive some training pertaining to the use of technology (ie. iPads).
- d. The district recognizes that hiring highly qualified teachers to teach high-needs students is a challenge. As a result, the district has hired academic coaches and intervention specialists to provide support to the teachers who teach high-need students. The interventionists and specialists provide strategies to the teachers, team teach, and work with students in the classrooms. The district provides teachers of hard-to-staff positions with training and differentiated pay. Teachers in the "hard-to-staff" category are eligible to receive an additional \$3,000.00/year stipend. The district's partnership with Tennessee State University provides graduate students to support schools that are low-performing. These graduates support teachers with math and science. It is evident that the district has supports in place for the teachers who are in hard-to-staff positions. The applicant did not specifically share how teachers of students in the special education sub-group are supported.

The applicant provided relevant information as it related to the professional development that would be in place to support staff as they implement this proposal. However, the timeline shared lacked the explicit details outlining specific professional development outcomes, frequency of the professional development, and the impact of the professional development on students and their learning.

### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant conveyed information outlined in this selection criteria.

(a) The applicant provided the leadership framework that is currently in place in JCSD. The framework is in the form of a graphic organizer, and it explicitly outlines the system's hierarchy. The applicant clearly shared how the district leaders, inclusive of the superintendent, under the direction of the board, will support the students and teachers with the support needed to implement the proposal with integrity.

(b) Autonomy is given to schools as evidenced by the leadership teams within every school. The principal is able to make decisions, in collaboration with the leadership team, regarding the implementation of the proposal in their school. The decisions are site-based, and all schools will solicit the input of the stakeholders. The applicant shared that all students will receive high-level instruction and resources.

(c) The credit recovery program ensures that the systems is provisioning for the needs of all students. The system does a nice job identifying differentiated approaches to assist students to earn credits for high school. The Graduate On Time (GOT) program ensures that students receive credits, on time. There is also have a distance-learning program, Khan Academy Online Learning, designed to assist students with acquiring the credits needed for graduation. The applicant did not explicitly share how they would use the Khan Academy Online Learning to accelerate the credit attainment.

(d) The applicant shared some of the actions taken to close the achievement gap. The actions involve an analysis of student achievement data, assessments, progress monitoring, and providing information regarding career and college readiness.

(e) The applicant provided actions that would be taken to ensure that all students and especially students in those targeted groups (ELL, Special Education) are able to receive equitable access to resources and high-level instruction. However, the applicant did not provide a timeline reflecting the frequency of the meetings. The applicant shared that they will apply additional support for the ELL students based on feedback from the ELL Student Home Language surveys. The timeline for the "frequent" administration was not shared. The applicant did not share who would be responsible for administering, analyzing, and sharing the results of the data on the surveys.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant clearly conveyed the tenets outlined in this selection criterion.

- a. The district shared specific resources that will be in place to ensure that all students and parents are able to equitably access the curriculum. However, the applicant neglected to share how they will ensure that all parents have access within their homes. They noted that parents and students will be able to access their students' information, but there was no mention of assuring that they have those capabilities outside of the school. The applicant also does not share how this technology implementation and usage would be implemented and sustained over a period of time. The applicant neglected to explicitly share how the district will ensure that the parent stakeholders receive the training needed to maintain equitable access via technology. The applicant noted that the district would equip the students in Tier III, and other vulnerable student groups with iPads. Programs are in place to support families and students with access to student performance data.
- b. The applicant noted that training for students on the iPad will be provided in the fall of 2014 and an additional training for students in 2016 identified as "Getting the Most of Your Digital Platform." Although these trainings are designed to meet the needs of students and provide them with the tools they need to support their own learning, the frequency of the training was not explicit nor was the actual outcomes of these trainings shared on the timeline.
- c. The information shared regarding information technology systems is appropriate and fulfills the criteria. The data systems made available to parents will allow them to receive information via text, phone, and/or email, check their child's grades, access teacher websites, and access formative and summative student data. Infrastructure will increase parents' ability to monitor student progress and their achievement.

- d. The applicant shared that the current interoperable data system, known as Enrich Access, includes demographic data and students performance data allowing the stakeholders to make informed instructional decisions. Enrich Access also interfaces with web-based data systems.

The applicant shared some components as it related to the criteria. However, the timeline shared did not denote explicit supports to ensure that the system would be able to sustain technology for parents and students. The timeline for student training was vague, and the type of training described may not ensure that students will acquire the skills needed to impact their achievement.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

**(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant conveyed specific information pertaining to the tenets outlined in this selection criteria.

The applicant shared various ways in which data would be disseminated and shared with all stakeholders. The applicant noted a type of Root Cause Analysis that would be conducted in order to identify the specific goals for the school's individualized School Improvement plans. The applicant noted that once goals are identified, specific actions would be taken. However, the applicant neglected to provide examples of specific actions. The applicant shared that schools identify data that reflect a longitudinal trajectory of student performance. The applicant noted multiple measures taken to analyze progress. However, the applicant neglected to definitively share the specific data or samples of the data that comprise this analysis. The timeline provided some information as it pertained to the level of professional development to ensure that the proposal is implemented with fidelity. However, the timeline did not illuminate a specific schedule of professional development nor the frequency.

