



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0012KY-1 for Montgomery County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant articulates its commitment to serve as an exemplary public school district by creating and sustaining a top notch, comprehensive, educational program. The applicant discusses the implementation of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program that has been in effect in the school district since 2011. However, the applicant provides insufficient details related to the model and how it is aligned to the four core educational assurances.</p> <p>The applicant also describes collaborative efforts that began in 2011-2012 to develop new curriculum and common assessments that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards to ensure that all students are college and career ready, but the applicant does not provide a detailed plan of action to build on the work that has already been done.</p> <p>The applicant currently uses a wide variety of systemic data systems to improve instruction and states it only uses data to make broad instructional decisions, but provides no evidence as to how it will improve the use of its current data systems to measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction.</p> <p>The applicant details the student-centric system that it will implement to enable teachers to personalize and deepen the learning for every student through a blended learning approach. Students will be involved in both on-line deliveries of content and instruction as well as regular classroom instruction. The applicant portrays the future classroom environment as more flexible and unrestricted by time, but the narrative lacks specific details as to what the teachers and students will do each day in the participating schools to turn around the lowest achieving schools.</p> <p>The applicant will implement a new teacher evaluation system that will be used to tailor the individual development needs of the teacher, but there is insufficient evidence how this system will be used to recruit, retain, and reward effective teachers and principals.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant convincingly articulates the need for strong foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem solving at the elementary school level. All three of its elementary schools will participate in the reform initiative.</p> <p>The applicant provides adequate details in the narrative that 59% of its students are from low income families and they meet the eligibility requirement IIc as defined in the notice. The applicant provides a Chart (A2) of the schools that will participate in the grant. The chart also provides the total number of students (4,893) which exceeds the minimum of 2, 000 participating students requirement as well as the total number of high need students.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides limited information related to the current teacher and principal evaluation system and how it will be revamped to include a student growth component at both the classroom and school level to reach its outcome goals to improve student learning for all students.</p> <p>While the applicant provides sparse details related to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program model which has led to continual increases in levels of student achievement, the applicant does not specifically address how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district change beyond the participating schools.</p>		

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan that includes key goals, activities to be undertaken, the rationale, timelines, deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

The applicant provides insufficient information related to its specific outcome goals and the narrative lacks specificity as related to inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides detailed charts by content area, subgroups, graduation rates, and by college enrollments delineating the performance targets, graduate rates and college enrollment goals to be achieved over time. However, it is unclear who in the district will be responsible for monitoring the performance targets as this was not articulated in the narrative.

The applicant has set incremental, achievable, and measureable growth goals for improved outcomes and adequately describes how the new Kentucky State Assessment system assesses the Common Core State Standards and includes measures such as Explore, Plan, ASVAB, ACT, COMPASS, and KOSSA to gauge readiness for college or career readiness.

The applicant provides targets and annual goals for decreasing achievement gaps in reading, language arts, and mathematics for all subgroups which will assist in improving student learning and performance.

The applicant also presents evidence that the new assessment system includes new methodology for measuring the success of students in the gap populations.

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	7

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant cites achievable gains for its sophomores. From 2008-2013, composite scores rose from an average of 16.0 to 17.2 percent. The applicant further cites achievable gains in the areas of English, Math, Reading, and Science citing student improved performance. The applicant asserts that in 2012 Science increased by .7 percent boosting student performance to 18.3 percent after dropping in 2011 to 17.6 percent. These scores clearly demonstrate a clear record of success as evidence by the incremental gains achieved each year.

The applicant also states its ACT data represents an increase in student achievement and that each year it has made gains in its ACT math scores. The applicant cites for the past four years the average ACT scores in math has increased by .4 percent and similar increases were noted in Reading ACT scores, which have risen from 18.3 in 2008 to 18.9 in 2012.

The applicant reported data to reflect a 79.1% graduation rate, which was an 8.7% increase from 2010's 70.4% rate. And, the applicant's graduates in both 2011 and 2012 school years exceeded the state graduation rates.

The applicant further articulates its record of success reporting that at the end of the 2011-2012 school year 60% of its school graduates had enrolled in a four-year university and an additional 8% reported being enrolled in a two-year program. However, the applicant does not provide sufficient documentation such as charts, graphs or raw student data as evidence to support the gains articulated in the narrative. The applicant does not provide the data in any other form to support what is written in the narrative.

The applicant describes the efforts of one of its lowest performing schools and how it was turned around using research-based instructional practices, using data to track student learning, and using teachers planning lessons and assessments together to provide students with challenging activities.

The applicant does not address how it makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways to inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

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

The applicant assures that it has in place a variety of policies and procedures to be transparent. Specifically, the applicant states all stakeholders can access the district’s website to review the Salary Schedule of instructional and non-instructional, salaried instructional and non-instructional personnel, certified and classified substitutes. The applicant did not provide evidence that actual personnel salaries are provided by each school. Additional salary information can be found by accessing the Kentucky Department of Education Open House data portal. However, the applicant does not provide access to the stakeholders beyond the website such as information being shared at the Board of Education meetings and/or other public forums to ensure transparency.

The applicant does not provide specific information related to how changes in salaries are shared with stakeholders.

The applicant describes the process by which each school is governed by a School-based Decision Making Council which has complete autonomy in making decisions regarding the school budget, including staffing, federal grant dollars, state grant dollars, and per student appropriations.

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

10

5

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant assures that through its School-Based Decision Making Councils (SBDM) they have sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments. And, the state law requires individual schools to adopt and elect a SBDM Council, along with establishing the powers and duties of said Council.

The applicant provides insufficient documentation to support the autonomy given to the School-Based Decision Making Council. It is unclear as to what the role, responsibilities, and authority that the SBDM has at the school level because this information was not provided in the narrative.

The applicant also states the SBDM has issued their endorsement of the grant, however, it does not provide the evidence to support this claim.

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

15

13

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant adequately describes stakeholder involvement in the development of the proposal which included the Superintendent, Director of School Improvement, District Assessment Coordinator, District Instructional Supervisor, school principals, district and school level curriculum specialists, teachers, representatives from the local education association, a district school psychologist, a technology specialist, an information specialist, and parents.

The applicant discusses how the superintendent met with the Student Advisory Council to gain insight into changes that could be made at the classroom level to improve and enhance the quality of instruction. Additional interviews and conversations were conducted with stakeholders once the final product was complete to provide further contributions and critiques.

The applicant provides a detailed description of how the stakeholders were involved in key components of the proposal. Members of the Montgomery County Education County Association met with the faculty and staff members at each of the district six schools during a school-wide faculty meeting. Over seventy percent of the teachers supported the proposal.

Letters of support were included from teachers of the participating schools, a letter from a member of Congress, a county judge executive, the school board chair, a college dean of education, the President of Montgomery County Public School Student Council, and letters from four high school seniors. The applicant has clearly involved a cross section of stakeholders in the development of the proposal.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has outlined a plan that spans all grade levels and has several key components. The top priority for all students in the district will be on personalization of the learning environments, implementation of the Common Core State Standards, implementation of standards-based grading, implementation of STEM education, expansion of preschool programs, increasing teacher and principal effectiveness, and expansion of world language instruction.

The applicant also describes its strategic plan and key components delineating what students will do at the certain stages to include the Preschool Stage (developmental), Discovery Stage (Grades K-4), Exploratory Stage (Grades 5-8) and Exploratory Stage (Grades 9-12).

Students in the developmental, discovery, and exploratory stages will be engaged in the rotation model of blending learning which allows them to rotate through on-line and offline-learning stations in a given subject based on individual needs.

All of the grade level key components appear to address the needs of all learners and increase in complexity as students' progress through middle and high school to ensure they are college and career ready. The various stages and targeted activities ensure students have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that deepen individual student learning.

