



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0041MA-1 for Lawrence Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant builds on the four core educational assurance areas as defined in the notice. In the proposal, these are noted as Standards and assessments; Data system to support instruction; Great teachers and leaders; and Turning around lowest achieving schools.

- Under standards and assessments, the applicant has engaged standout teachers to write new curriculum maps for math, ELA, and science. The applicant plans to implement new assessments from the PARCC. They have partnered with the Achievement Network to ensure students are exposed to rigorous assessments in math and ELA. Under data, the applicant notes the partnership with ANET that provides extensive coaching for teachers to build capacity to execute the data cycle. Under the teachers and leaders section, the applicant notes efforts already made in this area (ex. the development and implementation of the new career ladder and compensation system; the educator evaluation system; and the creation of the director of innovation and talent position). Lastly, the applicant noted how the LPS has already illustrated significant evidence of change in the area of low performing schools. The applicant notes how they have engaged partners and identified strong leaders in each of the Level 4 schools.

The applicant articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests by highlighting four key turnaround strategies.

- The applicant highlights the following implemented strategies and their impact to date: extended time, strategic use of data, and high expectations for academic achievement; recruitment, retention, and cultivation of great people and proven partners; strengthened support and engagement for students beyond academics; and increased autonomy and accountability for schools to promote student success.
- The applicant lists key objectives that the PAL approach will address with the corresponding activities. For example, to identify and meet social and emotional needs of all students, social workers and counselors will provide screenings; they will match community services or partnerships to identified student needs. To improve teacher capacity to personalize instruction and maximize the impact of effective teaching, the district will provide leadership opportunities and 50 hours of intensive and job embedded PD focused on implementing PAL.
- The applicant notes that college and career readiness will begin in 6th grade and that a menu of personalized supports at the high school would accelerate progress along college and career plans. This objective was illustrated by the PAL high school framework (Exhibits 3 and 4).
- The applicant emphasizes the PAL Instructional Cycle model as its primary mechanism for scaling up existing reforms such as the Acceleration Academies, expanded learning time, partner led schools, data cycles, and increased autonomy.

The applicant mentions that the classroom experience for students and teachers participating in personalized learning environments would consist of a wide variety of high quality content, including digital content where applicable; blending learning opportunities; differentiated instruction; and the re teaching of standards. Based on the evidence, a score of 10 is given.

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

The process the applicant describes to select schools was mentioned. The applicant notes that the PAL is accelerating the turnaround reforms for the district and a comprehensive plan is the most equitable approach considering nearly all schools are underperforming and serving large populations of high needs students. The district is small enough to implement with all schools (13,500 plus students; 94% are minority; 89% free and reduced lunch; 21% SWDs; 25% ELLs; 73% with a first language other than English-noted in the school's background section)

- The applicant notes that LPS meets criterion 1a of the eligibility requirements; will exceed the 2,000 student minimum (1b) in year one of implementation; and 85% of students are eligible for free and reduce lunch exceeding the 40% minimum (1c). Therefore the applicant

collectively meets the eligibility requirements.

A list of all the participating schools was available in Exhibit 5. This evidence showed 30 schools with corresponding raw data and percentage demographics. the following evidence was provided for each participating school: the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators.

The applicant also noted that all schools will be selected but pre-K will not be involved in the implementation. Justification (sufficient) was provided and included the fact that the scalable personalized learning strategies for this grade level have not been sufficiently developed.

Sufficient evidence was provided for a score of 10.

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

The applicant describes the PAL logic model (Exhibit 7) and highlights how it will scale up, accelerate reform, and improve teaching and learning district wide. The logic models includes identifying opportunities, appointing leadership, planning and aligning with the blueprints, launching, and improving and scaling in efforts to ensure all students are college and career ready. Collectively, these details speak to how this proposal will translate into meaningful reforms to support district wide change.

- The applicant provides a description of each level of the logic model and sufficient evidence was provided to show how it will improve student learning outcomes for all students (Exhibit 8). Exhibit 8 includes the key objective, planning and piloting plans in year 1, full implementation plan in year 2, and year 4 expansion and refinement points. Some of these include creating an online PAL portal to collate and present student level data; MATCH tutors expanded to at least one high school.
- Exhibit 8 also demonstrates how the implementation plan will improve students outcomes including but not limited to increased achievement on state summative evaluations, narrowed achievement gaps, and increased graduation rates and college enrollment rates.
- Appendix M shows LPS's High quality detailed PAL implementation plan. This evidence provides key objectives with corresponding strategy with the activities to be implemented, a rationale, deliverables, owners and Years 1-4 timeline. Sample activity included use multiple measures, including formative assessment data, to set student growth goals and college and career goals for Acceleration Academy student; the rational was Individual goals will ensure that all students achieve high standards; deliverables included Goals identified in individualized learning plans for Acceleration Academy students; and the responsible party (owner) would be the Sontag teachers. This would take place years 1-4.

The applicant plans to include all schools in the district. Exhibit 8 and Exhibit 7 specifically and collectively serve as sufficient evidence for how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change as well as help the applicant reach its outcome goals. The evidence provided clearly demonstrates a high quality plan as defined in this notice. This warrants a score of 10.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided details for each of the following areas: Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth); Decreasing achievement gaps; Graduation rates; and College enrollment rates. Exhibit 9 provided sufficient evidence for these four areas and included data such as goal areas, the subgroups, baseline data for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, and goals for 4 years and post grant.

Under the MCAS student growth percentile- the goal was noted as 51 or higher. Evidence under the goal area, MCAS ELA shows an achievable annual goal of 51 for all 4 years and after the grant for all subgroups. This is also the case for goal area MCAS Math. A justification of why 51 is the static goal (no increase over 5 year period) would have been helpful. Evidence does not support 51 as achievable goal for SWD subgroup with 39 as baseline.

In addition, the MCAS science and technology/engineering data appear to be really aggressive for the ELL and SWD subgroups. For example, ELLs

baseline data show 5 and in year one, the applicant's goal is a 29; SWDs baseline data are 4 and in year one, the goal is approximately 29. A statement of rationale to support these goals would have been helpful for the reader.

The applicant identified the summative assessment being used (MCAS); the methodology for determining status; and the methodology for determining growth. Graduation rates data report federally approved cohort graduation rates for high schools from 2014-18.

College enrollment data focused on subgroups such as female, male, low income, ELL, SWD, and racial categories. Optional baseline data was provided for the Blacks subgroup for 2011-12 but not for not reported for 2012-13. Justification as to why this data was not reported would have provided clarity to the reader.

Collectively, the applicant provided adequate and supporting evidence for each of the following areas: Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth); Decreasing achievement gaps; Graduation rates; and College enrollment rates. Evidence included does not support 51 as achievable goal for SWD subgroup with 39 as baseline. A rationale statement detailing the aggressive goals for SWDs and ELLs would have been helpful in justifying the claims provided. Supporting details are needed, thus a score of 8.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence to support the following three areas. Under each area is the range (sufficient or insufficient) of evidence to support the final score.

(a) Improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps, including by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates

- The applicant provided evidence for this area. Notable achievements include Lawrence doubled the number of Level 1 schools this year from 2 to 4 (supporting document in appendix G); increased by 11 points to an annual Progress and Performance Index, exceeded its first year district Turnaround Plan goal of doubling the number of schools in which students outperform their academic peers.
- Exhibit 10 shows the SY 2012-2013 school SGP for the number of schools with ELA and Math SGP greater than 50; ELA; and math. Data show nearly tripled schools with ELA and Math SGP over 50; doubled schools with ELA SGP over 50; and quadrupled schools with math SGP over 50.
- Evidence also reveals gains in math achievement in 2013 (proficiency across all tested grades increased by 10 points growing 35% to 48% of students); Exhibit 10 shows this data on a 2010-2013 scale. Exhibit 12 shows SY 2012-2013 MCAS ELA data and an increase of 4 points district wide. Evidence show specifically the closing of the achievement gap for SWDs who increased from 35 to 39 in ELA; 33 to 46 in math versus district wide averages.
- Dropout and graduation rates improved according to the evidence provided (46 to 58% in 2012-graduation; decrease in dropout rate 10-6%). Evidence to show a clear record of success in the past four years was not adequate for college enrollment rates. The applicant noted that more recent data on enrollment in institutions of higher education was not available; justification why would be helpful. Additionally, data from 2010-11 would have provided some evidence of a track record.

(b) Achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools or in its low-performing schools

- Applicant highlights ambitious reforms and initiatives for the district such as increasing learning time for students; recruiting new talent; increasing school based decision making; increasing students' engagement in intramural sports, arts, music; and developing intensive interventions at the high school.
- Evidence focused on actions to turn around the district's 6 lowest performing schools. Such actions included implementing acceleration academies; working with the achievement network; extending the school day; and recruiting proven partners and leaders. Outcomes have increased for the six underperforming schools (detailed description provided for each school). The evidence provided is well justified and supported for this section.

(c) Make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services

- Applicant provided some details to show how student performance data are available for students, educators, and parents. The applicant mentioned that most schools have data walls, data meetings, and other forums through

which students performance data are made transparent and available for collaborative action planning but does not provide details if the school does not have these in place. More elaboration is needed in this area.

- In addition, the applicant noted a stakeholders group convened to study the performance data of the Oliver School; and to develop the district Turnaround Plan and recommendations.
- Evidence was not clearly defined as to how the publicly available data and parent information improve participation, instruction, and services. The applicant noted that school performance data were available via the school website and that parents get progress reports and report cards twice per term. Although performance data are available to parents, details as to how these elements inform and improve participation, instruction, and service would have strengthened the applicant's claims.

Based on the evidence provided, a score of 13 is given.

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

The applicant indicates that the budget is made available to the School Committee, staff, and public on a school by school basis. This includes the number of students and staff across 18 different categories. Details can be provided on the district's website.

Although, the applicant makes mention that there is a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, more evidence is needed to justify a score above a 2. It would have been helpful to include as an exhibit or Appendix item evidence to support the following:

- (a) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff,
- (b) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only;
- (c) Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and
- (d) Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level (if available).

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

The applicant mentions and describes five key conditions that will support the implementation of the personalized learning environments. These include streamlined governance; significant available autonomies; prudent use of autonomies; extended term of receivership; and state law supports core educational assurance areas.

- The applicant notes that the governance of the district has been streamlined under State receivership with all operational powers of the Superintendent and School Committee being bestowed upon Receiver Riley, who in turn reports to the Massachusetts' Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- The applicant cites the 15 wide ranging autonomies provided under the State law. These include but are limited to the expansion of the school day, school year, or both for schools in the district; the addition of pre-k and full day kindergarten if the district does not already have the classes; reallocating the uses of the existing budget; and including a provision of job embedded PD for teachers in the district
- Evidence in Appendix A-1 (Appendix 0) provides additional support to the prudent use of autonomies. These include increased school based decision making; performance compensation system; and expanded learning time.

The applicant provides sufficient evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments. Thus a score of 10 is applied.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	13
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided sufficient evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement throughout the proposal. The evidence includes a meeting with 23 high school students (representation from all six district themed high schools and class representatives). Supporting evidence includes the presentation shared with students (Appendix P), the list of students (Appendix Q), and specific student leader feedback.

Evidence that support family engagement in the development of the proposal included a PowerPoint RTTT Presentations in English and Spanish (Appendix R) and a list (Appendix S) of signatures from the Presidents' Council Supporting LPS'

RTTT Application. The applicant noted that the implementation plan was modified to address parents' concerns of resources reaching all students, thus the participation of all schools in the district. This provided adequate and meaningful evidence of stakeholder engagement.