The applicant did an excellent job sharing how information is shared regarding student achievement and school improvement over a period of time. The applicant divulged how data would be periodically shared with all stakeholders involved in the review of the plan and how some are involved in the analysis of the plan. The applicant shared the embedded staff development available and implemented within the district and alluded to the availability at the school level. Each school has autonomy regarding the needs of their staff. The applicant neglected to add specific staff development opportunities at the school level. The district needed to elaborate how students are involved in the process and how they are able to provide feedback related to their own learning.

The applicant did share that the feedback would be collected through individual School Improvement Plan (SIP) committees at individual schools. All stakeholders would be given an opportunity to share their feedback regarding the implementation of the plan. The SIP committees, the District's 5-year Planning Committee and Curriculum Council will use the data to evaluate the program and determine areas of need. Although the applicant shared that they will make concerted efforts to monitor, collect feedback on and evaluate the program's success, they neglected to provide a clear timeline as to when these specific efforts would take place. The timeline was vague.

<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
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**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant explicitly shared the actions the district takes to ensure that the communication between the district, schools and stakeholders are transparent. The applicant shared that Goal #4 of their strategic plan reflects the commitment to communicating to all stakeholders. The applicant provided examples of how the information is disseminated and how parent stakeholders can extrapolate data to determine if students are meeting set targets. The district shared how they have set individuals in place to ensure that the information is shared accurately and in a timely manner. The applicant did not discuss how this information is made available for stakeholders who speak different languages or for the hearing impaired. Although the applicant fully included how internal and external individuals are involved, they neglected to share who would be responsible for sharing this information with internal and external stakeholders.

The applicant provided some timelines pertaining to delivery of information to the stakeholders regarding the

district's continuous improvement. They shared that the Board of Education will hold monthly meetings that are open to the public. The district will share information in November and April via a district-developed newsletter to students and staff. However, twice a year may not provide enough information to stakeholders. Principals send letters home to parents regarding their student's progress. A specific timeline was not given for this action.

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

**5**

**4**

**(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided adequate information for this section. There were specific upgrades that would provide more clarity related to the rationale.

- a. The applicant explicitly stated that the school reform goals were identified by the careful analysis of student performance goals outlined by the state AMO's and ambitious reform goals of Tennessee's First to the Top Act. Although the applicant shared the importance of including a goal that speaks to the social-emotional well-being of the students within the district, they only provided information pertaining to national research. The applicant neglected to provide their local district data to support the rationale for this particular focus/goal.
- b. The applicant clearly identified goals that would support students' achievement for all demographic groups. The applicant provided a rationale for each goal selected that supported the positive impact toward career and college readiness and the close of the achievement gap. The projected data targets were reasonable.
- c. The applicant fulfilled the requirement for the 14 performance measures. The goal benchmarks, as quantitatively shared, were ambitious yet achievable. The applicant provided limited support as to how the staff would gauge implementation success over time. The applicant provides varied examples of how it will be evaluated. As a result of varied opportunities to assess goal attainment, the analysis of effectiveness of the proposal may exhibit increased variability.

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

**5**

**3**

**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

- The applicant established opportunities to identify ways to determine the effectiveness of the plan and identified how feedback would be used to monitor the success or to determine if various upgrades are needed. The applicant noted that the Quality Control Manager will meet weekly to review progress and implementation.
- Building-level administrators will meet monthly to share information regarding specific school implementation. Interventionists will meet monthly to review data and discuss implementation. The principal will meet weekly with the administrator, school coaches and the leadership team to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- The applicant shared that every month the GATT Team will provide information to the board with explicit feedback regarding updates about the program.
- The applicant explicitly shared various methods they will use to effectively evaluate the program. The applicant noted that they would use research-based questions as an evaluation tool to assess implementation and outcome evaluation. Additional qualitative methods would be used to collect feedback on the program. Although the applicant shared multiple measures to collect feedback, they neglected to provide an explicit timeline for collection or delivery of the information. The applicant also neglected to share who would be responsible for analyzing and disseminating the feedback collected. The applicant also did not share the process for making the changes, as needed.
- The applicant elicited feedback via an evaluation questionnaire. The timeline provided explicitly lists that the Plan Evaluation would occur on a yearly basis. The applicant noted that a gap analysis, a progress report, a survey, and a financial audit would be the tools used to determine the effectiveness of the program. However, the timeline did not provide the details as it related to the frequency of this administration. The applicant did identify the individual responsible for the collection of this information.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

Available

Score

<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant clearly conveyed all aspects of the funds needed to support the project. The applicant provided a complete rationale for the funding request..</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The district is proactive in establishing partnerships. The applicant shared the partnerships that have been and are currently in place and how those funds and resources support the goals.</li> <li>b. The applicant's proposal is reasonable and sufficient and clearly supports what is needed to ensure program sustainability. However, a portion of the funding request are for iPads. The applicant needs to consider the cost of the iPads, maintenance, and repair.</li> <li>c.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The rationale and priority for the investment are directly linked to the goals of the project. The expenditures are reasonable and support the program goals, not only with the instructional materials to make the program sustainable but with the allocation of human resources in strategic school locations.</li> <li>ii. The district clearly identified a one-time funding request to support the infrastructure for data accessibility and technology in the schools. The applicant clearly supports the success of this program. The applicant neglected to share why iPads were designated as a tool as opposed to another piece of equipment. They did not clearly share any supportive research that supports how the iPads will assist in closing the achievement gaps or better prepare students for career and college readiness. The purchase of the iPads may not support long-term sustainability. The applicant should consider that the maintenance of these instruments may impact long-term sustainability. The proposed hires for this grant is appropriate to ensure that the program is implemented with fidelity. However, additional rationale is needed regarding hiring five nurses and their direct impact on the implementation of the plan.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>		