The applicant ensures that its entire infrastructure will embody the idea of personalized learning for each student. Each school in the district will implement a blended learning approach to standards mastery. The applicant assures technology will be available for all students and learning spaces will be organized to promote whole group, small group, and individualized learning. To ensure personalized learning, a computerized algorithm based on the student's learning style, personal preferences, daily performance, and instructional activities will determine each student's daily learning sequence.

Each student will have a Personalized Learning Plan created by students, parents, teachers, and performance advocates to ensure they are receiving a personalized education. Students will monitor and track their performance with the assistance and support of the Performance Advocates.

To ensure all students are on track to meet college and career readiness and graduation requirements, the applicant describes how each student will have access to high quality instructional strategies. Students will be placed based on data and standards. The blended learning environment will include accommodations, interventions modifications, and acceleration for all students and provided to those who demonstrate need. The Accelerated Academy will allow students to focus on STEM subjects and build their educational knowledge through enrichment activities, research, scientific experiments, and problem solving. Students scoring in the 94th percentile on a norm-reference assessment have the option to apply.

While the applicant ensures there are mechanisms in place to ensure students are successful in tracking and managing their learning in a personalized environment, it does not address how training will be provided to students in the utilization of the tools and resources. Instead, the focus of training is on teachers and the Performance Advocates to help students design, implement, manage, and assess personalized learning plans.

While the applicant includes activities and strategies to personalize the learning environment to improve teaching and learning, the plan lacks key goals, the rationale, the alignment of activities to the goals, timelines, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the plan.

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

20

12

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant documents evidence of its plan to implement an approach to teaching and leading and assures all educators will participate in both common and individualized professional learning through a variety of formats. All educators will participate in book studies, engage in professional learning communities to deconstruct the Common Core State Standards into teaching targets, create daily formative assessments, and create common unit assessments.

Schools implementing the blended learning model will be afforded release time a half day once each month to analyze data to strengthen instructional practices. The applicant further details how instructional coaches and technology instructional coaches will model lesson strategies in common group and small group settings in order to support the implementation of the personalized learning environment. Teachers will also engage in two days of training during the summer to prepare for new initiatives which will be revisited at monthly and after school meetings. The applicant provides a list of the topics to be covered.

The applicant details how educators will adapt content and skills to meet the needs of students to ensure optimal learning. The applicant will create a bank of resources, assessments, and strategy suggestions for teaching each target. The bank of resources will be used to create computerized algorithms.

The applicant provides an appropriate plan to determine if students are making progress towards mastery of college and career standards and is putting steps in place for immediate intervention or enrichment based on weekly and/or daily results. Common grade level/content unit assessments are also being designed and administered which allows teachers and students to analyze progress toward meeting expected learning outcomes.

In order to improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness the applicant documents it will implement with fidelity its states' new teacher and principal evaluation system which consists of quantifiable indicators to guide teaching and learning. The system is supported through components in which teachers can devise an individualized growth plan with specific focus on identified weaknesses and allows the teachers and principals to work collaboratively to improve performance through frequent feedback.

The applicant presents information on how it will gather various data points for each student that will be used to create Personalized

Learning Plans. Data points will include standards-based assessment results, learning style inventories, interest inventories, and information from Career Cruising’s ILP. These data points will be used to create optional learning approaches for each student.

The applicant adequately describes a list of the resources the teachers will need to personalize the learning environment for all students. The applicant will provide a bank of resources such as various software programs for each content area, manipulatives, early literary and numeracy resources, digital texts, STEM resources, and digital applications.

The applicant will utilize tools such as computerized algorithms to help make instructional decisions as the algorithms are developed. Computers and iPods will be readily available for students to access online learning programs as well as various software programs and digital applications. To ensure students are provided with continuous feedback the applicant assures the Performance Advocates will meet frequently with students to create time logs that include descriptions and reflections of each day’s intended learning.

The applicant assures leadership training support structures are in place to support an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs. School level leadership teams come together monthly to engage in a professional learning forum with students and the information is shared with the staff of their respective schools. The district level team meets monthly to engage in school learning walk throughs as part of the district’s improvement plan.

The applicant details its plan to recruit and retain highly effective teachers and principals and assures that it conducts recruiting fairs, attends university recruiting fairs, markets the benefits of teaching in the district, creates partnerships with college and universities, empowers teachers, and implements leadership programs. The applicant documents partnerships with one local college and one university to provide personalized instructional assistance in subjects where improvement is needed.

The applicant does not identify a plan of action for recruiting STEM education teachers.

While the applicant details activities and strategies to improve the teaching and learning environment, the plan lacks goals that are aligned to the activities, timelines, deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing and monitoring the activities. While the applicant has done a good job in detailing a lot of activities, it does not identify the key goals and how the activities are aligned to the project goals, nor does the applicant provide a timeline for the deliverables. There is also no mention as to the parties responsible for ensuring that all of the activities are carried out in a timely manner.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant articulates how the central office staff and employees are guided by six validated drivers of performance excellence, but does not specify how the beliefs are translated into policies that support every student, educator and level of the education system.

To support teachers in the classroom and to reduce the teacher student ratio, the applicant underwent a reduction in the number of district administrators.

The applicant provides limited information regarding the development of an evidenced based evaluation process to determine and improve the effectiveness of the leadership system which includes the school board, superintendent, and other key leaders. Providing indicators of measures of leadership effectiveness and the impact it has on infrastructure support would have strengthen the proposal.

The applicant describes the School-Based Decision Making Council (SBDM) as having autonomy and flexibility to make instructional, staffing, and operational decisions and assures that all stakeholders are invested in a student centered program, have input, and are treated as equal partners, however, the applicant does not provide written documentation to support the roles and responsibilities of the SBDM as well as a flow chart to show the governance structure.

The applicant articulates that students will be able to demonstrate mastery based on their individual needs using different modalities, timeframes, and assessment instruments. Students in grades eighth to twelve participate in the Individual Learning Program by taking interest inventories, career aptitude assessments and develop a course of study based on required course electives. Data from the plans are used to personalize curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The applicant details its plan to develop and implement a competency based assessment plan, providing students the option of earning credits in specific classes in order to increase their college and career readiness by enrolling in core-electives, vocational classes, or job shadowing schedules to further their goals. The applicant also has partnered with a local university to provide dual credit courses. Students currently participate in one of six classes offered and may earn college credit while completing diploma requirements.

To ensure learning resources and instructional practices are fully accessible and adaptable to all students, the applicant proposes through grant funds to utilize live web-based learning for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Videotaped lectures and notes

and supplemental resources will also be provided to students and technological devices will be loaned. The applicant also has made provisions for use of additional assistive technology devices such as keyboard filters, reading tools, text-to-speech synthesizers, and screen readers to personalize the learning environment.

The applicant does not address how students in grade PreK-7 will demonstrate mastery.

The proposal is lacking a high quality plan in that the applicant does not align the key goals to the activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities. The plan does not include timelines, deliverables, and the responsible parties.

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

To ensure all students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have access to content tools and other learning resources both in and out of school, the applicant describes its plans to partner with the community to develop and sustain Wi-Fi hot spots in local churches and community centers across the district to provide greater accessibility to informational knowledge and equity for all students and parents.

The district also plans to create a process for lending of laptops and iPods as needed. Technology support will be made available in web accessible formats, videos and processes, as well as hard copy pamphlets.

The applicant will increase the number of flipped classrooms and the training and implementation of e-platform learning management systems to provide students and parents with real time availability to curriculum and instructional resources.

The applicant describes its plan for reviewing and revising all processes used for administration and functioning in the district. The district's website will increase the number of images, charts, and videos, in addition to text so that all stakeholders will have more equitable access.

The applicant assures that data is made accessible to students, parents, partners, and all stakeholders in both electronic and hard copy. However, the applicant does not articulate how its technology systems will allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format.