The applicant showed how "educators" were involved in the proposal process. Documents educators received were an overview of RTTT competition (Appendix T); a district competition grant abstract (Appendix U); and a menu of key initiatives proposed (Appendix V). A survey was also administered; 599 participating educators responded to the survey (close to 40% of all participating educators). Of that 40%, results showed that 92% supported or completely supported the district's plan. Appendix W showed a full list of educators' feedback.

The applicant provides a detailed description of the involvement of community partners and state engagement and support for PAL. Over 25 letters (Appendix BB) were included for a variety of stakeholders. These stakeholders included the mayor of Lawrence, the Deputy Director of the American Federation of Teachers, and the president of the Lawrence Teacher's Union. Exhibit 13 provides a list of stakeholders and community partners who provided letters of support.

Overall, the applicant provided sufficient evidence demonstrating the involvement of students, families, and educators in the development of the proposal and how their feedback was used. Letters of support from various stakeholders were strong but did not see support from student organizations, individual parents, and/or parent organizations. These letters would have strengthened the evidence provided.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

As evidence, the applicant provides a summary of learning activities against Race to the Top criteria document (Exhibit 14) that identifies the six key objectives and how they meet the Race to the Top criteria (student learning goals/mastery of academic content; high quality personalized instruction; and support for student management of their learning). This evidence is meaningful and justifies the applicant's claims.

Exhibit 15 demonstrates the instructional approaches and environments experienced by students through PAL. A few of the instructional approaches included blended learning, intensive tutoring, project based learning, and experiential learning. The multiple environments include technology labs, acceleration academies, and home. The applicant notes that these approaches and environments will best meet the students' individual needs as well as ensure students do not experience the "one size fits all" education.

Exhibit 16 describes the three types of PAL instructional time and what students will experience. This piece of evidence shows how students' learning will be deeply personalized based on their needs, interests, abilities, and experiences. This piece of evidence adds strength to the applicant's argument.

The applicant clearly articulates how each objective will embed the PAL instructional cycle in classroom practice and effectively personalize learning to meet the needs of all students. Exhibit 17 illustrates PAL plans for grades k-5 and college and career plans for grades 6-12. Student ownership and involvement are essential for both plans and described sufficiently.

Five strategies are identified and explained in detail to illustrate how learning plans will be used as tools for personalizing the learning environment to meet the needs of all students. The strategies include use student level data, tools, and resources to develop individualized learning plans for all students; make student level data, tools, and resources available online for identification and individualized student needs and student ownership of plans; make student level data, tools, and resources accessible through district provided devices; utilize and continuously improve individualized learning plans; and engage families in supporting students' growth along individualized learning plans. These provide evidence of the accommodations and strategies for students to ensure they are on track.

The applicant identifies the PAL portal as a mechanism in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. Exhibit 18 provides supporting details as it relates to the resources/tools/data on the teachers', students' and family portals. Although the details provide justification to the applicant's claims, a question of ambition comes into play. Will the applicant be able to carry all these out in year one becomes a factor.

The use of blended learning opportunities will be available; online coursework (such as AP physics) will be provided; and

the dual enrollment at Northern Essex Community College option is available for high school students. These examples provide evidence of high-quality content, including digital learning content.

The applicant references (Appendix M) its high quality detailed PAL implementation plan as additional evidence for improving learning and teaching.

Overall, the applicant provided adequate and meaningful evidence for each of the components. Exhibits 14-18 added supporting evidence to the overall response. Although some evidence is provided, additional details are needed as it relates to students having access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. These details would have been helpful for the reader especially since the district has a large ELL population. More evidence on who will be responsible for each planned activity would have also provided justification to the applicant's claims; this is a key element in defining a high quality plan. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 16 is given.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Teaching and leading evidence is provided under the following four bold-faced headings.

- Building teacher capacity through professional learning and professional learning communities. The applicant describes the use of professional learning (requiring at least 50 hours of PD for all teachers, principals, coaches, personalized learning specialist, and staff) as an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators. The applicant also highlights district-level trainings, job embedded coaching, professional learning communities, frequent measures of student progress, and educator feedback as other approaches. Detailed descriptions are provided for each approach.
- Teachers will receive intensive training in the first four years of PAL implementations. The district will leverage existing PD days to provide 14 hours of PD and the remaining 36 will be delivered at the school level. The applicant notes that the educators will develop specific modules and routinely film their training sessions and post them on the Teacher Portal.
- The applicant describes how coaching from the Personalized Learning Specialists will facilitate the existing 36 instructional coaches and educators at each school. The specialists will visit classrooms at least 4 times per day to conduct walkthroughs ; craft and deliver actionable and focused feedback; report on their walkthroughs weekly with principals; support teachers to use technology; foster teacher to teacher coaching; and analyze student level data with teachers.
- The applicant notes that the district will foster professional learning communities (PLC) and ensure all teachers have common planning time at least weekly. In addition, the district will use common quarterly assessments to frequently measure student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards.
- Improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback was addressed by describing the district's evaluation system. The five step evaluation (self-assessment, analysis, goal-setting, and plan development, implementation of the plan, formative assessment/evaluation, and summative evaluation). The applicant provided adequate details to address this bullet point.
- ***Collectively, the applicant provided adequate evidence to support the Building teacher capacity through professional learning and professional learning communities heading. All the components were addressed with supporting details but more clarity is needed on how the current roles in the professional development settings would be meshed with the new roles.***
- Supporting teachers with information, tools, data, and resources. The applicant highlights the personalized learning plans as one of the tools educators will use to respond to students' needs and interests. The interim assessment data (A-Net, iReady, MAP), teacher developed assessment data (unit tests, quizzes), and summative assessment data (MCAS) will also be available.
- The applicant provides a summary of learning resources and supports for educators' use. These learning resources include a new curriculum map aligned to the Massachusetts curriculum; a menu of formative assessments; and preapproved options for blended learning platforms. Supports include rubrics and look-fors to guide principal walkthroughs and classroom observations; intensive "up front" and ongoing district professional development and trainings, and incentives for contributions to school Google docs
- Empowering school leaders. To address how school leaders will assess and improve the school, the applicant comments on the PAL Blueprint, the mechanism in which school leaders have exercised autonomy to create the structures and supports that will help to engage students in successful learning. The applicant provides sufficient supporting details on how this mechanism would assist in the efforts to maintain continuous school improvement.
- Additional supports to help teachers identify and improve teacher effectiveness included a data system maintained by the Achievement Network; the ANet system; the TeachPoint system; principals of the Acceleration Academy; and the TELLS teacher survey results. ***Supporting details for each of these supports would have been helpful for the reader to get a broader picture as to how each clearly relates to continuous school improvement.***
- Maximizing student time with the most effective educators. The applicant provides a multi-step plan to maximizing student time with

effective educators. The process begins with attracting and retaining the most effective teachers and leaders; using the evaluation system to exit ineffective educators; developing the capacity of high potential educators; and using strategic staffing strategies and teach-leader opportunities to maximize the most effective educators in the system.

- Supporting details were provided for each step. Details included the important initiatives of the Director of Innovation and Talent (professional compensation ladder; pipeline of talent; leadership opportunities; Sontag prize in urban education; and hard to staff subjects and specialty areas), 50 hours of PD; ongoing coaching; and PLC time for collaboration and continuous improvement.
- *Collectively the applicant provided adequate evidence for each area but more evidence is needed to clearly articulate students' time with teachers in the hard to staff and specialty areas. The applicant mentioned several initiatives to identify and hire qualified teachers but the descriptions lack supporting details. This piece of evidence would have strengthened the applicant's claims.*

The applicant addresses each component but further evidence/supporting details would have strengthen the claims (refer to the statements in italics above). Overall, the applicant does provide a comprehensive plan likely to lead to the proposed goals and outcomes. Based on evidence provided, a score of 14 is provided.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant notes that the central office was reorganized to "improve the efficiency, quality, and delivery of service from the central office, especially to schools." LSP streamlined its central office to improve supports provided to increasingly autonomous schools and free up greatly needed resources and reallocate them to schools. The applicant also provides key features of the central office redesign. These features included academics, operations, community, family, and student engagement department, and PAL implementation. Supporting details were provided for each key feature. The applicant provided sufficient evidence for this area.
- As it relates to sufficient flexibility and autonomy for schools, the applicant notes the Turnaround Plan (Appendix A-1) as evidence. The Turnaround Plan states, "Principals will have the authority to operate and staff their sites based on the best interests of students in the school." Additional hours (at least 200) have been added to grades 1-8 and as many as 400 hours of instructional time have been added for students and staff. The applicant also highlights additional areas of autonomy: principals will be able to choose blended learning programs and models as well as professional development supports; principals will have autonomy over personnel decisions (e.g., hiring of the Personalized Learning Specialist, strategic staffing options for maximizing effective teachers, leveraging Sontag teachers), as well as the calendar (e.g., use of vacation academies, Expanded Learning Time). *More details are necessary for the reader to clearly see autonomy over factors such as school level budgets.*
- The applicant clearly demonstrated how students earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. The district uses promotion based on mastery on a limited basis, mostly at the high school level. Online credit recovery classes are used at the six high schools but also a major draw at the new alternative high school. Supporting evidence is provided in Exhibit 22, which demonstrates the high-level mastery-based promotion phasing plan.
- The applicant explains how students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times in multiple comparable ways. A central component of PAL is personalized learning plans for all students based on Common Core State Standards/Massachusetts Curriculum Framework. Quizzes, unit tests, exams and common quarterly assessments will be implemented. The district is already using the NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), The Achievement Network, TestWiz, and/or i-Ready assessments.
- As it relates to learning resources and instructional practice that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, the applicant mentions the RETELL initiative to improve personalized ELL instruction by (1) implementing high standards for every ELL student, (2) implementing common assessments to demonstrate student mastery of standards, and (3) training all teachers of ELL students (virtually all teachers in the district) on differentiating instruction to meet the individual needs of ELL students through fostering SEI environments. The applicant goes on to note that the LEA will begin providing 45 hours of training for teachers to receive their Sheltered English Immersion Endorsement. Implementing technology rich environments is another approach noted by the applicant. *More evidence on SWD would be helpful to further*

justify this area. It is not clear how the leaders the applicant mentions would integrate into the trainings and how this would look with SWD subgroups.

- Based on the evidence provided, the approaches proposed show signs of a high quality plan. All the elements were addressed but clarification and/or supporting details are needed for specific areas (*More details are necessary for the reader to clearly see autonomy over factors such as school level budgets; More evidence on SWD would be helpful to further justify this area*). The evidence provided leads to the proposed goals and outcomes; therefore a score of 13 is given.

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

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided detailed descriptions addressing the LEA and school infrastructure. Ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have access to content, tools, and learning resources in and out of school, the applicant notes that every classroom will be outfitted with wireless internet, and the district’s current bandwidth will be able to support the increased traffic (currently, only one-fifth of available bandwidth is in use). Schools will also have lending libraries, centralized locations where teachers, students, and families can check out devices (e.g., tablets, netbooks, broadband internet cards). Exhibit 23 illustrates students and parent portal content, tools, and learning resources. The YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs will be Second School Spots for wireless internet for families and students.

The applicant noted that educators and stakeholders would also have access to content, tools, and resources. All teachers and administrators are provided with a tablet, netbook, or laptop in order to enable access to the Teacher Portal. All administrators were issued iPads during SY 2012-13 in order to track and monitor educator evaluation information – this data will be integrated into the Teacher Portal as well. The evidence provided is sufficient.

The applicant will ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support: by utilizing the technology support team in the central office and the LPS-TV audio/visual department more heavily. The the district will also develop and staff a full-time “help desk” that will support drop-in service needs, manage a help desk email service, and also staff a help desk phone line. The help desk approach will also go out to the schools, with the tech facilitators all conducting at least one hour of drop-in support at each school per week. The Lawrence High School campus will also form a student tech support team, “YourTechPAL.” YourTechPAL will not only provide a great practical experience for students interested in technology, but will also provide an important service to peers and younger students. It would be helpful to see how these technical supports would be implemented at the elementary level. Evidence appears to lend itself more to the middle and high school student.