<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provided convoluted information pertaining to sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The applicant shared a 4-year budget to support the program. The applicant shared that there are resources available that will be coupled with the funding to ensure sustainability. However, the applicant did not definitively share that the funds are already secured for the LEA. As a result, the projected sustainability of the program is questionable and dependent on the budget of the city at the end of the grant. The applicant did not adequately confirm the funds to secure the scale-up or sustainability of the project beyond the life of the grant.</li> <li>· The applicant shared the questionnaire that is used to evaluate the program and if the funding is effectively moving the program forward. This was outlined on the timeline provided. However, specific times were not given; only that evaluation is occurring every year.</li> <li>· The applicant shared that they would hire administrators and other human resources to support the implementation of the program, and class size reduction would occur through Title I funding for identified schools. However, the plan to support the funding for class-size reduction at other schools beyond the life of the grant was not adequate. The rationale warranted additional consideration beyond a prediction of how the project may be funded.</li> <li>· The applicant noted that the state endorsed past reforms to replicate programs, and for the purpose of sustainability. However, the transparency of the steps taken in the past or the future to secure the program was not explicitly shared, nor did the applicant provide a clear timeline that shared when the process to begin the funding transition would occur or who would be responsible to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken.</li> </ul> <p>Although the applicant contributed some elements to support the sustainability and the evaluation to support the program beyond the life of the grant, additional information on the timeline and the evaluation process would have supported this section and contribute to a high-quality plan.</p>		
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**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**



	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant has established partners within the communities to provide a variety of support for their families. The programs highlighted in this section were:</p> <p>(1) The applicant shared that they have an ongoing partnership with Frontier Health, a mental health service corporation. The district received a grant through Frontier Health known as <i>Helping Everyone Reach Optimum Excellence and Success</i> (HEROES). The applicant stated that the HEROES grant has afforded the students and the families of the district an increased level of social-emotional support in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance to Hispanic families via increasing their level of comfort in schools and offering bilingual services to ESL families; case management to homeless families; and the provision of clinical services.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant did not explicitly share the outcome of the evaluation of these services and the long-standing impact of these services on long-range outcomes.</p> <p>(2) The applicant shared some data that supported how the students positively responded to the services. The applicant did not provide specific performance gains as it related to academics but did provide evidence of the impact of services on drug use, mental health clinical referrals, and the increase of support to teachers regarding strategies to support students in grades K-7.</p> <p>(3) The applicant shared how they track the success of the program via surveys (student, teachers, school, Hispanic parents involved in the program) and monthly data logs. The applicant neglected to share how other stakeholders are able to provide feedback and the use the feedback to critically analyze the effectiveness of the program or make changes to enhance the program. The applicant did not elaborate on how the plan would be scaled-up to meet the needs of more families.</p> <p>(4) The applicant explicitly shared how HEROES support bilingual families and Hispanic families. The applicant also shared the impact of this support on the homeless families and the students who exhibit mental instability.</p> <p>(5) The applicant did share how small groups of students were supported in schools, grades K-7, for 3-8 sessions per years. There was no definitive timeline of support, and the sporadic attempt to support students will not provide relevant data to ensure that these sessions are positively impacting students. The applicant did not definitively make a correlation between the direct school support and the explicit impact of the services. The applicant shared how they used surveys to collect feedback. However, they did not share how the feedback from the stakeholders informed changes, if needed.</p> <p>(6) The applicant clearly shared the vision for the partnership and provided a desired outcome for the students.</p> <p>The applicant shared some viable components as it related to the outside partnership with Frontier Health. However, the information shared did not explicitly reflect the scaling-up of the support to meet the needs of more students and families.</p>		

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Th applicant comprehensively shared how this plan will increase/improve student learning, educational opportunities, and resources as it relates to preparing students for career and college readiness. The plan meets the four Core Educational Assurances. The applicant explicitly shares that the school district's overarching vision is to create opportunities to increase the learning for all students. The district supports the implementation and the goals outlined in the Common Core State Standards. The proposal is designed to meet the needs of all students via creating a personalized learning environment through a comprehensive RTI model. Throughout the proposal, the applicant shared various opportunities to provide teachers with varied professional development opportunities, to increase teacher recruiting efforts and attrition, and to expand student access to high-quality teachers. The applicant did an outstanding job outlining opportunities to increase graduation rates, evaluate the program, collect feedback from stakeholders and ensure that parents, students and staff are

able to access student data in order to make instructional decisions.