The applicant does not ensure the use of interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instruction improvement data systems.

Overall, the applicant appropriately address the criterion to support the implementation on the project through its policies for reviewing and revising all processes in the district as well as providing the infrastructure needed to ensure students and teachers have the resources needed to successfully implement the personalized learning environment.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents information related to how each school will implement a continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback. In doing so, the applicant states each school will analyze formal and informal data on a weekly basis through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to make school and classroom level adjustments. The PLC team will consist of district administrators, teachers, principals, School-Based Decision Making Council members, parents, students, and community members who will be charged with monitoring and analyzing data for increases in student achievement as well as for growth. The information will be shared with the superintendent, principals, and SBDC council members to recommend celebrations and needs for improvement. Findings will also be shared publicly each month during Board of Education meetings, released to local media, and placed on the districts website.

The applicant ensures district wide issues will be addressed through existing monthly leadership development meetings focused on continuous professional growth of leaders, but offers limited information on how it will measure the impact of professional development on student achievement. The applicant will pursue the support of local colleges if issues cannot be improved through the district's own expertise; however, the role of the college is unclear.

Instructional Rounds will be conducted in each participating school and information gathered will be collected for discussion and recommended next steps.

The applicant will utilize implementation and impact tools to monitor not only full implementation of the grant, but the impact it is

having on student achievement. Each strategy being implemented will be measured through identified data and monitored at the school and district level.

The applicant describes how all professional development will be measured by an evaluation survey. The survey will gauge the quality of the content, materials, presentation facilitator, rigor, and relevance. The applicant also justifies measuring professional development through assessment data. Assessment data will be analyzed to ensure the professional development had an impact on the student's primary understanding and mastery of the Common Core Standards. Professional development provided to instruct teachers on the use of iPADS in the classroom will be measured based on actual iPad use, as well as student surveys given to assess the benefit of learning with such tool.

The activities and strategies outlined by the applicant demonstrates a plan for continuous improvement that provides timely and regular feedback, however, the proposal is missing goals, timelines, and the rationale for the activities, the deliverables, and the parties responsible. These components are essential to ensure that the continuous improvement plan is monitored to ensure full implementation and impact.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents information related to its plan for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders through the district website, weekly parent and employee electronic newsletters, Facebook page, telephone notification system, regular radio broadcasts weekly educational newspaper articles, parent and community survey; weekly classroom walk-throughs and feedback.

While the plan presented is specific and provides for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders, it is missing goals, timelines, and the rationale for the activities, the deliverables, and the parties responsible.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has documented detailed performance measures by grade levels that will provide valuable information for it educators to personalize the students learning environment. All incoming preschool students are universally screened using the Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning which is the basis for Response to Intervention.

The applicant also makes a convincing argument for its accountability system to ensure all students are college and career ready and provides a chart detailing the implementation phases for each category of learners.

The applicant will measure student individual growth through mastery of reading and math Common Core Standards consisting of multiple choice questions and constructed responses, short answers, and extended response questions. These measure are appropriate and valid in determining if the students have mastered the content.

Students in grades eight and above will be assessed through EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, COMPASS, ASVAB, ACT Word Key, Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment, Industry Certificate, and Graduation Rate. The applicant justifies the use of these performance measures because they assess student mastery of the Common Core as well as science and social studies. Information can also be received regarding the growth of each student and on closing achievement gaps and will assist in determining how prepared students are for college and careers. The proposed measures have been well established in the educational arena and have been proven to be valid and reliable.

While the applicant provided in its narrative numerous ways to measure students' performance, it was not clearly articulated how often the data would be monitored for timely feedback to gauge success or challenges. The applicant provides inadequate information related to how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge the implementation progress. It is unclear how often the data would be analyzed. That is, monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly to ensure the initiatives are working to improve learning and teaching and increase student achievement.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of RTTD funds. The narrative does not include the alignment of key goals to the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for the evaluation.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a limited budget and identifies funds that will be needed to support the implementation of the proposal. The budget narrative includes funding sources from local, state, and federal entities and it appears reasonable to support the implementation of the proposed reform initiatives.</p> <p>The applicant presents costs that will be used for one-time funding as well as ongoing costs needed to sustain the proposal during and after the grant. Contractual costs are included in the budget as well as maintenance of hardware.</p> <p>The applicant provides details related to the train the trainer model during year one of the project, as well as provide strategies for sustaining the project beyond the grant period.</p> <p>The narrative lacks sufficient details related to strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant documents anticipated financial support from Title I, Title II, IDEA-B, Kentucky Educational Technology Professional Development, SEEK and Rural Low Income Funds for the 2012-2013 school year. The district plans to use a portion of these funds to sustain grant initiatives beyond the life of the grant. The applicant provides a chart documenting how the funds will be used for the fiscal years 2016-19 which seems reasonable. The applicant assures all unmet needs will be funded through the school district's general fund.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide specific information related to how it will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use this data to inform future investments.</p> <p>The narrative lacks a high quality plan to include the key goals activities to be undertaken and the rationale for the activities, the timeline, the deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing all the activities.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes to partner with community resources to assist families and students through coordination, consultation, and case management services. The applicant identifies four target areas and describes how it will partner with community resources such as Community Education, Migrant Program, Extended School Services, the District Court, the health department, community businesses, and a local university. The four target areas include academic, personal, social, and career development components. These agencies will partner with the school district to provide additional student and family supports that address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of the participating students. Volunteers will also be utilized to track and monitor student progress.</p> <p>The applicant will track the selected indicators using the state's database which will serve as an early warning indicator system for identifying students who may be off-track to graduate. The Persistence to Graduation Tool will provide student level data to identify students in need of additional intervention and support. The applicant will also collaborate with the Search Institute to administer Asset Development Surveys which can be disaggregated to identify, student, school, and community needs.</p> <p>District staff will collaborate with a local mental health agency by making necessary referrals for intensive interventions. The applicant appropriately identified performance measures for the proposed student population.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students.</p> <p>The applicant does not describe how the partnership would use the data to target resources in order to improve results for participating students, how it would integrate education and other services that address social-emotional and behavioral needs for participating students,</p>		

build the capacity of staff In participating schools by providing them with tools and supports, assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership’s goals for improving the education and family and community supports, and create a decision making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students. The lack of details related to these criterion makes it unclear how these services would be integrated to augment school resources.

The applicant also does not address how it will build the capacity of school personnel in providing them with the tools to assess the needs of participating students.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal meets the Absolute priority. The applicant has addressed how it will build on RTTD core educational areas to personalize and intensify the learning environment for every student. The applicant emphasized the importance of professional development, teacher collaboration through professional learning communities, creation of standards-based common assessments, and the use of data to improve instruction. The applicant also conveyed the importance of working collaboratively with stakeholders to establish a network of support to the meet the needs of students and families, The applicant clearly demonstrated its commitment to accelerating instruction and deepening the learning experiences for students to ensure they are college and career ready. The applicant has designed a project that will support student improvement through a blended learning model, providing tools and strategies specific to skill development and mastery, and the use of technology to assist with increasing student achievement.

Total	210	119
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0012KY-2 for Montgomery County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a score of 4.

The applicant does expand upon adoption of the Common Core State standards as required by the state of Kentucky. References are made several times connecting the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and linking them to attaining success to prepare students for college and the workplace.

The applicant does provide data demonstrating that the lowest performing school in the district increased from the 26th percentile to the 83rd percentile academically. There is no other data as to whether this increase was in reading, math, or another content area, for special education students, for low socioeconomic students, attendance, discipline, etc. The district's goal is to achieve "Top Ten" state status. The specific criteria needed to achieve this status is not documented in the grant proposal

The applicant is using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The application contains information that the district is improving upward on the program's rating scale. However, there is no definition of the criteria used to demonstrate outstanding performance in each of the areas. Specific scoring measurement areas indicating measurable gains for this Program are not provided.