The Parent Portal through PowerSchool is the mechanism in which parents and students will export information and use data in the electronic learning systems. The system tracks attendance, enrollment, master schedules, student and family information, and assessment data. The district provides student level data to parents through the PowerSchool parent portal in terms of an “open” format. The applicant provides sufficient evidence to support its claim.

The applicant notes that the district has initiated interoperability between the primary data systems currently in operation, including PowerSchool, HealthMaster, ELLevations, EasyIEP, and LunchBox. This area appears to be lacking supporting details. Recommend further elaboration to clearly show how the LEA and schools will use interoperable data systems. It is clear whether the educator data systems are fully integrated with the student level data. More information is needed in this area.

Overall, the applicant provides evidence of a high quality plan as defined. All of the components were addressed but in some areas, supporting details are necessary. For example, it would be helpful to see how the technical supports noted would be implemented at the elementary level, considering they are participants. The evidence appears to lend itself more to the middle and high school students. In addition, supporting details to show how the interoperable data systems would be used are also needed. These elements would add strength to the claims. Based on the evidence, the score of 7 is given.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Exhibit 23 shows the continuous improvement practice plan: Plan, Do, Reflect, and Share which is the district's existing plan. The applicant notes that the district plans to leverage processes that are already in place to help them implement the improvement cycle and expand their practice in two critical ways.

In terms of leveraging processes in place, the applicant articulates that LPS has put in place four essential structures that help the district practice their cycle for continuous improvement, which they intend to leverage in order to effectively and continuously improve PAL. The five structures were identified and described as 1) setting baseline data; 2) articulating annual targets; 3) ongoing monitoring; 4) external reviews; and 5) sharing. The applicant provides supporting details for each of the structures.

Supporting details included the use of baseline data to measure improvement. The baseline data will help to determine the impact of PAL and understand what elements of PAL need to be refined to ensure greater impact. In addition, the applicant noted the use of Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) as part of the Turnaround Plan to articulate the outcomes the district expects to achieve over the next five years (supporting details on the MAGs are in Appendix JJ). A Plan manager, an external partner who helps track progress along the Turnaround Plan, will develop and send quarterly progress reports to the Massachusetts State Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mitchell Chester, and Receiver Riley, which summarizes progress and suggests opportunities to strengthen the plan. These aspects further justifies the applicants claims to have a plan that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

An external vendor, SchoolWorks, conducts annual Monitoring Site Visits of the six LPS schools identified as “underperforming” by ESE. These MSVs consist of a series of interviews, extensive classroom observations, document review, and facilitated prioritization sessions. The MSV reports provide a detailed assessment of strengths and recommendations for improvement. This evidence strengthens the applicant's claims.

As it relates to sharing of information, the applicant notes that this may vary by school. Schools have their method of regularly communication with parents and community partners while the district uses a liaison to share district progress. The applicant notes that the district will develop data dashboards to measure, monitor, and communicate progress against the PAL implementation plan.

Exhibit 24 details the role of each data dashboard. Central office dashboard to measure, monitor, and share effectiveness of service delivery to autonomous schools under the new redesign; school-level dashboard that monitors progress towards school goals (that are aligned with the Turnaround Plan and PAL); integrated management dashboard that provides an overview of central office and schools, to be discussed by district leadership on a monthly basis; and district report card shared quarterly with Lawrence community.

Collectively, the pieces of evidence provided show signs of a high quality plan as defined. The applicant addresses each component with meaningful details. The continuous improvement plan described is rigorous and aligns well to the proposed goals and outcomes but a timeline of the improvement process would have strengthened the applicant's claims. Details showing a coherent plan that shows how plans translate down from the district level to the classroom level and vice versa would have provided additional support and justification of claims. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 13 is given.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has identified five key internal and external stakeholder groups: (1) students and families; (2) teachers; (3) community; (4) school leaders; and (5) district leaders, which it plans to engage at least on a monthly basis and formally at least twice a year with an online survey. In efforts to reach as many stakeholders as possible, the district plans to utilize several engagement strategies for each group.

Exhibit 25 describes the plan for engagement for continuous improvement. For example, engagement strategies for students and families include PAL Portal, school site councils, district score card, social media and LPS website, and school climate surveys. For district leaders, the applicant highlights the following engagement strategies: monthly dashboard review and action planning, cabinet meetings, plan monitoring, logic model, implementation milestones. Community engagement would be demonstrated in the form of PAL portal, district score card, community partner meetings, website, community survey, and town hall meetings

The applicant provides evidence to justify the applicant's claims of having a plan for ongoing communication and engagement among internal and external stakeholders. It would have been helpful to know how often the communication and/or engagement strategy would take place. For example, would the town hall meetings take place one a month, quarterly. This piece of evidence (timeline) would strengthen the claims. Consequently, a score of 3 is given.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Exhibit 26 shows the application's proposed performance measures for all participating students, K-3, 4-8, and 9-12. The table provided the following headings: applicant-proposed measure, the rationale for selection, the ability to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information, and the plan to review and improve, if necessary.

The applicant provided sufficient evidence in Exhibit 26 to support its rationale for selecting the measure; how the measure

will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

Under the 4-8 grade band, the proposed measure,% of students scoring proficient or above on math and ELA MCAS by subgroup, notes the rationale for selection as "achieving proficiency on standards-based tests are indicators of high school graduation" and the ability to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information was addressed by the statement, "MA ESE tests have proven reliability and validity; help us monitor successful implementation and effectiveness of PAL, and make course corrections to our plan for future years." As it relates to a plan to review and improve, the applicant noted "as Massachusetts revises its standardized assessments to reflect the rigor of CCSS, we will include these new measures (PARCC)." Each of the proposed measures contains similar details. This provided strength to the applicant's claims.

Exhibit 27 (Performance Measures) provides additional evidence as it relates to the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup (all students; ELL; SWD; Free and reduced lunch), whose teacher and principal are a **highly** effective teacher and principal and effective teacher and principal. Based on the data provided, ELLs baseline data for the # of students show 2687 and 3031 highly effective teachers and principals respectively. In year one, the goals are 3262 and 3566 respectively.

Exhibit 27 also demonstrates the performance measure for grades 4-8, the number of students on track to college and career readiness based on the applicant's on track indicator and # and % of students scoring proficient or above on math and ELA MCAS by subgroup and absent fewer than 10 days.; the number and percentages of students who complete and submit a FAFSA form (by subgroups in grade 9-12); and the number and percentage of participating students, by subgroup, who are on track to college- and career-readiness based on the applicant's on-track indicator and the # and % of students taking and achieving 1550 combined score on the SATs. These pieces of evidence provided supporting details to the applicant's claims.

Overall the applicant includes adequate targets for the required performance measures and all are included in the response. The evidence provided was detailed and justified; therefore, a score of 5 is given.

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

The applicant addresses six key objectives along three dimensions: (1) fidelity of implementation versus plan; (2) effectiveness (i.e. extent to which the objective and its supporting strategies increased student outcomes); and (3) academic return on investment (in order to determine the relative value of each objective and/or strategy). This annual evaluation will be conducted at the start of each school year.

A mixed method approach will be employed (quantitative (e.g., MCAS performance data, formative assessment data, teacher and student attendance, online course enrollment and credits earned, and technology utilization) and qualitative data (e.g., student, teacher, and family feedback via online surveys, professional development session feedback, teacher and student focus groups, interviews with project leads, and artifacts such as lesson plans and feedback from classroom visits).

The applicant has identified the internal and external modes of data collection: internal structures and systems (the data dashboards and Educator Evaluation System) and external structures that leverage third-party partners (the ESE Plan Monitoring, facilitated by the District Management Council, and Monitoring Site Visits, conducted by School Works).

Additional evidence of evaluation includes: The PAL Project Manager will assess, by comparing actual activities and outcomes to the master implementation plan, the fidelity of each objective and strategy of PAL, at each site; the PAL Project Manager will codify lessons learned and effective implementation strategies to share with other district schools; and the applicant will partner with an ESE pre-approved vendor to conduct an academic return on investment analysis for PAL. An A-ROI analysis will illustrate the magnitude of impact on student learning through our investment in PAL.

The applicant has addressed each defined component. The evidence provided is justifiable and sufficient and is likely to lead the applicant's proposed goals and outcomes. The evidence demonstrates a comprehensive plan and warrants a score of 5.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The overall budget summary table provides reasonable figures. Over a 4 year period, the applicant proposes a total budget of \$34,321,241. This includes personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, training stipends, other, indirect costs and funds from other sources used to support the project.

The budget clearly articulates the seven project level budgets described in the application narrative: 1. Use student-level data to develop, utilize, and accelerate individualized learning plans (total 6,402,731), 2. Implement blended learning opportunities to facilitate personalized instruction (total 7,880,750), 3. Expand proven Acceleration Academies (total 5,630,000), 4. Expand menu of options for college and career pathways to drive student engagement and investment along individualized learning plans (5,102,875), 5. Improve teacher capacity to personalize instruction and maximize the impact of effective teachers (total 2,870,000) 6. Identify and meet social emotional needs of all students, and 7. PAL project management (total 4,468,060). Project 7: Pal project total proposed budget is 1, 966,825.

The applicant notes that the district will support PAL with at least \$9.7 million from other district and external sources which will support the initiative in several critical areas. Supporting details on Table 3-1 (Project level budget summaries) section 12 of each project provide justifiable evidence for the claims. Subpart 4: Project level budget narrative shows possible sources of the external/other funds.

In Subpart 4 and section F2 of the sustainability plan, the applicant identifies the one time vs. ongoing project budget items. Evidence shows that personalized learning specialists and benefits would be mostly one time while technology infrastructure and support for PAL Portal would be one time.

Collectively, the applicant provides reasonable and sufficient evidence in the tables and narrative to support the development and implementation of the proposal. Funds used to support the project were identified and supported with evidence. As a result, a score of 10 is provided.

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

10

8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant created a robust plan for sustainability, including a three year (Years 5-7) sustainability budget that clearly illustrates the district's consideration of which resources will be required for PAL success in Years 5-7. Approximately \$3.8 million will be required to sustain all components and objectives of the PAL project, of which \$2.2 million would be new investments and \$1.6 million would have already been budgeted and funded by the district in Year 4 of the grant.

The plan includes support from State and local government leaders, financial support, and a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments. The applicant notes that the \$1.6 million investment already included as a district match in the Year 4 grant budget will be funded through Title I, general funds, and a modest amount of external grant dollars.

Appendix M, Part F2 provides a detailed description of how the project plans to be sustained. The following headings guide the document: budget item; one time vs. ongoing costs; activity/rational; budget assumptions; years 1-5; and owners. The evidence provided clearly shows the portion of applicant's plan to sustain the project.

Potential sources for sustainability were not clearly highlighted in the budget narrative or in Part F2. Not enough evidence was provided to show how state and local government leaders would support the project after the grant period; this does not include only financial support but support in terms of personnel and/or infrastructure. The applicant did not clearly demonstrate a high quality plan for sustainability. Based on the evidence provided, a score of 8 was given.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence to support the description of coherent and sustained partnerships; desired results for the students; use data to target

resources, improve results, and scale the model; integrating education and services; building the capacity of staff; and annual performance measures.