The district has established strong partnerships and has a good track record of successes. The proposal will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>153</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0244TN-3 for Johnson City Schools

#### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

**(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant's vision for educational reform is deeply rooted in providing equal opportunity for all in an environment that is conducive to learning. Core beliefs outlined in the plan are consistent with defining a school system that reflect standards as evidenced by the adoption of the Common Core Standards, a strong focus on individualized instruction and the inclusion of support staff at schools where there is disparity in academic achievement among sub-groups. Varying systems have been defined that include supporting teacher performance and data management for stakeholders to include students and parents. Most required assurances have been met however the applicant does not fully discuss how schools with the greatest need will be identified. Additionally, a complete picture of teaching and learning in a daily classroom environment is not provided. Collectively, the plan as outlined ensures that most requirements will be effectively met.

<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
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**(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(a)Based on information provided the applicant proposes to include all schools in the project with a specific emphasis devoted to schools with the greatest academic need. The inclusion of all schools supports systemic reform. For this reason the applicant notes a total enrollment of 7,254 students in PK-12 of which 48.6% are receiving free and reduced price lunch which defines eligibility of all participating schools. However, information is not provided on the process that will be used to determine the schools with the greatest need. By identifying a definitive criteria the process will be effectively enhanced. For example, factors such as the percent of students who receive free and/or reduced price meals, test scores and discipline data could be utilized.

(b)Eleven schools will be included in the project with special attention being devoted to those with the highest needs. Demographic data for each of the participating schools has been identified in Table 1. Supporting data includes the number of participating educators, the number of high need students, the number of low-income students and the number of students from low-income families. All data provided clearly reflects a need among the target population.

(c) Data provided denotes that the applicant has clearly defined its sub-populations as evidenced by the inclusion of 3,677 economically disadvantaged students, 200 non-economically disadvantaged special education students and 122 non-economically disadvantaged ELL students. Taking these factors into consideration further offers support for district-wide systemic reform as well as the intended purposes of the grant.

<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:**

Proposing district-wide reform and change is noted through the identification of newly identified staff positions that will be included in the implementation and the operation of the project. Identifying these key positions support the applicant's primary purposes of the project – improved student achievement. Each identified position is supported by how they will effectively support the project. For example, academic specialists will provide differentiated instruction to struggling students. Establishing five basic project components further provide direction and guidance in meeting the primary goal of the project. Additional support for district-wide reform and change is evidenced by supporting research upon which proposed strategies to increase staffing, professional development and technology applications are included in the overall framework thereby increasing the longevity and sustainability of the project. Collectively, the information provided by the applicant clearly reflects systemic reform and change. Of note, the applicant does not provide a detailed timeline relative to an implementation process. The lack of a fully developed timeline does not ensure that all key components of the project will take place. Additionally, issues of staff responsibility and accountability are recognized as a result of this limitation which negatively impacts the project.

<b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

A)(4)

Establishing performance measures and targets that exceed the required state mandate indicates that the applicant has completed a detailed analysis relative to addressing student performance in reading/language arts and math, graduation, college enrollment and the overall achievement gap among sub-populations. Incremental increases specific to each area allows for a target that is attainable within a pre-determined timeline. Attainability clearly supports ambitiousness in ensuring improved academic performance.

(a)

Based on summative assessments students will demonstrate growth as evidenced by a 1.8% increase in math while incremental increases of 3.54%, 4.31%, 3.67% and 5.71% thereby reducing the existing gap by 50% by 2018. Additionally, students taking end-of-course tests will show an increase of 1.2% annually. These projections support the applicant's plan to reduce the academic achievement gap which is in alignment with the purposes of the project. Establishing incremental improvements supports the applicant's vision of ensuring an effective educational experience for all students.

(b)

As a result of assessment testing the applicant notes improvement in academic performance in math for grades 3-8 with a reduction each year by 1.74% thereby reducing an academic gap among sub-groups. End-of-course tested subjects will also experience a gap reduction of 2.24% each year of the project. All projected reductions are in direct alignment with meeting the needs of students. Defining an ambitious and attainable focus in mathematics reflects a primary assurance of the project.

(c)

Based on projections the applicant notes that by 2019 90% of students enrolled will exceed the state graduation rate. Additionally, projections for sub-group graduation will be greatly improved. Improving the graduation rate reflects a district change and reform relative to meeting all performance measures. Both elements are in direct alignment with addressing required assurances of the project. All measures are ambitious and attainable based on the inputs established for the project.

(d)