The applicant mentions that they are striving to implement an innovative data system. They do mention an example of such a system. However, there is no mention of the data system or the process they specifically will use to purchase or implement the system. There is no documented plan or process that they will use to choose such a system.

The application contains information tying high teacher salaries to a reward system for teachers. There is no evidence as to the specific criteria teachers will have to attain to receive a salary reward. There is no definitive plan for recruiting or retaining quality teachers other than the salary increases.

The applicant does explain that students will enter personalized learning environments. There is not a clear coherent plan describing exactly what resources will be used to design individual student learning plans. The plan mentions success, but does not define what success looks like with measurable goals and levels. There is no mention of specific developmental assessments for the varying grade levels or who will create these assessments.

The applicant included general information related to the four core educational assurance areas as is required. A comprehensive plan outlining specific details is missing, such as specific criteria for assessing measurable student gains for documented student success. In addition, there is a lack of a listing of specific resources that will be used to implement and deliver a standards based curriculum that is designed to increase student learning through the use of individualized learning and personal learning environment. There is not a clear comprehensive plan for recruiting quality teachers and administrators.

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

The district scored the highest number of points(10)

The proposal provided data demonstrating that the applicant chose to have 100% of the students, teachers, and administrators participate as part of their implementation process. The district demonstrated that each school building had sub groups of students that are classified as high need. Each school is listed along with participating percentages. There is also a calculation presented to demonstrate low income and high need student participation. The applicant chose all schools, teachers and students in the district to participate in the Race to the Top project and offered a rational explanation for their selection.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	1
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a score of 1.

The district states that they will be utilizing effective leadership, professional development for teachers and pre-service teachers, recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and staff members as deliverables and activities to be undertaken for implementing meaningful reform. The applicant also mentions utilizing Chinese Instructors at the elementary level. No conclusive evidence ties this strategy to any goals mentioned within the proposal.

There is minimal data demonstrating state growth for the entire district. The applicant is lacking key goals for individual schools, data for individuals, and individual school related personalized learning (since this was a goal stated in section A1). As a result the key goals are not clear nor matched with aligned data to demonstrate gains or lowering of achievement gaps.

Stated rationales are generalized and not specifically tied to key grant proposal goals that are being measured. Timelines are generally stated as school years, such as: 2011-2012, 2012-2014 with no start dates or ending dates.

The key goals are not clearly stated or aligned to assure successful implementation of the plan. Rationales are stated, but mostly refer to generalities rather than specific data related to any increases in student learning or demonstrating clear gains attached to goals. The only individual in the district being mentioned as accountable is the Superintendent.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant receives a medium score of 3. The presented charts show data demonstrating increases in student learning for student subgroups districtwide, allowing for mathematically calculating gap achievements among subgroups of students. The data on the charts demonstrate credible growth in percentages for Reading and Language Arts. The applicant does document use of a summative assessment system designed to assess and identify student achievement gaps. Timelines are provided for increased student achievement gains.

It is unclear as to what criteria is used for what the applicant refers to as State ranking. The applicant does not state if the gain in state ranking was at the elementary level, secondary level, etc. The applicant does not state what it means to be “one of the Top 25 K-12

districts in the State of Kentucky or what it means to attain Top Ten status for student achievement”. There are conflicting graduation goals. The data shows a maximum rate of 98% in 2017. In the applicant’s narrative, the applicant states a graduation rate goal of 100% by 2015. With a high need percentage of 29%, the district’s goals should be more aggressive by the 2015-2016 school year; especially in the college enrollment, math and reading areas. The applicant does not identify resources or deliverables that will focus on improving personalized learning or explain specifically how individuals will be assessed to demonstrate a decrease in gaps. The application does not designate a person to be responsible for monitoring gains and gaps. The plan is generalized and does not provide the rationale, resources, personnel or specific timelines to deem this a credible action plan.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received a medium level score of 6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PLAN assessment results were provided to show that sophomore scores increased in all content areas. • The EXPLORE, predictive assessment was used by the district to provide data to explain 8th grade increases in student performance in all areas except Science over a four year period of time. • ACT math scores were provided as evidence of increasing student achievement at the high school. • The applicant demonstrates that the district showed an increase in percentage of Montgomery County students who are college-ready and exceeded state increase in each subject area. • Within the grant proposal there is data that indicates an increase in graduation rates exceeded increases at the state level as well as an increase from 2010-2011. • The applicant states that there were increases in student enrollment at post-secondary institutions; however, only data for 2011-2012 school year is cited. • The applicant explained significant achievement gains in one of its elementary schools. • The applicant demonstrated significant increases in math and science in one of its middle schools. • The applicant did not provide evidence that student achievement data was made available to students, parents and educators. • The applicant mentioned some gains were made in their elementary school with the highest number of low income students in their elementary school. The applicant did not demonstrate that significant gains in student achievement were made at all levels. There was data showing only slight student achievement gains were achieved in some of its schools. • There was minimal data provided to indicate if student achievement gaps were decreased in sub groups. • Much of the data was provided for a two year span of time versus providing data over a four year period of time. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received a score of 1 which is at the lower end of the scoring scale.</p> <p>Only a minimum report level was made available to the public, such as supporting a website with the district employees’ Salary Schedule. Only minimal reporting methods were sustained for documentation of resources for reporting personnel salaries and completion of state reporting. The grant application does not provide further resource information for reporting salary information to stakeholders. The grant application mentions some activities that allow for transparency of funding sources with transparency related to funding sources and reporting with minimal evidence of total articulation and transparency to the public.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district received the highest score possible for this area.</p>		

The proposal provides evidence of local school board autonomy which is allowed by State statutes to local school boards. The applicant provides information relative to school based autonomy for implementing actions which are necessary to implement personalized learning environments. The application does provide letters from a variety of local organizations supporting enactment of programs for promoting individualized student learning.

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

15

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a medium score of 4.

An Application Assurance signature is provided from the President of Local Teacher's Union.

There is evidence of letters of support from teachers, a local university, and Board chair.

Forums were held to solicit engagement and buy-in; and also to provide information for the submittal of the application.

A document is provided in the appendix with signatures supporting the Race to the Top application submittal. The signatures do not indicate the position or title of each individual who signed the application.

There is no indication of support letters from community/business leaders, collective bargaining leaders, and/or parent organizations.

There is no evidence of agendas, minutes of meetings, etc. that could provide confirmation as to what was discussed at the forums and when meetings were actually held.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	3

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a low level score of 3 based upon the following criteria:

- The key goals are not supported by quantitative measurable data aligned to student learning and goals.
- The plan references that all students will have access to high quality instructional activities to prepare them for college and the workforce; however the instructional activities that are listed are very general in nature.
- The plan lists activities for Elementary, Middle, and High School levels
- The applicant references activities such the Rotation Model of blended learning and Project Lead the Way for accomplishing the key goal of personalized learning for all students.
- The plan does address instructional activities for enrichment, gifted and English Language Learners.
- The activities listed for gifted students and English Language learners are not designed with a sequenced plan for when and how these activities will occur.
- Formative and Summative tests are mentioned as methods of measuring student learning. The plan does not provide measurable benchmarks to assess student growth or account for achievement gaps.
- While creating Personalized Learning Plans created by stakeholders sounds ambitious, the plan does not explain a process for how this will occur.
- The plan does not include what type of technology will be used to track student needs and successes. The plan does not explain how student needs and academic interests will be learned or what specific type of evaluations or assessments will be used to measure success.
- The plan does not state what percentage of time students will be using technology learning environments and what percentage of time students will be engaged in other blended learning activities. There are no specific instructional activities designed to address methods related to teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.
- There are no specific timelines aligned to any of the instructional activities that are listed in the plan.
- There are no specific individuals as being listed to be responsible for tracking the success of the activities and the success of the students.
- Rationales for listed activities are generalized based upon quoted research from authorities rather than quantitative data based upon student academic interests and needs.