- The applicant targeted mental health services and parent/family engagement as the most critical levers to enhance support for the social, emotional and behavioral needs of the students. To target these two levers, as part of PAL, the applicant plans to expand the school-based partnerships so that every school has a community agency partner that can provide social emotional and mental health supports to students and families, above and beyond those that are already provided within the school (by the school counselor, social worker, nurse, or school psychologist). The applicant provides a clear and reasonable plan to identify student's social, emotional needs and to meet them through the use of partnerships. Supporting details highlight current services and additional needs, expanding existing partnerships, and many partnerships supported by APAN. Exhibit 28 (community partner commitments) provides additional evidence. Several of the organizations are Lahey Health Behavioral Services; Family Service of the Merrimack Valley; and South Bay Mental Health. More evidence demonstrating how these partners are currently working with school districts would have strengthened the applicant's claims.
- The six population-level desired results listed in Exhibit 29 focus on what the applicant believes are the critical leading indicators of student success: meeting emotional/behavioral/health needs of students that would otherwise negatively impact attendance, engaging and empowering parents, establishing effective partnerships, and ensuring services are available in a timely manner. Exhibit 29 provides the population group, the type of result, and the desired results. This evidence shown here clearly supports the applicant's claims.
- As it relates to using data to target resources and improve results, the applicant provides details regarding tracking indicators, using data to target resources, scaling the model, and improving results. Supporting evidence note two potential systems to better understand student social-emotional or behavioral needs. Two potential systems are the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). Key indicators from the partnerships will be monitored by district leadership on a monthly basis and included in the formal annual evaluation of PAL. The supporting details are appropriate and justifiable.
- Under the heading of building capacity of staff, the applicant comments about assessing needs and assets of students; identifying needs and assets of the school and communities; decision making progress and infrastructure; engaging parents and families; and assessing progress. Family Outreach Workers will serve as case workers to assess needs and assets of students and coordinate education and community-provided and other services to address individual needs. Key performance indicators will be tracked by the PAL Project Manager and CFSE Director; the school Blueprint process will allow district leadership to understand school needs and recommendations for services and partnership; needs and assets of our schools are regularly inventoried by the Mass TELLS working conditions survey and student and staff focus groups; the Teacher Leader Cabinet is a direct line from the classroom to the Receiver, which will provide additional context, from the district's most effective educators, on the needs and assets of schools and the community; and meetings with APAN help to surface and unpack both the needs and assets of the community. School Dashboard Teams, district monitoring of key performance indicators, and the school Blueprint process will all provide opportunities for decision making about the supports being provided to students. The evidence addressing this bullet point was strong and clear and justified with supporting details.
- Exhibit 30 provides the annual performance measures for all students, ELLs, SWDs, free and reduced lunch subgroups in grades K-3, 4-8, 9-12. This document clearly shows achievable performance measures for a desired set of students.
- Collectively, the applicant provides strong evidence to demonstrate the extent to which the applicant plans to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students. Further details are needed to clearly see the vision the applicant proposes the partnership would, within participating schools, integrate education and other services for participating students; therefore, a score of 8 is given.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. In the proposal, these are noted as Standards and assessments; Data system to support instruction; Great teachers and leaders; and Turning around lowest achieving schools.

As it relates to standards and assessments, the applicant has engaged standout teachers to write new curriculum maps for math, ELA, and science. The applicant plans to implement new assessments from the PARCC. They have partnered with the Achievement Network to ensure students are exposed to rigorous assessments in math and ELA.

The applicant provided a summary of learning activities against Race to the Top criteria document (Exhibit 14) that identifies the six key objectives and how they meet the Race to the Top criteria (student learning goals/mastery of academic content; high quality personalized instruction; and support for student management of their learning). Exhibit 15 demonstrated the instructional approaches and environments experienced by students through PAL. A few of the instructional approaches included blended learning, intensive tutoring, project based learning, and experiential learning.

The multiple environments include technology labs, acceleration academies, and home. The applicants noted that these approaches and environments would best meet the students' individual needs as well as ensure students do not experience the "one size fits all" education.

In addition, the applicant described the three types of PAL instructional time and what students will experience in Exhibit 16. This piece of evidence showed how students' learning will be deeply personalized based on their needs, interests, abilities, and experiences.

The applicant also described the use of professional learning (requiring at least 50 hours of PD for all teachers, principals, coaches, personalized learning specialist, and staff) as an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators. The applicant highlighted district-level trainings; job embedded coaching, professional learning communities, frequent measures of student progress, and educator feedback as other approaches. Detailed descriptions are provided for each approach. Teachers would receive intensive training in the first four years of PAL implementations. The district will leverage existing PD days to provide 14 hours of PD and the remaining 36 will be delivered at the school level. The applicant notes that the educators will develop specific modules and routinely film their training sessions and post them on the Teacher Portal.

Overall, the applicant provided adequate and strong evidence for each selection criteria. The supporting details demonstrated a coherent and comprehensive plan; therefore, a score of met is given.

Total	210	178
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0041MA-2 for Lawrence Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A.

The applicant has fully acknowledged the adoption of the new Common Core State Standards and associated assessments as part of MA's state policy. Additionally, the district has been engaging with its teachers in developing curriculum maps across the subject areas that reflect the instructional shifts and increased rigor found in the adopted standards. It is less clear how these district developed curricular resources are actualized in classrooms and whether the teaching practice across the district has shifted toward the new standards.

The applicant has also described the type of data system that exists in measuring student growth and success. This system is organized to support the interim assessments that are administered across the system and provides timely feedback to teachers who can advantage this information to inform their own instruction. It is less clear whether teachers are utilizing this system on the ground and the range of coaching that is available to support teachers in fully utilizing this system for continuous improvement in their instruction and formative assessment.

The applicant has described a series of strategies that support the recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective of teachers and principals. The strategies of a new career ladder and compensation system as well as the identification of strong teachers for both the Sontag Prize and the Teacher Leader Cabinet has promise. It is less clear how the district is strategizing with Teacher For America in its development of a Summer Institute. This strategy of recruiting and investing in resources for teacher who have on the onset, a limited time in the classroom may not be the most effective use of professional development resources for teachers. A more comprehensive and long-term investment in the teacher recruitment and development would better support the districts goals of accelerating student learning.

The applicant has clearly articulated its Turnaround Plan in detailing out the strategies and mechanisms of turning around its lowest performing schools. The applicant has provided ample and robust evidence of the planning, implementation, and

current outcomes of the work of turning around its lowest performing schools within the district. Detailed evidence included measures and growth rates to other state level outcomes. This level of data provided strong comparison data to the growth trends at the state level which helps assess how the district is progressing not as an isolated case, but meeting and excelling its growth targets beyond state trends.

B.

The applicant has provided clear and credible approach to goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support. The applicant has provided concrete examples and cases of the strategies that have been utilized in their earlier turnaround schools which represent about 10% of their student population. The applicant is taking what has been effective within the smaller subset of schools. Additionally, the applicant has expanded the approach to goals across six key objectives with concrete strategies that work together in realizing those key objectives.

C.

The applicant has articulated the classroom experience in a comprehensive way. The Personalized Accelerated Learning (PAL) is fully articulated in both the content of the learning and the process by which teachers, school leaders, and students will work together in achieving its key objectives. PAL is not a new process by which the applicant is launching, but the district plans to build upon the prior work at its school as it scales up its work district-wide.

Additionally, the applicant explicitly describes what the student and teacher learning experience will look like at the classroom level. These concrete visualizations provide clarity as to what the outcomes of the work could be when the district launches this work.

Overall, the applicant scored a 9/10 for this selection criterion. Points were deducted for the lack of clarity in some of systems regarding the implementation of the new standards and assessments as well as a less than robust short-term teacher professional development plan with Teach For America.

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

The applicant has fully addressed all three parts of the selection criterion A2. That is, the district has a strong and reasonable rationale in working at all of its schools based on historical and current academic performance. A full list of school and all of the participating students are detailed as per the guidelines listed in selection criterion A2c.

Additionally, the applicant has made a strong case as to how PAL can be scaled up and implemented across all of the district's schools. They have listed evidence of support and alignment with its prior Turnaround Schools work as well as state level policies and support that cohere to the work within the district. As a result, for this selection criterion, the applicant received a full score of 10/10.

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

The applicant has detailed out a high-quality plan that fully describes PAL in its scale up and implementation across all of its schools. The applicant provides clear details focused on the activities and rationale within the proposed logic model, which are components of a high-quality plan. Additional components of a high quality plan were well detailed and include the six key objectives that are directly connected to the key activities and processes proposed, timetable of work for each activity, responsible parties for each line of work, and key deliverables generated through the activities and processes. It is clear how the activities and processes listed within the logic model (exhibit 6) are aligned with the strategies that are listed within key objectives 1-6.

The applicant scored in the high range of 10/10 for this selection criterion because the strengths included key rationale based on past successes using these approaches as well as a comprehensive plan for scale up and implementation.

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

The applicant has fully articulated its vision and target outcomes within this selection criterion. All five parts A4 (a-d) are detailed within Exhibit 9. The goals set are ambitious yet achievable annual goals based on goals that have already been set at the state level. The goals set are ambitious because the applicant is working toward reducing the achievement gap across the various subgroups. The applicant has provided enough details within the teaching and learning sections

regarding how it aims to provide additional supports for SWD and ELLs that the goals set for these populations are reasonable and achievable. The applicant has scored in the high range of 10/10 for this selection criterion because it has provided clear and detailed outcome projections that are aligned with its logic model and vision of work of PAL.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a. The applicant has provided ample evidence in its recent track record of improving student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps as a system, across specific schools, and in growth rates in specific subject areas. For example, the growth and acceleration measures are demonstrated by exhibit 10 that are complemented by anecdotal quotes from practitioners. Additionally, the applicant discusses the strategies that may have directly influenced these growth scores and builds upon this core work within the PAL model.</p> <p>b. The applicant has provided ample evidence in how it's achieved ambitious reforms in lowest-achieving schools. The applicant included evidence in both absolute and growth measures in mathematics and ELA, outcomes from their current Turnaround Plan, gains with specific population groups since 2010 to present, and specific strategies at the school level that may have attributed to academic gains. The details and evidence provided imply a strong potential in how the district plans to scale up its current reform across all of its schools. For each of the major outcomes, the applicant is able to connect with the strategies and actions that contributed to the associated outcomes. For example, the applicant is able to discuss achievement driven by specific interventions such as Acceleration Academies, Unlocking Potential (partner), MATCH (partner), and Phoenix (partner). The level of detail is impressive as the applicant is able to identify grade level outcomes at specific schools and relate them to strategies that may have attributed to the outcome listed.</p> <p>c. The applicant has described a number of systems that makes student performance data available to students, educators, and families. Some of the data systems organized for educators need greater clarity. For example, it is not clear how educators within each school are utilizing systems such as data walls and data meetings to collaborate and improve instruction.</p> <p>The applicant has not identified the composition of the various stakeholder groups who are working together to analyze student performance data. It would be helpful to understand how these stakeholder groups are formed at the various levels (e.g. classroom, school-wide, across-schools, district-side), when they gather to review student data, plan for action and course correction.</p> <p>Even though parents have access to performance data via progress reports and report cards twice per term, it is not clear how the district plans to engage with students and families who may not have access to the online portals where additional student performance level data may be present in greater frequency.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant scored in the high-range of 13/15 because it provided strong evidence for selection criterion B1a-b, but had a weaker description of engagement for how students and families could be informed about student progress system-wide in an equitable fashion.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has described in generalities how items listed in selection criterion B2(a-d) are provided to the public across the district and at a school by school basis. The applicant does not provide concrete evidence as to examples of funding transparencies across the district and at each school site. Rather, the applicant describes that the budget is made available that include the costs of staff, operations, fixed costs, and 18 different categories within each school budget. It would be helpful to see an example of a school budget or a summary of the district budget that is accessible to be included in the appendix.</p> <p>It would be helpful to understand how LEA processes and practices are also shared with the public in addition to the specific expenditures at the school and district level. For example, it is unclear how the public can engage with and understand the decision making processes that have produced the resource and funding allocation outcomes that are made public. Additional details describing the LEA processes and practices would have strengthened evidence for this selection criterion. As a result, the applicant scored a mid-range of 3/5.</p>		