By 2021 the applicant anticipates closing the gap in the percent of students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Annually .6% of graduating students will complete the form with a projected growth rate of 3.23% of sub-groups also completing the form. Completion of the FAFSA form is not commensurate with college enrollment. The lack of a clearly defined measure to effectively determine college enrollment hinders the applicant's ability to effectively determine how many students are going to college.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Supporting information provided by the applicant denotes a demonstrated history of past and recent accomplishments relative to student achievement and school recognitions. Citing recent data suggest that reforms and improvements are presently underway. Varying examples of progress has been noted as evidenced by the number of schools within the district receiving Blue Ribbon recognition. Noting improvement based on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program denotes academic improvement among sub-groups between the years of 2011 and 2013 further demonstrates the applicant's ability to make incremental improvements among all students within the district. These and other cited examples clearly demonstrate a past and recent history of success. However, data is not provided for four previous years more specifically on the graduation rate or other identified indicators as required by the grant.</p> <p>The applicant does not indicate which schools were classified as needs improvement among all participating schools in the project. Without providing this information it is difficult to determine what standards and/or processes were utilized in making this determination.</p> <p>Performance data will be available to students and parents through various methods as noted by utilization of the state department of education website, the district website and the local media. Additionally, teachers conduct data conferences with parents and students. All strategies support effective uses of technology and access to educational information that support transparency and improved student achievement.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>(B)(2)</p> <p>By citing several policies the applicant provides clear documentation relative to how transparent associated financial information is made available to stakeholders. Each citation reflects an action that is commensurate with full disclosure in the use of public funds to include salary schedules. Collectively, the processes and procedures are effectively in alignment with expectations of the grant.</p> <p>(a)</p> <p>The applicant provides personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff on its website. Making this information public supports open access for all interested parties. Additionally, step increases for staff is available to the public which further support transparency that reinforces to the community that their public funds are being appropriately utilized.</p> <p>(b) The applicant provides actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff on its website. This strategy allows for transparency to the public as well as staff. Making this information available supports competitiveness in the marketplace for staff.</p> <p>(c)</p> <p>For the 2012 – 2013 school year the applicant provides a salary scale for teachers. The scale is based on years of experience and level of education attained.</p> <p>(d)</p> <p>The expenditures for non-personnel expenditures at the school level is included in the overall district budget. The budget status is reviewed and presented to the Board monthly. A continuous review of the budget allows for modifications and/or revisions accordingly.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Background information granting the LEA the authority and oversight to manage and operate schools within the district is provided. Historical information denotes that the applicant has the duty, responsibility, authority and autonomy under state law to implement the project and all components accordingly. Additionally, the applicant has not proposed any changes, revisions or modifications that require state intervention. The information provided in this regard effectively supports the applicant's ability to ensure the conditions required for creating new and creative learning environments. Additionally, all</p>		

schools are included in the project under the governance of the LEA thereby giving schools needed autonomy. All requirements for this criterion have been met.

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

**15**

**8**

**(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

(a)

Strategies and activities developed for the solicitation of input from all stakeholders suggest that wide spread input was allowed in the development the project. The strategies denote a variety of methods consistent with gathering information. Noted examples include meetings with parents and teachers and established avenues for all stakeholders to provide written feedback. Attached letters of support from various community agencies further establish support for the project and its involvement. However, only allowing written feedback with some stakeholders (parents and teachers) is not the only avenue for active involvement. Additional information supporting parent and teacher involvement would enhance the development of the project.

(i)

The applicant reports that the Johnson City Education Association received input into the development of the project however a letter of support is not included. The lack of a fully developed letter does not completely indicate that the association had opportunities for participation in the development of the project.

(ii)

The applicant does not have collective bargaining within the district. Additionally, information is not provided that indicates that 70% of the staff support the project. This information is a requirement of the grant.

(b)

In consideration of the project the applicant presents letters of support from the City Manager, the Johnson City Council of PTA, the Johnson City Police Department and East Tennessee State University. Collectively, these and other letters denote full support and cooperation with the project and its intended purposes.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>

**(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(C)(1)

(a)

(i)

Supported by key components of the project's design the applicant has clearly defined how students will understand what they are learning as noted by identifying a proven instructional model, setting a standard, personal learning and providing specific support strategies. Focusing on the utilization of technology and staff the overall design denotes a sound and effective plan for improved student achievement. Additionally, highlighting parental involvement strengthens the capacity to provide an integral connection between home and school.

(ii)

Based on the information included for this criterion the applicant provides a range of interest inventories. Each inventory is specific to a designated instructional level and offers meaningful information in making a career choice. As outlined the collective plan is appropriate and commensurate with the needs of participants and support the intended purposes of the project. More specifically and by design the project aligns college and career expectations through integrating classroom information to careers. This approach supports a direct relationship to what's learn and how it applies to a future career.

(iii)

The district has chosen a proven instructional model (RTI) that will effectively support enhanced learning experiences and activities that meet the needs and interests of students through individualized instruction. Further support for individualized

instruction is noted through the pre-assessment of content material relative to giving credit for demonstrated mastery. Requiring teachers to develop personalized lessons and activities will effectively enhance and engage student interest and participation in the content. Noted strategies highlighted by the applicant reflect a strong focus on individualized instruction.

(iv)

Varying opportunities for cultural exposure are highlighted throughout the district. Specific cultural programs and activities are noted. All activities are consistent with providing students and staff with cultural experiences that reflect diversity. The applicant notes that courses in understanding diversity are offered through elementary guidance programs but does not identify them. Without identifying these courses it is difficult to determine their quality.

(v)

The teacher evaluation system allows for the inclusion of teamwork, goal-setting and other traits for students. This system ensures that all students will receive direct support and guidance in a structured manner thereby facilitating opportunities to support their learning goals and activities. Merging key learning traits into the design of the lesson by teachers facilitates a direct relationship between content information and skills such as critical thinking and teamwork. The TEAM rubric for instruction allows for a complete understanding and reflection on performance levels in assessing above, at and below instructional expectations.