- Due to lack of specific measurement methods, assigned personnel to be responsible for delivering the action plan, timelines for delivery of activities the plan lacks comprehensiveness and credibility.

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

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a score of 4.

The applicant provides accommodations to implement professional development for their educators with a variety of activities. Educators will participate in book studies. Teams of educators will travel to New York to the School of One. Teachers will be part of Professional Learning Communities focused on the Common Core Standards. Formative assessments will be created. Gaps will be identified between former standards and Common Core Standards. Common unit assessments will be developed. Instructional coaches will be available to assist teachers with professional development. A teacher/principal evaluation system will be implemented. Teacher and principal leadership teams will meet regularly to engage in new learning activities. Administration will realign teacher assignments in order to implement a Peer Coaching model.

The district is seeking to increase student achievement and provide personalized learning environments. Teachers will develop a standards-based grading system. Staff will implement a variety of assessments that will be used to assess individual student needs. Performance Advocates will meet with individual students on a daily basis to create Personalized Learning Plans to guide students on a path to be college- and career-ready. Partnerships will be formed with local universities using student mentors and pre-service teachers to help provide personalized instructional assistance to students.

The plan did not account for the following information:

- More in-depth mention of digital resources available to teachers and students
- A comprehensive plan for providing in-depth professional development for staff to use digital resources in order to provide quality personalized learning and increased student achievement.
- Key goals specifically aligned with qualitative or quantitative baseline data or measurable goal data.
- Activities showing measurable data that will substantiate whether or not these activities have truly increased data.
- Explanation of an evaluation system for measuring the success of teacher professional development and student success.
- Evidence of timeline parameters in which any of the listed activities will occur.
- Names/titles of specific personnel to take responsibility for implementing and evaluating the success of the listed activities.
- Specific goals for increasing effective and highly effective teachers in hard to staff schools
- Documentation for seeking out teachers specifically for math and science.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	3

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a score of 3.

The applicant states that the central office administration provides support to teachers in the classroom via a system of curriculum and administrative teams working at the school level. These teams provide instructional support gathered through a series of Instructional Service Stops. The proposal contains statements that demonstrate committed support to all schools.

The district has instituted programs that give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery at the high school level through the use of dual enrollment courses. Relative to dual enrollment, the components listed in the plan allow for students to demonstrate multiple means for mastering standards and at the same time earn their high school diplomas. For other grade levels the proposal uses technology-based resources to facilitate mastery of standards for meeting individual needs simultaneously.

The district documented a proposed plan to use a variety of digital devices and programs and to have instructional practices and resources available to all students. The proposal lacks a detailed plan for how staff will be trained in order to provide the proposed learning resources and instructional practices to all students.

Key goals with supporting data related to availability of student resources are not identified. The plan does not show timelines for when and how proposed activities will be delivered. The applicant proposes multiple means of technology for equalizing instruction at all levels, but does not have personnel assigned to assume the responsibilities for implementation, execution and evaluation of the proposed activities. Although the applicant proposes a variety of means for meeting individualized needs of all students, a comprehensive plan with timelines for training personnel has not been developed. Without training and monitored accountability the plan does not demonstrate a sound foundation for credibility.

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

10

2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a score of 2 for this section of the proposal.

- Throughout the proposal there is information ensuring that all students and stakeholders within the educational community have access to all resources within the district. The applicant continually mentions that all students, parents, partners and stakeholders will utilize electronic and hard copy district resources.
- The applicant refers to the available systems in a generalized manner; they are not specifically named. In addition, there is minimal information to support that all systems are interoperable. There is lack of data to demonstrate that district staff is readily available to support stakeholders who may have difficulty accessing the technology.
- The applicant expresses a need for professional development that provides various levels of support and training in order for staff to be able to provide instructional practices to all stakeholders. The proposal boasts of a database system that is aligned with a state system. There is repeated documentation stating that stakeholders will have access to the system. There is no evidence as to how a comprehensive training program will be provided for all parents, students, and staff members to be trained for accessing and utilizing technology in order to efficiently and effectively export data from the system.
- Information is available to students, parents, partners, and stakeholders in both electronic and hard copy. This information is made available to the workforce, students, parents, partners, and stakeholders as appropriate. The district collects and transfers knowledge to the workforce that is relevant. Students and stakeholders have access to relevant knowledge as appropriate; it is not clear if the system allows parents to be able to export data and use the data in other electronic learning systems.
- Throughout the document annual school year timelines (2013-2014, 2014-2015) are provided for implementation and creation of activities and deliverables. The proposal lacks comprehensive action plans that denote sequenced schedules of timelines, personnel responsibility assignments, clear rationales for choosing all named activities, and how and when the activities will be delivered.
- In order to be credible the plan needs increased specificity relative to timelines, assignment of responsibilities, and clear articulation of the key goals.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant received a score of 3.

- The proposal documents that a Performance Improvement Council will meet twice a month to monitor and communicate progress related to the implementation of the grant to the public. Monthly reports will be presented to the public.
- The applicant refers generally as to assignment of an administrator to supervise the Race to the Top grant proposal.
- The proposal contains documented evidence that several leadership teams will be measuring student achievement and teacher effectiveness as it relates to the commitment to the Race to The Top grant.
- The applicant refers to the Balderidge model in a very generalized manner. Specific outlines of criteria describing how the Balderige model aligns qualitatively and quantitatively to the proposal's key goals is lacking.
- There is generalized reference to timelines such as monthly reports and weekly meetings of staff to analyze data. Specific beginning and ending dates are not provided.
- There is generalized reference to assigning administrators to monitor some of the facets of leading the teams.
- Specific administrative titles for assigned responsibilities are lacking as far as providing credibility for successfully managing all aspects of the grant implementation.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received low end score of 1 point.</p> <p>The plan does account for ongoing communication and engagement of stakeholders in generalized formats across the grant proposal. To adequately communicate and report findings requires specific outlined assignment of defined roles. Because the responsibility assignments for communication and articulator are so generalized the plan's success appears to need more specific information in order to be credible as it relates to the success of the implementation and execution of the communication related activities and deliverables. There is generalized reference to timelines such as monthly reports and weekly meetings of staff to analyze and communicate data results. Specific beginning and ending dates are not provided for communication activities. There is some reference to assigning administrators to monitor some of the facets of leading the teams. Specific administrative titles referencing who would specifically be responsible for monitoring communication with internal and external stakeholders are lacking.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received the highest points available for this section of the grant.</p> <p>The proposal contains rationales for why the district proposes to use the chosen assessments.</p> <p>The application provided the number of performance measures as dictated by the Race to the Top requirements.</p> <p>The applicant provided detailed chart information outlining percentages of students sorted by subgroup.</p> <p>The proposal contains detailed documentation of performance measures that are developmentally appropriate and aligned to the key goals and expectations defined by grant requirements.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received a low end score of 1.</p> <p>The applicant provided evidence that the district will use a Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System for the purpose of collecting data to determine the success of the activities undertaken by the Race to the Top Grant. Relative to technology it is not clear as to what data benchmarks will set and what data will be collected to begin to determine whether the district has implemented activities with success. When defining the software that will be used to identify success the applicant did not assign timelines for start dates and ending dates for each activity's implementation. There is generalized documentation (simply referring to an administrator) as to which individuals will be responsible for coordination evaluating the technology activities, collecting and analyzing the data, and deciding whether or not the activities and deliverables have proved to be successful. There is a plan in place to use a new teacher/principal evaluation system that would help to improve teacher effectiveness. The evaluation of the plan is based upon generalities and needs additional specific information about processes for data collection that could be used to put together a credible plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the activities and determining how these activities will be improved.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received a score of 9.</p> <p>The applicant provides convincing documentation that the funding the district currently has listed in the budget is sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. The applicant provides detailed tables describing all of the funds that will be used to implement the proposal. One time investments are appropriately accounted for; operational costs are clearly delineated. The budget narrative in conjunction with the charts and tables provide detailed documentation focusing on strategies and the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. It is not clear that the proposed funding tied to long-term sustainability was guaranteed to be available to ensure the money would be there to carry out all the proposed strategies in the application.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant received a low end point of 1 for providing minimal generalized information for how the district would self-sustain the grant proposal.</p> <p>The applicant plans to be self-sustaining in regards to the continuation of the Race to the Top activities.</p> <p>The applicant does not account for continued grants, partnerships, government expended revenue, etc. The applicant did not take into account the possibility of federal and state funding budget cuts. There is no documentation to plan for assigned responsibilities if key personnel should leave the district. There is no evidence that the district considered alternative plans for sustaining, goals, activities, or deliverables beyond the 4 years of the grant program. As a result no timelines have been established for a fifth year and beyond. Having no vision beyond 4 years does not account for a credible plan.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant scored 2 points in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district identified 4 partnerships to support their plan. • The district identified six population desired results that are aligned with the Race to the Top proposal. • The proposal provides a sentence that describes technology that will track the partnership project results. There is no further evidence to show steps that would be used to implement the use of the system or demonstrate support for how the technology will be used to show results and or improvements of the process. • The plan does not provide sound evidence of a means for using the data to improve results for subgroups of students. • The plan does not outline how a model would work, how the plan would currently work, how to improve results beyond the current 4 years of the grant, or how the applicant proposes to expand outside the immediate community and named participants. • The applicant lists in bullet format activities that would address the following components: academic, personal, and career. There is no evidence of how the district would integrate the partnerships within the educational process. • Individual subgroups are not delineated in order to provide/integrate personalized learning activities that would align with Absolute Priority 1. • The plan does not provide evidence that documents a plan or outline of specific activities for building capacity related to addressing the requirements needed to score the highest number of points for augmenting public and priority resources. 		