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated comprehensive and clear evidence in providing successful conditions and autonomies from the state in fully implementing PAL. The applicant has described its relative unique position as a district because it is currently under state receivership. As stated by the applicant, this type of state receivership allows for certain autonomies and conditions that may not be present otherwise. The five key conditions listed are all clearly defined and work in tandem in supporting the PAL work. Additionally, the 15 autonomies under the state law are aligned with both the core assurances and the strategies listed in reaching the key objectives in PAL. The applicant clearly understands the nuances of the uses of autonomies presented in its situation and describes how it plans to utilize the autonomies in directly supporting its goals and outcomes.</p> <p>For this selection criterion, the applicant scored a high-range of 10/10 for providing exemplary details and evidence of the district's relationship to the state and how that relationship promotes the proposed work.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provided strong stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. The evidence of engagement and support from the student leader cabinet provided strong and ample feedback to the applicant team as they designed and formulated their PAL over the course of the proposal development period. The applicant also demonstrated evidence of a strong level of parent leadership engagement. However for both the student leadership cabinet and parent leadership groups, it was not clear what the communications and feedback channels were from each of these representative leadership groups back to the larger forum of students and families at each of their respective school sites.</p> <p>The educator engagement at 40% is relative low in terms of educator engagement. It is also not clear how the educator composition is composed. That is, of the 40%, which percentage is school leadership, which percentage are classroom teachers, and which percentage is composed of other staff or personnel that support teachers and school leaders.</p> <p>Within the narrative, it is not fully transparent whether this district currently employs a collective bargaining representation. Based on the statutory basis for the implementation of the turnaround plan found in the appendix, it appears that this LEA can limit, suspend or change one or more provisions of any contracted or collective bargaining agreement in the district. This is also reiterated as #8 of the autonomies provided by state law listed by the applicant. It is unclear whether the applicant will exercise this autonomy as allowed under its current conditions. Additionally, the applicant has provided evidence of support based on the signature from the local teachers' union.</p> <p>The applicant provides a number of letters of support from a full range of key stakeholders. It would be helpful to further understand the relationships of each of these stakeholder groups to the district PAL plan and the role each of these stakeholder groups plan in advancing the vision, goals, and outcomes of the PAL model. Some of the letters provide strong details in the current and future PAL related relationships with the district and other letters provide more general letters of support. While these general letters of support build a comprehensive portrait of the complex school, district, family, and community environment, the general letters are less helpful in gauging their support and commitment to the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant received a mid-range score of 8/15 because it did not demonstrate clear evidence of student, teacher, and principal engagement and did not meet the evidence standard of 70% of teachers in support of PAL.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a full description of how it plans on supporting selection criterion parts C1a: i, ii, iii, and v as part of its quality plan. Strong pieces of evidence included Exhibit 15 that detailed the eight types of instructional approaches across 5 types of learning environments, extended school day and school year through Acceleration Academies and other vacation academies, strategies included to address needs of students with disabilities and English language learners, developmental appropriate PAL plans with components across each of the two major grade spans (elementary and secondary) fully defined, and the new Department of Community, Family, and Student Engagement.</p>		

The applicant has not explicitly addressed how it intends to address selection criterion part C1a: iv regarding how all students would have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. The applicant has identified a high percentage (73%) of students who have a first language other than English with many coming from recently immigrated families. An opportunity exists for the district to take advantage of the students' and families' cultural background and assets in supporting this specific selection criterion subpart iv.

The applicant has provided a comprehensive set of strategies that are aligned across the six objectives. The ideas behind the strategies such as blended learning are strong, but it is unclear whether the content of the blended learning experiences are of high quality and prepare students for college and career readiness. The menu of blended learning options is too general as described by exhibit 15 and 16. That is, they do not create enough clarity as to whether the content is of high quality, standards and grade level aligned, and supporting of the diverse student needs that have been identified by the applicant.

The PAL portal has potential promise in supporting the mechanism of cycle of inquiry and feedback for teachers, students, and families. The applicant has provided significant details of what this PAL portal should entail. However, the system itself has not been created. It is unclear whether the timeline of work in building and launching this comprehensive system will be completed within year one and how the team will troubleshoot the design of this comprehensive portal if not all elements in the design can be actualized by the start of year 2. Additionally, the applicant has detailed the participation of teacher, principal, district staff, student and family input and engagement through the PAL Portal. However, it's not clear what the mechanisms are for each of these stakeholder groups throughout the duration of the project period to actually engage with this data system in supporting the PAL outcomes. Much of the description of the PAL portal involves the "what" or the ideals of the portal, but does not detail the "how", or the strategic interactions the portal will have with the various stakeholders over the course of the project period.

Similarly, the applicant details a number of professional learning opportunities that will support the learning of teachers and educators that support the work of or the development and use of high-quality plans and help educators develop the knowledge and skills needed to effectively differentiate instruction for all students. Greater clarity is needed in terms of how the professional learning opportunities will be scaffolded system-wide over the course of the project period. For example, detailed within Appendix M under strategy 2b, it is unclear what the content and processes are regarding how the applicant plans to coordinate district-wide training on blended learning in year 2 or how the 14 hours of professional development (PD) district-wide per year will ensure a coherent approach to PAL. The 36 hours of PD in schools is described in clearer detail and provides stronger evidence of how teachers are supported so that the project objectives can be met.

The applicant provides strong evidence in providing mechanism for students to take ownership of their learning goals as demonstrated in strategy 4(a-c). These strategies listed are developmentally appropriate and provide concrete strategies that will engage students in their own learning goals.

Overall, the applicant scored a 15/20 for this selection criterion. Even though the applicant has included all of the components necessary for a high-quality plan both in the narrative and in appendix M, some of the ideas behind blending learning, online tools, and professional learning opportunities are not fully articulated within the narrative. Additional support details are needed in how these strategies will take hold in the hands of students, teachers, school leaders, and parents as well as what the actual content these tools and opportunities will provide for these users.

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

20

13

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A.

The details provided in within the job-embedded coaching section are well articulated. The example of how the Personalized Learning Specialists will work at their respective school sites has strong potential of building teacher capacity across the district's schools. It is less clear what the roles of the existing 36 instructional coaches will be in this new context and how the current coaches will interact and collaborate with these newly hired Personalized Learning Specialists. It is also not clear how the Achievement Network coaches ("ANet") will work with these Personalized Learning Specialists, the current coaches, and the teacher leaders that are at the school site. With all of these coaching services available, it is not clear what the role of the school leader will be and how the school leader will interact and gain capacity through this influx of resources at the school site.

The applicant has provided clear evidence in supporting selection criterion C2 (a)(iii). The diversity of the assessment tools allows the district to provide a range of choices for their educators. It would be helpful to understand how these tools have been selected and whether these assessments are aligned to the new standards and provide the rigor that is necessary in supporting students' college and career readiness.

The general process of how the applicant plans to improve teacher practice as demonstrated in the diagram within the narrative describing (iv) educator feedback. The development of the teacher evaluation rubric in which the PAL system is also launching is less clear. The applicant doesn't fully address how principals' practices will be evaluated. Selection criterion C2 (a)(iv) contains two parts to be addressed by the applicant. The applicant has sufficiently addressed the teacher feedback and evaluation mechanism but does not explicitly address principals' feedback and evaluation mechanisms.

B.

The applicant has provided a number of tools data, and resources that accelerate student academic progress. These tools listed have promising potential. However, it is unclear how these tools and resources will be used by teachers independently, with the support of their various coaches, school leader and distinguished teachers, or in professional learning communities. Stronger evidence is needed in the efficacy of these individual tools such as online textbooks, video lessons from Khan Academy, online modules, and optional professional development mini-courses.

Additionally, the feedback processes in the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs is not fully articulated. It is not clear whether the principal will have the time and capacity to follow up with all of its teachers on a monthly basis using the data compiled by the IT staff. It is also not clear the coaches' role in interacting with this teacher portal in gathering evidence of teacher usage of the portal and using that data in coaching teachers.

C.

The applicant has provided clear rationale and resources that are necessary to support school leaders that enable them to structure an effective learning environment at their school site. It is unclear which of the systems and strategies that are listed are novel approaches for school leaders or currently utilized approaches. This is critical because the applicant does not detail a strategy to support the growth of these school leaders. With the influx of many new systems and strategies, there needs to be a developmentally thoughtful approach for adult learners so that the steep learning curve of new work can be accommodated.

D.

The applicant lists a number of promising strategies for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The evidence is clearly presented in Appendix M (Strategy 5b and 5c) as part of a high-quality plan. Examples of strong evidence include the following: providing leadership opportunities to maximize the impact of effective teachers (5b) and maximizing the reach of effective teachers through strategic staffing assignments (5c). For each of these two strategies (5b and 5c), the applicant has described in detail the types of activities that would support these overarching strategies. The activities listed in supporting these strategies are clearly defined with strong rationale, associated deliverables and ownership of responsibility.

For this selection criterion, the applicant score in the mid-range at 13/20. The applicant has provided a strong overall plan for improving learning and teaching. However, within this plan, some of the specific details are not fully articulated as the some of the systems (e.g. PAL portal) do not exist and needs to be built, piloted and implemented in a short year one timeframe.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A. The applicant has provided a detailed organization makeup of how the new work would be supported by the central office. The roles and responsibilities are clear and they are aligned with the proposed strategies and objectives. The newly created Community, Family, and Student Engagement Department holds the greatest promise as the applicant has identified the high needs of the student populations.

B. The applicant has provided ample and strong evidence as to how school level teams have the flexibility and autonomy for key decisions in supporting the PAL model.

C. The applicant has clearly articulated ways for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. It was helpful to include prior successes in the partnership with Phoenix Foundation as well as ways the applicant aims to build on its current work in this field.

D. The applicant describes ways in which students can master the standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. Examples of sample formative assessments that are pre-developed by outside vendors are listed and they provide a good starting place for teachers and district leaders to use in assessing students in a formative manner. It is less clear how the district will organize itself and its teachers in developing new assessments and performance tasks that accompany the district's Common Core curriculum maps.

E. The specific teacher training focused on supporting ELLs holds promise. It would be helpful to understand how this training will be integrated as part of the PAL model explicitly as 73% of the student population has identified that English is not their primary home language. It is also unclear how school leaders, coaches, and district leaders would build its own capacity around supporting both ELLs and SWDs. While the increase in the use in technological tools may be beneficial to SWDs, it is unclear how the educators within the system will adapt and improve on its practices to serve the population of SWDs.

Overall, the applicant scored a 12/15 for this selection criterion because the proposal provided details around the practices, policies and rules that facilitated the PAL model across each of the five sub-selection criterion. Areas of weakness were mostly around the specificities of implementation regarding part d and part related to the work around formative assessment implementation and mastery and the work with special populations (SWD and ELLs) as part of a comprehensive implementation plan.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A.

The applicant has provided clear evidence as to how it plans to support its students and educators so that they have access to the necessary content and tools as part of the PAL Model. It is less clear how the strategies of increasing access to parent communities was developed as it would be important to understand the technology access needs of the families and community members prior to building out the access mechanisms for this population. There is also not an explicit engagement and outreach strategy specified for this families and communities.

B. The technical support provided by the applicant is strong and clearly stated for the work that is held in schools. The approach is comprehensive and works strongest in supporting school technology needs. The technical support for the out of school time in relationship with parents is less detailed. The help desk that is provided is minimal support for families. It is also not clear whether language issues may be barriers for parents in their access and use of these tools.