(b)

(i)

Provisions have been outlined by the applicant to ensure that each student has a personalized learning plan. Associated activities and strategies clearly denote a well-defined plan for maintaining on time graduation with career exploration. Noted strategies that have been developed at each instructional level are consistent with supporting a personalized plan for college and career preparation. Many of the strategies reflect best practices as noted by a clearly defined plan for credit recovery.

(ii)

The district has outlined an ambitious plan to provide effective teachers through mentorship and research-based instructional strategies. Programs with a proven record of success are being utilized to increase teacher effectiveness and improve student achievement. Of note, all new teachers are placed with under the mentorship of a master teacher for one year. However, complete information is not provided that outlines how this program will operate or what expectations are in place.

(iii)

The applicant identifies a number of digital resources that are presently being used within the district. The applications referenced are consistent with effective instructional practices and will allow for individualization internally and externally. Noted programs include Kahn Academy, STAR Reading and Read 180. Although a number of instructional programs have been identified information is not provided relative to their correlation with college and career standards.

(iv)

(a)

In response to the utilization of assessment measures and tools the applicant identifies specific data management tools that will be used to provide students and parent feedback. The management system also allows for teacher data where instructional decisions can be made accordingly. More specifically the plan allows for individualization relative to the modification of instruction. Strategies that promote teacher understanding of data management and usage are in place.

(b)

Through strategies such as parent-teacher conferences, data conferences and other strategies the applicant will personalize learning for each individual student as outlined by overall plan. As presented the plan will allow for a focus on developing an individual plan that supports college and career readiness. The plan does not indicate how each instructional level (elementary, middle and high) will be developed accordingly. Additionally, information is not provided regarding the frequency that these strategies will take place.

(v)

The time allotment and allocation of staff will provide the needed support for individualized instruction for those students at the Tier I and II levels. Identified strategies are consistent with addressing remediation and the advancement needs of

identified students.

(c)

The applicant notes that the district provides on-going training opportunities for students and parents in utilizing the Parent Portal System which provides student level data (grades, attendance and testing). Student/teacher data conferences are held with the purpose of training students how to access and understand their own student information. The applicant does not provide a complete plan that includes a timeline as to when all components will converge into a solid plan.

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

**20**

**16**

**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

C)(2)

(a)

(i)

The applicant has established a professional development plan that will meet the needs of students and staff as evidenced by developing a plan that is researched-based, defining a structure that allows for individual assistance for staff and establishing specific days for professional development. Essential to the plan are specific strategies that will allow for feedback from and to participants. The identification and development of varied professional development activities reflect a system will effectively sustain itself as well as provide support for teacher learning and support.

(ii)

In response to adapting content and instruction that provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks relative to their academic needs the applicant proposes to rely on new staff positions such as a reading specialist at each elementary school, academic coaches and academic specialists at the high school level. All identified positions are designed to specially support the professional development of teachers with the intent of affecting student achievement. Limiting these positions to directly support teachers does not allow for direct involvement or engagement with students which in turns limits their opportunities to receive needed individualization.

(iii)

The utilization of several student driven informational systems will allow for the availability of information specific to student progress and achievement. By having this information available revisions and modifications can be made relative to changes in individual learning plans. Additionally, providing quarterly benchmark assessments and weekly summative and formative assessments information will be readily available for modifications and revisions as needed instructionally. All systems as presented will effectively meet the needs of students.

(iv)

The applicant proposes to rely on a teacher/principal evaluation system as the primary means of providing feedback. The system as structured identifies specific areas where staff will be evaluated and receive feedback. As an assessment tool the system requires feedback in specific focus areas. The applicant does not provide information specific to what procedures and processes are in place for those staff members needing improvement. The lack of a clearly defined plan for teachers requiring more intensive assistance is needed. The development of a definitive plan provides direct and support for the building leadership team and their resources.

(b)

(i)

The structure and planned approached to share student data relative to instructional modifications is sufficient to meet the individualized academic needs of students. The Enrich Assess program will provide student level data that will be supported by a staff specialist in understanding and making modifications to the student instructional program through data. Additionally, the establishment of a weekly common time for this effort ensures that data will be used appropriately. The utilization of common planning/collaborative time reinforces the concept of team unity in effectively addressing the needs of students.

(ii)The applicant has identified several technology based programs that will support the instructional program. All

technologies support the remediation and advancement of student achievement. Each identified program has been strategically selected to support several areas of the instructional program. Additionally, all teachers have access to a laptop and training support in the use of instructional programs. The information provided does not indicate the level of correlation between the existing curriculum and state standards. This limitation does not support the inclusion of all elements of a highly effective plan.

(iii)

Collectively the applicant has established and identified processes and tools that will effectively match the needs of students as evidenced by the identification of data management tools and support systems provided to teachers. For example the Enrich Assess program and Pearson benchmark testing program provide testing and data management relative to improving instruction individually. The identification and inclusion of these processes and tools greatly enhance opportunities for teachers to develop and institute instructional activities specific to the needs of each student which in turns improves student achievement.