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has met the requirements set forth for Absolute Priority 1.</p> <p>The vision and beliefs of this school district were woven throughout the application. Throughout the proposal there is a thread of documented importance related to professional development for educators and staff. The applicant addresses college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements. The plan addresses activities and methods for delivering personalized instruction for gifted students as well as all levels of education sub groups. Detailed charts are provided throughout the proposal identifying student achievement scores, content areas and decreases in achievement gaps for all student groups.</p>		

Total	210	73
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0012KY-3 for Montgomery County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has been using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to develop a performance-driven model which augments the four core educational assurance areas since 2011. They are doing well implementing the model and hope some day to be one of the “Top Ten” across all academic areas nationally in a few years. Each of the four core educational assurance areas was briefly addressed, but not enough detail was provided to tell if they had a clear and credible approach that included building data systems, recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, and turning around lowest-achieving schools.</p> <p>A history of their progress implementing new standards beginning in 2011 was provided. Common assessments aligned to the new standards are used with systemic data systems that include daily formative assessments, common grade level and course assessments are now used, but the data is “typically only used to make broad instructional decisions. “ As part of their move to a competency-based system, they will personalize and intensify the learning of every student in re-designed blended learning environments. For example, when high school student show proficiency on End of Course assessments they will be able to begin work on their next course of study. The plan includes personalized professional development for each educator and they want to increase taxation to augment teacher salaries and benefits. The district has a teacher principal evaluation system and is developing an evidence-based evaluation system for the superintendent and the school board. Publications were referenced to help describe how the role of the classroom teacher and how seat time would be redesigned to personalize and accelerate learning.</p> <p>There was a lack of detail about how a key component of the vision, building the capacity of educators to be facilitators of deeper, more accelerated student learning, will be accomplished using the structures of personalized professional development and an evidence-based teacher evaluation system.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Mountgomery County School District (MOCO) will include all seven facilities that include Pre-K through the secondary level in the grant. This is justified because 59% of MOCO’s students are from low income backgrounds and qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. A list of the schools that will participate in the grant and the total number of students and educators was presented. A strategy was not articulated about why it makes sense to address all grades and all subjects across schools, rather than focus on particular subjects or grade levels. A paragraph about the importance of Pre-K education was provided in this section and the extent to which the applicants’ approach to implementing its reform proposal supports high quality LEA level and school level implementation was provided in A3.</p> <p>A high quality plan that lists specific goals, relevant activities, timeline, criteria by which they will measure implementation, and parties responsible for implementing the activities was not specified. Therefore, it is difficult to tell if their approach will support high quality implementation.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Since all students and schools will be served by this grant, justification for LEA wide reform was not needed. A high quality plan is</p>		

essential for understanding how the applicant will reach its outcome goals for LEA-wide reform and was not included. Missing were clear goals, deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities.

A description of how Montgomery schools have been affected by state-wide reform and the progress they have made was provided.

There was also no justification for why Chinese was selected to teach.

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

Tables displayed LEA-wide goals for improved student proficiency, decreased achievement gaps in math, reading, and social studies. Additional tables showed goals for improved graduation and college enrollment rates. The State ESEA targets for LEAs were not noted, but it was noted that their ambitious vision will catapult student learning far beyond the state targets for their district. And, as evidence they are on a positive trajectory, it was noted that MCSD's state ranking increased from 132 to the top 50 out of 173 school districts in 2012. Improvement continued in 2013, with the district being honored as one of the Top 25 Districts in the State. (Beginning in 2012 Kentucky students were assessed in Math and Language Arts Common Core Standards for the first time, so one can not compare performance in previous years.) The tables suggest that in all tested subjects, minority students have been making good progress, but in some areas white students' performance declined.

Growth targets were very ambitious, sometimes as much as 15% in a year in order to have everyone at 80-90% by the final year. This may be unrealistic. It is not clear in which years the targets meet or exceed State ESEA targets fro LEAS and student subgroups.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Montgomery County School District demonstrates a trajectory of successful progress particularly since hiring Dr. Joshua Powell, a renowned "turn around" expert, to be superintendent in May 2011. Prior to that time, the district had been relatively static with small improvements in student achievement and graduation rates. Under Dr. Powell, the school system's focus on developing an academic driven system was enhanced by employing an intentional, systematic series of processes to utilize data in an individualized way for all students. Some noteworthy examples of success in advancing student learning between 2008-2013 were provided:

- Performance on the PLAN assessment rose modestly from 2008-2012 (16-17.2), with 10th grade science rising to 18.3.
- On the ACT, Montgomery County experienced a gain in every subject area and composite level in 2011-2012 that far exceeded Kentucky's increase for every single subject area.
- High school graduation rates increased 8.7% from 2010.
- Two schools were highlighted for their improvements. Camargo Elementary rose from 26th percentile in elementary schools in the state to the 83rd percentile when ambitious changes were made in 2011.
- Similarly, in fall 2011, leadership also changed in McNabb Middle school and after providing math teachers professional development using the Carnegie Math Program, scores rose just over 2%.
- Graduation rate is indicative of the positive changes that have taken place and rose from 70.4% in 2010 to 79.1% in 2011.

No evidence was provided as to how the achievement gap is being closed. Only two schools were highlighted for improvements.

There is no mention of how student performance data is made available to students, educators and parents.

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

The applicant notes that while they are working toward transparency to all stakeholders, they have much work to do in this area. The District's Salary Schedule is available on their website. Salaries of individual employees are not easily available, but may be requested through the Superintendent. Access and control of school level budgets by the School-Based Decision Making Council at each school which includes three teachers, two parents, and the Principal was described.