C. The information technology systems presented by the applicant is clearly defined using the PowerSchool Portal in its current state. The applicant has a comprehensive plan in building out a more sophisticated portal that students, teachers, and parents can access starting in year 2. The full portal with all of the functionalities listed by the applicant will be an ambitious undertaking.

D. The applicant has provided evidence that it is working with the state in developing an interoperable data system. Based on the operating systems listed, it is not clear whether educator effective data systems are fully integrated with the student level data.

Overall, while the applicant provided a number of strong strategies, activities, and rationale behind the activities and strategies, a number of activities listed needed to be situated in a fully fleshed out plan that included the specific needs of the students, teachers, and parent populations in the local context. Additionally, the applicant hasn't provided full clarity around specific issues that included the implementation across the various stakeholder groups as described in part B of the comments. As a result, the applicant scored a mid-range 6/10 for this section.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided a good portrait of continuous improvement processes at the district level that includes a model of the process in practice, a case of the continuous improvement model in use, and lessons learned from the use of these processes. It is less clear how this process will filter down to the various grain-size of work at the school and classroom levels for the various strategies that support the PAL model. Because the applicant has not provided enough details as to

how the continuous improvement model would be actualized at the school site and classroom level, this lack of clarity weakened the overall section for selection criterion E1. Appendix M provides additional components clarifying the big goals, the activities, the rationale behind the activities, deliverables, persons responsible, and a rough timeline of work. Appendix M mostly address issues related to continuous improvement at the larger district level and not how the work would be then translated at the school and classroom levels. The details within the narrative regarding how progress would be monitored, measured, and publically shared do not provide enough details such as the frequency of meetings, the processes of analyzing data, and how the work continuously improves over the course of the project period.

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

Exhibit 25 and Appendix M provide a good portrait of how the applicant intends to engage in ongoing communications and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. For example, the applicant has clearly identified the five key stakeholder groups in terms of tailoring their messaging and communications tailored to key audiences. The applicant has also identified the frequency over the course of the project period by which they plan to engage with these identified stakeholders. Lastly, for each of the stakeholder groups, the applicant has listed strategies that promise in reaching the stakeholder groups and included clear deliverables including a timeline of work and frequency of activities that is fully detailed in appendix M under sub-section E2. The engagement strategies at the district and school level are stronger than that of the external stakeholders such as families and community members. It would be helpful to have additional details built out for the student, families, and community stakeholder groups as part of a strong comprehensive plan that address the needs of the high number of immigrant families where English may not be their primary language of interaction.

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

The applicant provides extensive details that describe each of the components listed in E3 (a-c). The rationale behind each of the measures listed is clear. The applicant has provided enough evidence that it can produce/collect the data and report them out in useful ways. That is, the applicant has strategically used the "SMART" method in determining the performance measures so that the goals and outcomes are Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. The applicant has clearly described in exhibit 26 the rationale behind each proposed measure, its ability to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information and its plan to review and improve, if necessary.

Additionally, the applicant discusses how it plans to review and improve upon the measure over time. The evidence provided an outline of a strong and promising plan in how the applicant plans to utilize these performance measures toward improvement.

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

The applicant has provided a detailed plan in which it will utilize in evaluating the effectiveness of investments. The three key dimensions are clearly articulated and are mapped directly back to the six key objectives. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the major activities that will take place in gauging the effectiveness of the plan. However, the timeline is provided more generally in terms of the frequency of the assessment and evaluation. It is unclear how the specific timeline of how the applicant plans to evaluate its effectiveness of investments would intersect with the key objectives and related strategies over the course of the project period.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified all funds within the budget and budget narrative tables that will support the project with a high level of detail and justification of costs as it relates to the each of the seven major projects. The costs listed are all reasonable and sufficient in supporting the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. Additionally, the applicant has provided how funds will be used for one-time investments as well as ongoing operational costs to support the implementation of the proposal. Overall, the applicant scored a high score of 10/10 for the completeness and clarity of

each budget item and how it supports each of the seven major projects.

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

10

10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Both the narrative and appendix M (table F2) provides ample and clear details that contribute to a high quality plan for sustainability of project goals. For example, in each of the projected budget items for years 5-7, the applicant has provided itemized costs. For each of these itemized costs, the rationale for continued support is evident and detailed, clarity is provided whether this is a one-time or ongoing cost, budget assumptions are detailed, and cost per year for years 5-7 are projected with district level commitments also listed.

The applicant has detailed out processes that it has used in the past that have proven to be useful in evaluating the effectiveness of the investments toward project goals.

One of the major strengths within this selection criterion is the applicant's projection of the project plan beyond the project period for years 5, 6, and 7. The applicant has detailed the level of human resources and financial commitments it needs to have in place to sustain the work beyond the project period. Examples of processes such as the "A-ROI" approach and productivity analysis are clearly identified and detailed in supporting how the applicant plans to maintain the longevity of the project plan.

Additionally, the applicant has provided ample letters of support from organizations and key individuals who have been working with the applicant district. While there is not explicit financial support listed from these letters of support, the letters of support from these stakeholder groups provide enough evidence that various community and state level stakeholder groups support this project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

1. The applicant provides a strong rationale as to why it's important to build school-based partnerships based on the need of the schools. This idea is a more grounded from what the school needs are rather than what may be most convenient for the district which can be beneficial to the school as targeted services are delivered at the school, classroom, and student level, but more complicated for the district as it is more difficult to take advantage of issues such as economies of scale, centralized management, coordination, and management of services, and building coherence of key initiatives at scale.

While the applicant has listed Agency Partnership Advisory Network (APAN) as the key partnership, the applicant has not provided a comprehensive list of these 60 agencies that are part of this network nor how these current agencies are working both with the district and with its schools and students. Some of the larger partnerships such as Lahey Health Behavioral Services and Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) are listed in detail in exhibit 28 but it is not clear how these identified partners are currently working in schools, how the district and schools will negotiate these partnerships and various cost factors that the district and schools may need to consider in their engagement.

2. The applicant has clearly identified six population-level desired results listed in Exhibit 29 focus on what they believe are the critical leading indicators of student success. These factors include: meeting emotional/behavioral/health needs of students that would otherwise negatively impact attendance, engaging and empowering parents, establishing effective partnerships, and ensuring services are available in a timely manner. All of these factors include both in and out of school factors that have promise in contributing to the overall academic success of students. For both of the educational type of results, the applicant has clear, concrete, and measurable goals related to student attendance that is one of the major drivers to students' academic success in school.

3. The applicant acknowledges that the outcomes measures of the six identified desired results are housed across six different data management systems. With this grant, the applicant aims to bring the disparate system under a comprehensive PAL portal so that various stakeholders can have access to the necessary data that can help inform their decision-making and resource allocations.

The applicant has clearly identified the types of instrumentation and data it aims to collect and lists examples that include the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). These tools assist the district and its schools to assess and target services to the most high need students in its schools and across the district. The applicant has a clear action plan and ownership of responsibility under the Director of Community, Family, and Student Engagement.

The applicant has clearly identified the autonomy and process that both the school and the district hold in making the partnership effective and useful for students. This includes providing schools the autonomy to monitor, negotiate, and proposal renewal of their community partnerships on an annual basis.

4. The applicant has detailed out the pilot efforts of their Family Outreach Program across three schools that have improved outcomes for students by a concrete measure of 30%. The applicant has provided a clear rationale as to how this program has benefited the current schools and ways this program can be used to integrate education and other services proposed.

5 and 6. The applicant has detailed multiple ways in which it plans to build the capacity of staff at participating schools. These ways include the hiring of five Family Outreach Workers, using existing tools to assess the needs and assets of participating students (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)), providing a clear approach of data analysis and integration of data sources to help inform decision making, providing strategies such as language translation and a Family Resource Center to engage families, and detailing growth targets for each of the indicators for all students and disaggregated by ELLs, SWDs, and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. The targets set are ambitious and reasonable as detailed in exhibit 60 that includes both the project period and in years 2017-2018 (post grant).

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed Absolute Priority 1 (Personalized Learning Environments) for its students. The major strength of this proposal rests with its prior record of success in the strategies and programs that have been implemented in its pilot schools and partnerships with the community. Additionally, the district is in a unique situation under state receivership. As a result, the district has leveraged the range of autonomies provided by the state to customize its program of work with limited constraints from both the local and state authorities. The applicant has detailed strong action plans for each of its major projects and includes a long-term vision and concrete strategy in sustaining the work beyond the project period. The goals and metrics are clearly defined and are directly linked to student outcomes. The coherence across the vision, goals, metrics, staffing capacity, implementation and continuous improvement mechanisms are fully articulated and provide a strong cohesive narrative by which the district has the potential to accelerate student achievement.

In regards to the four core educational assurances, the applicant has demonstrated ways that it will use college-ready standards and assessments that will be used to accelerate learning gains across the various sub populations. For example, the menu of college and career pathways that will be available is part of a continuum of services that support students' college and career readiness. The data system proposed by the PAL is robust and comprehensive and brings together disparate data sources under one system so that various stakeholders have access and utility with the collected data. However, the design and building of this comprehensive data system is highly ambitious in year one as the applicant has proposed a highly ambitious data system with a high range of services. Considerations and course corrections may need to be taken as set-backs or technology advances may not need the complete needs of the applicant.

The applicant has detailed a robust teacher career and performance compensation system for its teachers. Within this system, teachers advance up the career ladder based on holistic measures of teaching effectiveness and replace the traditional "step and lane" structure. Additionally, the teacher compensation system is clear and transparent and provides flexibility for schools to promote and hire with greater autonomy. The outline of the three additional compensation and leadership systems are clearly defined and detailed with dates and financial figures that include the ELT stipends, new roles for teachers, and school-wide awards. All of these proposed strategies provide strong evidence that the applicant has a strong potential in meeting the core educational assurance of recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers.

Lastly, the applicant has demonstrated strong evidence that it has produced results in its lowest achieving schools. Many of the strategies detailed are based on pilot and preliminary results at their turnaround schools. Consequently, because the applicant is building upon and growing the work from its turnaround schools, it has a stronger potential of success of scaling than brand new initiatives that may not have a track record of success in the local context.

Total	210	171
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0041MA-3 for Lawrence Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District fully and articulately addresses all subsections of A(1). Holistically, the District has created a wide-ranging system of supports and accountability to assure the reforms proposed lead toward student success. The following explorations of the District's plan hopes to highlight the strengths of the submitted plan:

The District will implement a "Personalized Accelerated Learning" Program for all students which continues the "aggressive" Turnaround Plan already in place, which has already led to increased student achievement within 18 months of adoption. The "Acceleration Academies," a part of the Turnaround Plan models which lead to the aforementioned success will double the number of seats for the district.

The District, after being highlighted as poor performing, was put in receivership. With this designation came increased flexibility and autonomy for the administrator of the District and has lead toward systems designed to accelerate student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity:

The District will "extend time, strategic use of data" and "high expectations for academic achievement." The District will focus time and effort into "recruitment, retention, and cultivation" of staff and partnerships. The District will also expend resources and support to "engage" students "beyond academics." The fourth strategy articulate as part of the Turnaround Plan is to increase "autonomy and accountability for school to promote student success."

With respect to the individual subsections of A(1), the district addresses each area and creates a compelling vision and approach.

Specifically of note is the articulation of the classroom experience, which shows a deep understanding of student need. According to the application, within the personalized learning environments "fostered for teachers and students" Students will "take ownership" of their learning, "be engaged" in excited and interesting lessons "relevant to their lives," "spend time with their teachers one-on-one," use a "variety of engaging tools and content," and "focus learning time on the standards and skills most relevant for them," among others.

The Personalized Accelerated Learning Program's instructional cycle shows a fully explained and designed system to meet the needs of students.

The Districts answer to section A(1) is complete and very high quality.