(c)

(i)

As designed the teacher evaluation system provides varying opportunities to make instructional adjustments thereby addressing the individual needs of students based on data. Specific programs have been identified to provide data management support as noted by the TELL survey. The applicant does not provide information specific to how frequent the survey is administered. This limitation hinders the effective use of defining modifications which address individual needs of students.

(ii)

The identification of key positions and their roles in providing assessment feedback assist teachers and schools with needed data to make effective instructional decisions. The inclusion of committees and councils in relationship to providing data support and also aid in developing building level expertise in data management as well as identifying future leaders within the district and at the school level. This strategy promotes leadership and teamwork which positively influences a culture of success for all.

(d)

Identifying key staff (academic coaches and intervention specialists) that will provide support to teachers denotes a definitive plan for effectively providing support to teachers in hard to staff schools. Further support in this area is noted by developing a differentiated pay scale. Both strategies offer needed support in assisting staff in their efforts to increase student achievement.

#### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

**(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:**

(a)

The identification of key positions that will lead and support the project at the district level provides for clear lines of communication and oversight. Additionally, defining when and what key committees will be doing in support of the project provides evidence of a clearly defined organization with the management framework to effectively implement and operate the project. However, in support of a highly effective plan the applicant does not provide a rationale in support of the identified organizational structure outlined for the project,

(b)

As noted by the establishment of site-based school improvement teams the applicant reports that all schools have the autonomy to develop their own schedule and assign staff in the best interest of students and the school. Additionally, each school has authority over its funding thereby allowing financial resources to support decisions and strategies at the school level. However, the applicant does not provide complete information on the makeup of local decision making teams.

(c)

By policy the applicant indicates that students are able to receive credit for mastery of standards in various ways. The identification of the Kahn Academy and the use of distance learning programs support the needs of individual students in a medium that reflect the current use of technology. Allowing this flexibility effectively increases student engagement and is a cost efficient method of credit recovery and advancement.

(d)

The applicant's student assessment program allows for multiple methods of determining mastery of content throughout the curriculum. Opportunities for quarterly testing combined with various methods of assessment such as projects, presentations and essays combined with the required teacher assessment program afford students varying chances of demonstrating their knowledge of the content. These and other strategies support the applicant's mission of individualization thereby improving student achievement.

(e)

The defined instructional model that will be utilized by the applicant outlines structures and staff support that will effectively address the academic and technological needs of English learners. The overall design clearly reflects specific strategies and activities that support inclusion and individual needs of students. Supporting evidence is noted by adopted policies and through staff allocations.

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

**10**

**7**

**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(D)(2)

(a)

Noted strategies included in the design of the project indicate that all students will have access to technology resources and the benefit of staff. Examples include ensuring that project information is provided in another language, specific staff positions are devoted to students and schools with the greatest needs and external support through a homeless liaison. The applicant does not provide supporting information specific to providing Internet access to all students based on economic status. This limitation does not address the requirements of a high-quality plan.

(b)

Varying opportunities for the effective use of technological applications will be made available to parents. The applicant has included within the design of the project training opportunities at the school level through PTA activities and the establishment of Parent Academies. As presented, both strategies and others will effectively support the needs of parents in utilizing provided resources. The allowance of technology on varying platforms with accommodations denotes leadership and vision in developing systems that reflect the needs of students and parents. However, in the applicant's plan information is not provided in response to the frequency that parent support activities will be provided.

(c)

Each of the six technology based programs for parents will allow complete information relative to student performance and related information. The identified programs specifically support the involvement and engagement of parents as noted by providing grade information, testing data, attendance and school information. Collectively these programs will have the desired impact specific to allowing parents to become immersed in school related information. Noted programs include the School Messenger, Gradebook and Enrich Assess. In the interest of effectively increasing parental involvement and engagement the applicant through visionary leadership expresses a strong connection between home and school by utilizing effective technological systems for those with complete Internet access. The lack of access of those without the Internet will impact their ability to be effectively engaged. This limitation does not fully address all requirements of a high-quality plan.

(d)

The applicant notes that each of the data systems included in the design of the project support interoperable data. All programs have been identified and based on the information provided denote that each will effectively support the design of the project and its many components. Through equitable systems the applicant has effectively personalized the educational experience through structures that reflect the current needs of the target population excluding those without current Internet access.