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

The Kentucky Board of Education has granted local school boards full jurisdiction to control and operate with self-sufficiency and autonomy their individual districts. This authority is given to the five members elected by the community to their District’s Board of Education. Montgomery’s School Board Chair person has provided a letter of support for all reforms in the four core educational assurance areas and will make decisions to fully support the initiatives outlined in this proposal.

The applicant receives a high score of 10 points for this criterion.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	12
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates stakeholder engagement and support for the proposal, Conversations with numerous stakeholders were held including the Board, Student Advisory Council, faculty and staff at each of the district’s six schools during a school-wide faculty meeting, each School Based decision Making Council, and a public forum, and a local college and university. Letters of support were written by a member of Congress, the County Judge-Executive, The Board Chair, the Interim Dean of the College of Education, Morehead State University, five students, and numerous teachers signed letters acknowledging approval from each of the schools. It was noted that the proposal received approval from over 70% of the teachers. There were no letters from parents, business community, or local community-based programs.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A) The applicant lays out a plan for implementing instructional strategies that will increase personalization of the learning environment at all grade levels. Key components at every level include implementation and assessment of the Common Core State Standards, which ensures content aligned with college and career-ready standards. To personalize the learning environment, the plan includes implementation of standards-based grading, students setting goals and tracking their learning of Common Core Standards, students engaged in blended learning in core subjects that goes from a fixed schedule in elementary school to a flex model in school, students exposed to or having the option to take Chinese and an increasing focus on students considering college and career readiness options related to individual interests.

(B) The proposal provides specific ways in which the infrastructure of the district will move to personalized learning. Each student will have access to a personalized sequence of instructional content. Learning spaces will be organized to promote whole group as well as individualized learning. Using School of One in NYC as a model, a computerized algorithm based upon several criteria for each student will be used to develop each student’s daily learning sequence. As student demonstrate mastery of each of their learning targets they will have three options that include deepening understanding, taking on leadership roles to support other students, or beginning additional targets. All students will receive regular feedback on daily formative tasks and assessments and meet regularly with teachers or performance advocates. (It is not clear how often feedback will be and whether it will vary across teachers). The increasing ELL and LEP population in Montgomery County will be assessed and monitored with specific instruments for this purpose and supported by an ESL program. The district’s alternative school will continue to accommodate “at risk” students which recently created a Saturday option and there is an Accelerated Academy for students scoring in the 94th percentile and above on a norm-referenced assessment or having a gifted IQ to focus on STEM subjects. Except for compliance with meeting Common Core Standards, it is difficult to tell the extent to which high quality instructional strategies and curriculum will be used to meet the needs of all students.

(C) Mechanisms to provide support to students to ensure they are pursuing a rigorous personalized course of study include Teacher PLCs, content algorithms, and Performance Advocates at the high school level. It was not specifically noted what training would be provided to students to ensure that they each understand how to use the tools and resources provided to track and manage their learning.

While the applicant addressed many specific components listed under (a), (b), and (c), a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching is fundamental to the selection criteria. A table showing key goals, activities to be undertaken, timeline, deliverables, and the

parties responsible for implementing the activities was not included.

In addition, the following was not addressed: the strategies by which students will master critical academic content and develop skills such as goal setting and critical thinking; the approach to learning used at the preschool; and how the District plans to use specific practices at School of One to improve learning in particular subjects and grade levels.

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

20

7

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Montgomery County Schools is implementing the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to create a culture of continuous improvement for educators. They plan to send a team of educators representing various disciplines and grade levels to visit the School of One. Every teacher is required to participate in a book study group. The center of most professional learning in the District are teacher PLCs in which teachers are currently deconstructing each grade level standard into targets and creating a bank of resources, daily assessments, and strategy suggestions. Later teacher PLCs will move onto working together to determine student progress toward goals and make instructional decisions. One elementary school in the district, Camargo, (which had an abundance of teacher support signatures), has moved on to discussing student progress by target each week. This is the goal for all schools. Instructional coaches will also model lessons and strategies in small group settings and help teachers support project based learning and collaborative student work. The grant will also support two additional days of training each summer to prepare teachers for the new initiative and planned topics were listed. It was noted that “each PLC participating in the blended learning model will be released a half day once each month to analyze student data.” This was surprising since the proposal calls for all schools to participate in the blended learning model. The sentence in this section implied that only some schools would be implemented the blended learning model.

(B) Montgomery County School District recognizes that all teachers must have access to and a working knowledge of multiple tools, data and resources to implement their Plan. They are in the process of ensuring that educators will be able to gather various data points for each students that can be used to create Personalized Learning Plans, along with a bank of resources to help teachers respond to individual student needs and interests. Specific digital resources or how participating educators will learn to use the resources and identify optimal learning approaches matched to appropriate resources were not described, beyond the planned use of an algorithm at the high school level for three subject areas.

With a shift to a competency-based system will eventually come a shift in grading practices based on content standard mastery that they hope will improve the disconnect between assigned grades and measuring content mastery that is currently a challenge.

Montgomery County School District plans to implement with fidelity Kentucky’s new teacher and principal evaluation system which involves each teacher developing a growth plan.

(C) Ongoing leadership training structures already in place include monthly district principal and curriculum team meetings, weekly walkthroughs by this team, along with return visits and discussions. At school level, there are monthly school level leadership team professional learning meetings in which members share s the learning with other teachers. Future topics included the blended learning approach and standards-based grading. The extent to which school leaders will have information that can help them take steps to improve educator effectiveness and school culture/climate is not mentioned.

(D) Montgomery County School District partners with Berea College and Morehead State University in two programs that offer points of contact for the district to recruit teachers. One program involves instructional coaching staff providing training preservice teachers to score student’s written composition and response essays. Other recruiting strategies were the typical ones such as attending and holding recruiting fairs. An effort is made to ensure equitable distribution of experienced and new teachers across grades and content areas and “effective teaches are placed with reluctant learners as often as possible.” There was no mention of how extra effort would be made to recruit effective teachers and principals would be recruited to hard to staff schools, subjects and specialty areas. There also was no plan to increase equity in the distribution of effective and high effective teachers and principals.

A high quality plan for improving learning and teaching is fundamental to the selection criterion. A table showing key goals, activities to be undertaken, timeline, deliverables, and the parties responsible for implementing the activities is essential.

Preschool was not addressed anywhere in Criterion C.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	8

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The following LEA practices, policies and rules to facilitate personalized learning were presented by the applicant to support this criterion. Missing information is noted for each bullet.

- The district is structured around the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, a validated, integrated management framework...This led to several district decisions that facilitate personalized learning such as: the number of district administrators has been reduced to increase the number of educators and lower the teacher to student ratio in core classrooms. The amount of tasks and paperwork that teachers must complete has been reduced. How the Baldrige Program would continue to improve teaching and leading was not described.
- The statewide teacher effectiveness evaluation instrument is currently being piloted and will be integrated into the district's evidence based evaluation process.
- Curriculum and administrative teams provide instructional support through Instructional services Stops (i.e., walkthroughs).
- High school students are given the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not seat time. It is not clear whether students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple ways. It is not clear whether this extends to the primary grades and preschool.
- TEAMKIDS, a professional cohort provides release time for teachers and administrators to collaborate and receive training to share data at the school level to increase personalized instruction and student achievement. There was no specificity regarding what data would be shared and how the release time would improve teaching.
- School based decision making councils have autonomy to make instructional, staffing, and operational decisions.
- The competency based high school program will allow students the option of earning credits in core classes, vocational classes, or job shadowing schedules and attend local universities and technical schools while completing diploma requirements.