10

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District fully and with strong educational acumen describes the process that it (the District) will use to select schools. In fact, the District decided to include all schools that serve K-12 students. Wanting to include all students indicated a true belief in the strength of the program and in the abilities of all the students in the district. The District's proposal includes a focus on all schools and all ages and thus including all the schools of the District is commensurate with this pedagogy.</p> <p>Additionally, the list of the schools is presented as is each of the subsections of participating student populations.</p> <p>10</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Because the District took the commendable step of including all schools and students in their reform effort, the district presented and described their logic model to scale up their current successful work to all the district's schools.</p> <p>The logic model is clear, cogent and concise: "identify opportunity"(this is based on deep analysis of multiple measures of assessment) --> "appoint leadership" (with greater flexibility because of being in receivership, the District is able to place appropriate and strong leaders into positions of authority and accountability) --> "plan and align blueprints" --> "launch" --> "continuously improve and scale"</p> <p>The District then created four year outcome goals for its six "Key Objectives." Each Objective is geared toward raising student achievement and supporting individualized learning. Some examples are: "Use student-level data to develop, utilize, and accelerate individualized learning plans," implement blended learning opportunities to facilitate personalized instruction" and "improve teacher capacity to personalize instruction and maximize the impact of effective teachers."</p> <p>This is a high quality answer that addresses all parts of the question.</p> <p>10</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District clearly and cogently articulates a vision that is likely to result in student learning. The goals for improved student outcomes put forth are ambitious yet achievable (except for some, which seem overly ambitious as noted below). However, there is no explicit definition of if these goals "equal or exceed State targets" however, it is mentioned that the goals were created using the State's metrics, thus it can be inferred that the District will be meeting the State targets.</p> <p>Most of the goals presented in this section represent a 50-100% increase from the baseline statistics. However, some, like the proficiency rate of ELL in ELA are over 600%, proficiency rate in SWD for Math would be an increase of over 800%, while the increase of proficiency of ELL and SWD in Science and Technology would be the equivalent of over a 1000% increase.</p> <p>Because of the lack of explicit reference to the State ESEA targets and the few overly ambitious goals, this section is scored in the low range of high.</p> <p>8</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

The District clearly articulates its evidence of success in improving student learning and specifically its ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in persistently low-achieving schools. Additionally, the District does a high quality job in making student performance data available to multiple stakeholders. The District employs the use of a website that is accessible to families so that they can view, grades, attendance, and assignment information. Additionally, teachers and other educators have access to diagnostic assessment data for students in K-8. However, the District does not articulate a way for students to have access to their information either on-line or in person, nor do teachers of 9-12 grade students seem to have access to high quality diagnostic assessment unless those teachers create it themselves. The District should be commended for making all the information accessible in English and Spanish as well as offering family support at its "Family Resource Center."

As evidence of the District's clear record of success: over the last two years, the District has almost tripled the number of schools with ELA and Math state test scores over 50, it has doubled the number of top rates schools in the state. Proficiency across all tested grades "increased by 10 points" in math achievement and increased its Composite Performance Index (a gap closure metric) by 7 points and its student growth percentile increased by 17 points. By multiple metrics the district has increased student learning. The District's graduation rate has also increased, by almost 12% from 2010 to 2012. However, the college enrollment rate has remained relatively static. Since the District's reforms started in earnest only 18 months ago, it is not surprising that college enrollment, a longitudinal indicator, would not reflect the positive work of the District.

Because of the District's tremendous track record of success, especially for its lowest performing students and schools, this section is rated highly, with points being taken off only because of the lack of improvement for college enrollment and of the lack of articulation of student access to data as well as 9-12 grade teachers not having diagnostic assessment tools readily available.

13

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

The District does a quality job in creating a high level of transparency by making public actual school-level expenditures, as per their articulation. The District provides a yearly budget which includes the "cost of staff, operations, and fixed costs on a school by school basis," on the its website. The District explicitly addresses all aspects of the required data points in the question, except for subsection (d). Additionally, the District supplies other budget information which is open and accessible to all members of the school community.

Because the websites mentioned are run by government agencies and the District had to sign a form stipulating all information in the proposal is true to the best of their knowledge, it is exceedingly likely that all of the aforementioned information is in fact available as stated. However, the actually answers to the question are not presented.

The lack of a clear answer to providing actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level should be noted. However, the District does state that "additional detail is available to the public upon request." Taking this into account, the District receives a middle rating for this section.

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

Since the District was placed in receivership, the District has been afforded a flexibility and autonomy rarely seen on the district-level. Additionally, the District has elucidated how this autonomy and flexibility will lead directly toward the District's ability to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal.

Under receivership, all operational powers of the Superintendent and School Committee are in the hands of the Superintendent/Receiver. Further, since the District is designated as a "chronically underperforming" district, the State Commissioner and Superintendent have "broad ranging autonomies" by state law.

The Superintendent fully supports the program and has already shown his willingness to move the District toward the proposal's goals.

Thus, the State context for implementation is extremely strong for the District.

10

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	13
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District spent considerable time and effort to meet with and engaged multiple stakeholders in meaningful discussion while developing the proposal, as well as receiving strong support for the final proposal.</p> <p>Some examples of this engagement are as follows: The District met with a student group, representing all of the District's "themed high schools." These students gave pointed feedback, which was integrated within the proposal. "Based on student feedback, several adjustments were made to the proposal." Parents were engaged through a meeting with one of the parent leadership groups, the President's Council. These parents were taken through a PowerPoint presentation and then engaged in a dialogue with an Assistant Superintendent. Parent concerns surrounding equability of resources were raised and the proposal was changed in order to listen to these concerns. At the end of the meeting, all in attendance signed a letter of support.</p> <p>The District provided all "participating educators" with "several key documents related to the RTTT district application." Additionally, all "participating educators" received an online survey to "gauge interest in the proposal, prioritize application initiatives and activities, and include educator feedback in the process." Almost 40% of all educators responded and of those that did, 93% provided additional comments. Some of these comments were included in the proposal and many of the educator ideas and concerns were taken into account when making adjustments and revisions to the application.</p> <p>The District also reached out to over 25 "key community stakeholders and partners" during the process and engaged these organizations in meaningful and open dialogue about the proposal.</p> <p>The District has received numerous letters of support from a wide range of organizations, including but not limited to the State Commissioner of Education, the Mayor, the American Federation of Teachers, the local YMCA, the local community college, the state office of Teach for America, and many local non-profit organizations. The District has shown that there was strong engagement, meaningful discussion, and strong support from stakeholders throughout the District and beyond. However, the lack of deep engagement from a wide and representative parent body reduces the overall score in this section. Meeting with only one parent organization, and not the PA or PTAs of even one school, presenting a long PowerPoint presentation, and then having all attendees sign a letter of support, does not indicate true engagement and meaningful discussion.</p> <p>13</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District has created an ambitious and thoughtful approach to teaching and learning which respects the individual learner as a unique and multifaceted student. The District has devoted its educational restructuring to "personalize the learning environment in order to support students' progression along individualized college and career plans." With its implementation of the PAL program there will be a "process for planning personalized instruction based on students' needs and interests, differentiating instruction to each student, assessing learning against CCSS standards, analyzing assessment data to identify individual needs, and reteaching to meet individual needs." The District consistently and thoughtfully articulates a vision of high quality approaches to learning that will lead toward success.</p> <p>For instance, the District's six Key Objectives are robust and cogent, based on and aligned to RTTD criteria. The District's explanation of multiple instructional approaches -- blended learning, digital learning, direct instruction, experimental learning, independent study, intensive tutoring, project-based learning, and peer or adult mentorship, is forward thinking and based on the most current educational pedagogy for promoting individualized learning. The District allows for the student to receive instruction and be supported in a variety of environments, from technology labs, to acceleration academies, to home, to classrooms, to second schools spots in community locations. The District's respectfulness of the needs of individual learners is clear, especially high-needs students.</p> <p>Not only will the District expand the school day and extend the school year, but it will add multiple opportunities for each learner to receive instruction and activities. Specific thought as been given for ELL and SWD by creating blended learning options accessible in Spanish language content as well as blended learning options that afford SWD multiple formats and additional resources. Additionally, the PAL program grants access to teachers, students, and families to learning and information portals which include such things as Khan Academy and Sontag video lectures, assessment results on an</p>		

item-by-item basis, online textbooks, grades and transcripts, and educator evaluation data.

As mentioned above the District stipulates clear goals and activities to be undertaken. The reasoning behind these goals as well as the timeline are also there. However, the exact parties responsible and the specific deliverables the District will produce are more vague and should be explored more in depth.

The District's response to this section of the proposal is strong and fully answers the question, except as stipulated above.

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

20

19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District's response to Section C(2) is of a very high-level, addressing all aspects of the question fully and clearly. District articulates a cutting-edge and fully formed plan to create a district where teaching and leading is at the forefront of the discussion of improving student learning. The District's plan includes building teacher capacity through professional learning and professional learning communities. Not only is this aligned with the key objectives described in the overall plan, but the District has a multi-faceted approach to building capacity: creating professional learning communities, holding district-level training, job-embedded coaching, using frequent measures of student progress to inform instruction, and a well throughout educator feedback system incorporating self-assessment, goal setting, plan implementation, formative assessment and summative evaluation.

The District also has created a robust system to support teachers with information, tools, data, and resources in order to "accelerate student progress along their individualized learning plans" The tools available to educators include individualized learning plan they "will develop" for each student. Interim assessment data is available through a myriad of sources. Additional tools, such as online textbooks, video lessons, as well as Personalized Learning Specialists will afford the educators support and resources to better serve the students. Other tools, data, and resources such as a menu of formative assessments, options for blended learning platforms, videos of effective lessons, and "Google doc of teacher-identified resources" are available and accessible as well.

The District articulates a theory of action for empowering school administrators and teachers to have the autonomy to deliver the best education for each student, while being held accountable to student progress. This process includes using frequent teacher effectiveness data to support principals.

The District also articulates a plan dependent on "increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals." The District's multi-step process includes plans to 1) Attract and retain the most effective teachers and leaders, 2) use the evaluation system to exit ineffective educators, 3) develop the capacity of high potential educators and 4) use strategic staffing strategies and "teach-leader" opportunities to maximize the most effective educators in the system.

The District thoroughly and clearly articulates a high-quality plan in this section. The only area the District's plan does not address completely and full the question is a lack of moving specific highly effective teachers to the hard to staff schools or most at-risk students. Though the District will increase the reach of the most effective teachers by maximizing their time with students, it does not highlight the move of these teachers to hard to staff schools.

19

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District fully and clearly articulates a plan in which practices, policies, and rules facilitate personalized learning. Because of the receivership model the District is under, the central office is organized to "improve supports provided to increasingly autonomous schools" and to "free up greatly needed resources, and reallocate them to schools." The central office was redesigned to be smaller and to reduce its budget, sending the freed up monies directly to the schools. However, the District did create a new department, the Redesign Office, to help support the efforts described in this proposal.

Additionally, the District's plan incorporates the other aspects of the section as well. The District has provided school leadership with flexibility and autonomy, by increasing the school schedule, schools having their own bell schedule, modify calendars, and principals having personnel decisions among other concepts. The District has also created a nascent program for awarding credit based on mastery and not seat time. Though this program is limited in scope, the District plans on increasing its reach. The District also employs online credit recovery programs in all of its high schools, which has shown positive results, specifically within the District's alternative high school. The District has also restructured its pedagogical construct by allowing for students to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple ways. However, the District's articulation of these multiple times and ways is not fully fleshed out, only described in cursory language and examples.