### E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>In response to establishing a plan that addresses continuous improvement the applicant has outlined a structure that defines specific procedures, expectations and staff responsibilities for the collection and sharing of data. Most structures reflect a plan that allow for corrective action. Modifications and revisions will take place at the school level through the work of the school improvement team. The work of the team will be based on the state's district and school improvement templates. The status of the project will be documented through a variety of means as evidenced by information provided through the district's and schools' report card, staff meetings and administrative meetings. Most methods of sharing project data with stakeholders will have the desired impact. However, complete information is not provided relative to frequency that these avenues will be utilized. Additionally, the information provided does not include opportunities for all stakeholders to be aware of the project on an on-going basis. These limitations do not support a fully developed plan for continuous improvement.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>With the utilization of a district-wide newsletter, a website, surveys and press releases the applicant has established effective strategies that will inform the community of the project's status as well as receive project feedback. The strategies and activities identified for the project are consistent with ensuring widespread information in various formats is provided relative to the project. For example a district-wide newsletter will go out twice per year (November and April), all schools update their communications plan in March and school-based communications will be ongoing. Additionally, a quarterly community forum will be held to discuss data and the overall status of the project. Most elements of the plan reflect a high-quality design. However, the applicant does not identify the role of staff in executing the plan. Without clearly defining the role of staff the strategy lacks complete accountability for execution.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant's performance measures are consistent with defining specific focus areas of the project. Each measure is based on state AMO standards which allows for direct accountability in determining student performance. All associated benchmarks and measures are commensurate with improved student achievement. Of note, the supporting rationale for selecting each performance measure is consistent with supporting the developmental and academic needs of students. By defining how each performance measure will be effectively assessed, providing further clarification and reliability information denotes that appropriate modifications will be made based on the needs of students. Collectively, each measure ensures improved academic rigor and continuous improvement. Each performance measure is supported by an assessment. For example, the ACT and TCAP tests will be used. There is a direct correlation between selected performance measures and major elements of the project design. However, a complete plan over time to continuously address identified weaknesses at the school level have not been addressed.</p>		
<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant's overall evaluation design incorporates essential components of an effective and efficient plan as evidenced by what data will be collected, when data will be collected and by whom. Specific evaluation questions that will serve as guideposts in assessing the project have been established. All methods of qualitative and quantitative sources are consistent with the needs of the project. In defining staff involvement the role and expectations of specific staff positions are</p>		

highlighted which support accountability. A noted weakness of the plan revolves around not clearly defining statistical tools that will be used in evaluating the project. By identifying the tools that will be utilized the applicant will ensure that the appropriate tool will be used in collecting and analyzing the appropriate information/data. Additionally, identifying statistical tools will address the evaluation of pre-determined research questions.

**F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Establishing a clearly defined vision for the project the applicant has leveraged needed expenditures in direct alignment with four specific areas of the project. This alignment reflects where funds will be expended and why. However, complete information is not provided specific to the need to establish two new assistant principal positions. As required by the grant the applicant does not provide definitive information that supports the continuation of these positions once federal funding has ended. This limitation directly impacts student achievement at schools with the greatest need.</p> <p>Excluding this limitation all other requested funding is specific to addressing an identified need for the project that clearly reflects the intended purposes of the grant. Additionally, identifying other funding sources offer further support for a cohesive plan that will positively impact student achievement. The budget as outlines allows for transparency in recognizing how public funds are spent.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant's complete plan for sustaining the project once federal funding has ended is based on several assumptions. First the placement of support staff into retirement positions where they will serve as classroom teachers and in-house resources may present a challenge. Secondly, the assumption that funds from external sources will be available may not be a viable option. However, the overall plan does include provisions for local support of the district from the community, the use of alternative funding such as Title 1 and utilizing billable hours for services rendered through Frontier Health. The budget as outlined include financial expenditures for three years after federal support has ended. Other noted highlights include identifying staff (Quality Control Supervisor) who will have the primary responsibility and oversight for all financial matters as well as providing a monthly status update to the Board.</p>		

**Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)**

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant proposes to partner with an already established service provider to broaden its mental health program for students, staff and parents. The overall plan reflects a strong focus on offering substance abuse and mental health assistance thereby meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of students. Key elements of the plan allow for supporting the effectiveness of educators in working with students who require mental health support. Provisions have been made to ensure that all students receive services as noted by the hiring of interpreters. The partnership as presented does not effectively outline substantiated details specific to how academic achievement will result from the partnership relative to improved reading results. Also, information is not provided as to how the partnership will build capacity at the school-level over time. The applicant does not provide supporting information that would denote that specific activities from the project will be scaled up to address the needs of non- participating students. Additionally, the applicant does not provide supporting information that identifies or inventories needs and</p>		

assets of the school community that directly impact educational and family support systems. The goals and objectives outlined for the partnership do not include specific performance targets. The lack of performance measures do not allow for a definitive determination relative to defining success. However specific tools that will be used to evaluate the program have been outlined which include surveys and tracking logs.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
<b>Absolute Priority 1</b>		<b>Met</b>

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

In meeting Absolute Priority 1 for this project the applicant provides a clear focus on developing strategies and activities that are specifically aligned to addressing the individual needs of students. Noted strategies include the institution of the RTI instructional model that supports mastery and individualization with a focus on college and career readiness standards. Students will have the opportunity to accelerate their learning based on demonstrated mastery of content as outlined in the project design. Support for improved academic achievement is also noted by a strong focus on technological tools that allow for instructional access through programs such as the Kahn Academy and through opportunities for parents to have continuous access to student information.

Improved student achievement will be noted through the newly developed professional development plan highlighted by a new teacher evaluation system that incorporates student academic growth. The plan also allows for instructional coaching and support for teachers through the inclusion of newly identified instructional staff. These positions will offer instructional support to teachers through collaborative modeling and coaching strategies. Improved teacher effectiveness will support the applicant's vision and plan to decrease achievement gaps among sub-groups as well as support academic advancement. Collectively, all strategies and activities are specifically designed to increase the graduation rate and ensure that students are prepared for college or a career. Pre-determined projections for increased graduation and college going rates as outlined by the applicant are consistent with the needs of the project and the intended purposes of the grant.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>157</b>
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