The District does create a high-quality plan for providing learning resources and instructional practices to all students specifically ELL and SWD. For instance, IEPs and personalized learning plans will be aligned and accessible on mobile devices so IEP team members can constantly support the needs of the students. The IEPs will also be available via the "Teacher Portal" so all staff can help support the needs of the District's SWD. ELL students will benefit from having all of the District's ELL teachers trained on differentiating instruction to meet the specific and individual needs of ELL students. Additionally, the District will increase the number of teachers who have demonstrated the ability to foster Sheltered English Immersion environments. Students will also have access to educational technology, both in school and through a series of out-of-school partnerships.

The District fully articulates a high-quality answer to this section, hitting all subsections clearly and cogently, except for the lack of full explanation for subsection d and not fully rolling out a system for awarding credit based on mastery outside of the high schools.

12

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

The District does a quality job in creating policies that promotes access to content, tools and learning resources in and out of schools. Additionally, the District has created the infrastructure of the actual resources as well. The creation of a "Student Portal" and "Family Portal" allows for access through any web device. Classrooms in the district will have wireless internet, mobile technology labs, and a system for students and families to check out digital devices. The District will provide technical support through its "technology support team" as well as the creation of four technology facilitators and ten personalized learning specialists. These employees will build the capacity of the central office so that the support can continue after the grant ends. The District will also create a "help desk" to support the needs of the District. Not only does the District provide access to data to families through the Family Portal, but families also receive individual student progress reports six times a year in K-8 and eight times per year in 9-12. The District will also provide students with training as to how to use the data systems. For parents the District will provide on-line training and expand the portal to be available in Spanish. The District has started to address the interoperability of its systems. It has initiated interoperability between the "primary data systems currently in operation including PowerSchool, HealthMaster, ELLevations, EasyIEP, and LunchBox." The District admits this is a work in progress but expresses an understanding and a desire to completely integrate all the data systems.

The District's answer to this section is of a good quality, because it is clear, has goals, and activities to be undertaken. However, since the work on interoperability is in progress, rather than fully fleshed out this cannot be seen as a perfect, high-quality plan. The District does not stipulate how the District will create full interoperability.

8

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The District articulates a robust continuous improvement process including multiple ways for timely and regular feedback to

be given and then lead toward corrections and improvements during and after the grant is over. With the District's adherence to their "Plan, Do, Reflect, Share" model, it is well situated to take in feedback and then incorporate it moving forward. In their proposal the District explains how it will leverage processes in place by setting baseline data, articulating annual targets, have ongoing monitoring, then holding external reviews using rubrics aligned to "Essential Conditions for School Effectiveness." All of this work will then be shared throughout the District to get feedback. This feedback in turn will be used to adjust and grow the program.

Additionally, the District will expand this process by developing "dashboards to measure, monitor, and communicate progress against the PAL implementation plan." And lastly, the District will try to "ensure progress at the classroom level" through multiple methods. School Data Teams (SDT) will regularly meet to analyze student formative and summative assessment data. District staff will meet with the SDTs to discuss the data and plan for improvements.

Again, the District has elements of a high-quality plan, including who will be responsible (District Staff, SDTs, etc.) and the goals and activities to be undertaken. But the plan does not have a clarity of a timeline and how this will lead toward specific deliverables. There is a conversation about "improvements," but what those are and how that will lead to deliverables is vague. In addition, how all the classroom teachers in the District schools will receive the information and be supported in implementation is not clear.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District articulates a plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders through a well thought out engagement plan for continuous improvement. This plan includes district leaders, school leaders, community members, teachers, students and families. However, how these stakeholders will work together to create deliverables and timelines and party responsibilities is not fleshed out. Thus, the answer has elements of a high-quality plan, but does not bring them together in a holistic manner.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The District has created 20 ambitious and worthy performance measures which align with the overall plan to create high-quality education for all students of the District. These measures have strong rationales for selection, with the District explaining its ability to provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information for each measure as well as a plan to review and improve the measure if necessary.

The measures run the gamut of increasing State test scores, to reducing suspensions, increasing the number of effective and highly effective educators, to increasing SAT scores, to reducing the number of students failing classes. These measures are wide, strong, and reflect multiple ways in which to measure effective schools. These measures speak to behavior, academics, and effective teaching, all important pieces of the proposal's success.

This is a high-quality response to the section.

5

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The District has a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the investment. The District will assess its six key objectives along three dimensions: "1) fidelity of implementation versus plan, 2) effectiveness and 3) academic return on investment." This will be done through an annual evaluation conducted at the start of each school year. Both quantitative (test data, attendance, credit accumulations, etc.) and qualitative data (survey results, professional development feedback, etc.) will be collected and analyzed to measure the effectiveness of the plan. Additionally, the District has a high-quality detailed PAL implementation plan which speaks to many of the ways in which the District will evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

5

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District has created and formulated a high-quality budget identifying all funds that will support the project, along with being reasonable and sufficient to support the program and provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. It is a fully formed budget supported with high-quality reasoning for its spending. The budget includes support for the District's six articulated projects, plus PAL project management, ranging from the creation of individualized learning plans, to created blended learning opportunities, to building teacher capacity, to social and emotional supports for students.</p> <p>The investments in the budget are focused on establishing "a solid infrastructure for the implementation" of the grant projects. The budget includes "building the systems, capacity, process, and technology platforms necessary for sustainability." Additionally, the District is supporting this project with over \$9 million of its own money, showing a true commitment to support the proposal. It should also be noted that very little money is spent in travel or supplies and none in indirect costs. The bulk of the monies are focused on the people and the equipment that will make the proposal work. This should be commended.</p> <p>The District also clearly articulates which monies are to be one time or ongoing within the budget narrative.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District presents a compelling and well thought out articulation of how it will sustain the work from the project. Throughout the life of the grant, the District plans on building capacity so that the skills and programs created during the grant will continue. Additionally, the presented "sustainability plan" (a budget for three years after the grant has ended) has the support of state and local officials, including the Mayor. Within the extended budget, ie, the budget for years after the grant, the District explains how it will have money to sustain the program. For instance the "central office was restructured to eliminate ineffective functions in order to invest \$2 million in school budgets." The District also uses an A-RIO approach to "assess the effectiveness of PAL initiatives during and after the life of the grant, in order to determine what is working, what is not working, and whether the returns have been worth the costs." Additionally, the District "will in parallel be assessing the A-ROI of other district investments and initiatives in order to understand the various options for future investments and to understand the tradeoffs and implications of those options."</p> <p>Lastly, this project has the support of many community leaders who have voiced their willingness to protect and keep the program's ideals long after the initial federal monies are gone.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The District has a high-quality plan to integrate public and private resources in order to serve the individual needs of the students of the District. In fact, the District states that it will "expand out school-based partnerships so that every school has a community agency partner that can provide social emotional and mental health supports to students and families, above and beyond those that are already provided within the school." The District has presented supporting letters from a myriad of partners that seem to want to support this program fully. The District has convened its "Agency Partnership Advisory Network (APAN)" since 2000 and has grown it to include over 60 agencies to date.</p> <p>The District has articulated specific desired results in six population groups. The results are strong and broad, incorporating ideals such as increasing parent engagement in school, agency partnerships established at all schools, reducing wait time for services, and increasing the attendance rate of students with social-emotional/behavioral/health needs.</p> <p>The partnerships will track the data articulated through the creation of the dashboard discussed earlier in this analysis. Additionally, the "Dashboard Team" will help support the partners and the District in tracking and adjusting the data. This data will in turn be used to target resources effectively and efficiently for the students in the District.</p> <p>The District will also create a Family Outreach Program to "provide schools with a structured case management service for coordinating education and services for high need students and families." This program will work with the partners to help</p>		

support the students and families.

The capacity of the District's staff will be improved through a continuous program of assessing the needs and assets of students, identifying needs and assets of the school and community, adjusting decision making with data, engaging parents and families, and assessing the overall progress of the program according to the stated goals.

The annual performance measures proposed by the District are ambitious yet achievable.

The District's response to this section is high-quality.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The District has created a high-quality program that helps to support and foster personalized learning environments. From a restructuring of the time students spend at school to how they spend that time, the District has built an ambitious program to individualize education, aligned with college and career ready standards, all while support the specific needs of students.

Holistically, the District has created a wide-ranging system of supports and accountability to assure the reforms proposed lead toward student success.

The District will implement a "Personalized Accelerated Learning" Program for all students which continues the "aggressive" Turnaround Plan already in place, which has already led to increased student achievement within 18 months of adoption. The "Acceleration Academies," a part of the Turnaround Plan models which lead to the aforementioned success will double the number of seats for the district.

The District, after being highlighted as poor performing, was put in receivership. With this designation came increased flexibility and autonomy for the administrator of the District and has lead toward systems designed to accelerate student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity:

The District will "extend time, strategic use of data" and "high expectations for academic achievement." The District will focus time and effort into "recruitment, retention, and cultivation" of staff and partnerships. The District will also expend resources and support to "engage" students "beyond academics." The fourth strategy articulated, as part of the Turnaround Plan, is to increase "autonomy and accountability for school to promote student success."

Specifically of note is the articulation of the classroom experience, which shows a deep understanding of student need. According to the application, within the personalized learning environments "fostered for teachers and students" Students will "take ownership" of their learning, "be engaged" in excited and interesting lessons "relevant to their lives," "spend time with their teachers one-on-one," use a "variety of engaging tools and content," and "focus learning time on the standards and skills most relevant for them," among others.

The Personalized Accelerated Learning Program's instructional cycle shows a fully explained and designed system to meet the needs of students.

The District has created an ambitious and thoughtful approach to teaching and learning which respects the individual learner as a unique and multifaceted student. The District has devoted its educational restructuring to "personalize the learning environment in order to support students' progression along individualized college and career plans." With its implementation of the PAL program there will be a "process for planning personalized instruction based on students' needs and interests, differentiating instruction to each student, assessing learning against CCSS standards, analyzing assessment data to identify individual needs, and reteaching to meet individual needs." The District consistently and thoughtfully articulates a vision of high quality approaches to learning that will lead toward success.

For instance, the District's six Key Objectives are robust and cogent, based on and aligned to RTTD criteria. The District's explanation of multiple instructional approaches -- blended learning, digital learning, direct instruction, experimental learning, independent study, intensive tutoring, project-based learning, and peer or adult mentorship, is forward thinking and based on the most current educational pedagogy for promoting individualized learning. The District allows for the student to receive instruction and be supported in a variety of environments, from technology labs, to acceleration academies, to home, to classrooms, to second schools spots in community locations. The District's respectfulness of the needs of individual learners is clear, especially high-needs students.

Not only will the District, expand the school day and extend the school year, but it will add multiple opportunities for each learner to receive instruction and activities. Specific thought as been expelled for ELL and SWD by creating blended learning options accessible in Spanish language content as well as blended learning options that afford SWD multiple formats and additional resources. Additionally, the PAL program grants access to teachers, students, and families to learning and information portals which include such things as Khan Academy and Sontag video lectures, assessment results on an item-by-item basis, online textbooks, grades and transcripts, and educator evaluation data.

The District also has created a robust system to support teachers with information, tools, data, and resources in order to "accelerate student progress along their individualized learning plans" The tools available to educators include individualized learning plans they "will develop" for each student. Interim assessment data are available through a myriad of sources. Additional tools, such as online textbooks, video lessons, as well as Personalized Learning Specialists will afford the educators support and resources to better serve the students. Other tools, data, and resources such as a menu of formative assessments, options for blended learning platforms, videos of effective lessons, and "Google doc of teacher-identified resources" are available and accessible as well.

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The District also articulates a plan dependent on "increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals." The District's multi-step process includes plans to 1) Attract and retain the most effective teachers and leaders, 2) use the evaluation system to exit ineffective educators, 3) develop the capacity of high potential educators and 4) use strategic staffing strategies and "teach-leader" opportunities to maximize the most effective educators in the system.

The District has met Absolute Priority 1

Total	210	190
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