The lack of a high quality plan, as defined in the RTT-D notice, reduced the score. There were no timelines, deliverables, or identified parties identified to ensure that LEA practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning will be made.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant used the following as evidence for a plan to develop a school infrastructure that can support personalized learning:

- A well-defined process will be developed to utilize Individualized Learning Plan data to improve student growth and achievement and students, parents, teachers, and counselors will be provided training and time to use it.
- Live web-based learning, videotaped lecture notes and supplemental instructional resources and technological devices will be accessible for high needs students.
- Infinite Campus, the state adapted program student information system, is available but underutilized due to lack of training for students, parents and staff, and funding will be used to make this more accessible and understandable to everyone. To support accessibility of Infinite Campus, an internet based system, funding will be used to support Wi-fi hot spots in local churches and community centers.
- Montgomery County Schools manages all organizational data and knowledge. Students and all stakeholders "will have access to relevant knowledge as appropriate."

It is not clear whether the number of flipped classrooms with e-platform learning management systems will be increased so that students will have around the clock availability to curriculum and instructional resources. (No numbers were provided).

It is not clear whether technical support for parents has been considered.

All students have a school email address and storage file. It is not clear whether students and parents can export information in an open data format.

It is not clear whether every school will use interoperable data systems (as defined in this notice).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
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(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided many ideas for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process:

- Montgomery County School's use of the Baldrige model provides them with a framework for continuous monitoring of outcomes for improvement. They have numerous ideas built into their plan to ensure continuous improvement: Their Performance Improvement Council (PIC), which meets twice monthly works to insure implementation of the Baldrige model, will be the executive team responsible for guaranteeing implementation and continuous improvement of the RTT grant. This team will consist of a diverse group of staff at all levels along with parents, community members, and students.
- The PIC team will analyze data collected across schools and their findings will be shared publicly at Board meetings. To be transparent and gain feedback from the community, the PIC will host quarterly public meetings and the minutes will be reported at each SBDM council meeting and posted in the district website.
- Every school will work on continuous improvement by analyzing data on a weekly basis through professional learning communities to make adjustments and support will be provided by the curriculum and instruction team that already exists. At the school level, TEAM KIDS will conduct Instructional rounds regarding Problems of Practice determined by needs identified in the grant and provide feedback to principals.
- An implementation and impact tool will be developed to monitor the implementation and the impact of the grant on student achievement, monitored at the school level by School Based Decision Making councils and at the district level by the PIC. The effectiveness of professional development will be measured by a survey to measure the quality of the professional development and then data will be collected relevant to the professional development to determine its impact on student learning.
- Measuring the implementation of technology will be done by school administration district personnel. The district will use Learning.com's assessments to determine pre and post level of competency of the national technology standards at grades 5,8, and 11. Professional development will be designed based upon teacher assessments to support their professional growth plans.

The applicant did not provide deliverable dates and specific personnel titles (e.g., "school administration district personnel" is too general) as part of a high quality plan.

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

Ongoing communication and engagement are embedded throughout the Baldrige model. As describe in E1, the school district will continue to engage and communicate with a variety of internal and local stakeholders. There are already many resources in place including weekly parent and employee electronic newsletters and posts on the district website, a telephone notification system, weekly classroom walkthroughs, and numerous school level events. In addition, the district will expand its communication base with other districts, regional and statewide stakeholders as part of its vision to be a leader in educational turn-around throughout the state. Deliverables and a timeline for the deliverables were not provided.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant appears to have enough ambitious, yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup. This applicant wrote a narrative for this section that describes their assessment plan for preschool through twelfth grade in addition to providing tables. The rationale for selecting each measure and how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information is included. Performance measures included in the assessments are presented in both general descriptive terms – i.e., “fourth Grade and Seventh Grades: Mastery of Reading and Math Common Core Standards – multiple choice, short answer, and extended response questions” and with performance goals and numbers of students by subgroups in the tables. (Subgroups do not appear to be available for preK-3.) The frequency with which each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information tailored to the teachers is described. In line with the proposed plan, it is noted that daily checks for learning is the most valuable way to personalize learning for each student. How the applicant will review and improve each measure over time to determine implementation progress and make adjustments if necessary was not adequately covered for each measure.

The Professional growth and Evaluation system will tell how well teachers are teaching to the CCS is being field-tested at one of their

schools this year. The Iowa Interim Assessments will be used three times per year to assess mastery in grades 3-9 and while it is expected that it will provide reliable information, it will be discontinued after two years if it is not adequate (as well other instruments). Annual targets for students with effective teachers are presented in the first table, starting with all at 0% for now because of lack of information, with hypothetical goals for other years.

The Development Asset Profile will be used to measure eight asset categories in grades 6-12 and additional grades will be added when the DAP becomes available for lower grades.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Kentucky Dept. of Education, as a RTT Grant recipient, has been able a system of continuous evaluation and improvement which enables district leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of assessments, professional learning, and technology. When fully implemented, the System will provide teachers with key information and resources and access to a wide range of longitudinal data and reports in a single integrated system. Montgomery schools anticipates that the data collected by leadership teams during their Instructional Rounds will be useful in evaluating the effectiveness of the RTT investments. No specific analysis for understanding the effectiveness of RTT funded activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning, such as professional development and student activities that employ technology were described. Without a high quality plan to work from, this criterion was lacking necessary key goals, rationale for each activity, timelines, and deliverables that will enable Montgomery Count Schools to continually improve its approach.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant’s budget, including budget narrative and tables, identifies funds that will support the RTT project, and seems reasonable and sufficient to support the implementation of the applicant’s proposal. It is clear which funds are for one-time investments and those that will be used for ongoing operational costs during the grant period. The budget narrative provides a rationale for strategies that will ensure the long term sustainability of the personalized learning environment. A few highlights include:

- In addition to RTT funds, MC will use a variety of funds to support substitute teachers for release time, technological hardware and software, Chinese language teachers, and consumable supplies needed for STEM-based instruction.
- Twenty individuals will visit School of One in NYC.
- Blended classrooms will begin year 2. Stipends will be paid to Math, Science, and English teachers for training in running a blended classroom and they will receive ½ day per month to plan personalized learning.
- Twelve performance advisors (1/110 students) will be hired to support and ensure every students graduates college and career ready.
- The two largest technology investments are 1560 ipads and apps for the ipads, and 1400 laptop computers (of which the district will incur some of the cost), purchased in year two.

It was difficult to understand how the purchases will be used to support the implemetnation fo the proposal because of the details lacking earlier in the proposal. For example, more details about ways in which teachers will use ipads and computers to sustain a personalized learning environment in different subjects and grade levels was never addressed.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district will use a portion of funding from its regular funding sources (e.g., Title 1, Title 2, Kentucky Educational Technology System, etc.) to sustain grant initiatives. Estimates were provided from each of 5 sources for the three years following the grant. Professional development provided in previous years will involve a train the trainer model, so the district will have the capacity to provide ongoing training of new staff and more training as needed. The district will continue to employ the instructional coaches to provided job-embedded professional development. Similarly, the six Technology Integreation specialists will train school level staff to maintain the technology at each school. The lack of a high quality plan containing specific goals and deliverables within ieach initiative made it impossible to tell how those goals will be sustained after the term of the grant, The applicant did not provide a description of how the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of past investments and use the data to inform future investments.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

A list of community resources that the district will partner with to support families and students was provided. The services and support were divided into four components: Academic, Personal Development, Social Development, and career development. For the most part, it seemed that the agencies listed might already be providing services to at risk students attending Montgomery schools. Few services appeared to be aligned specifically with the proposal.

The applicant identified desired results for students in the LEA for two performance measures: Persistence to Graduation Tool and the Developmental Asset Profile. Numbers of students at risk of not graduating was provided for 2011-2012 and a 10% reduction is anticipated per year.

How the partnerships would assess the needs and assets of participating students, integrate public or private resources in a partnership to provide additional student and family supports to support the special needs of high-need students, and develop and implement a decision-making process to engage parents of participating students to improve results over time was not provided.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has met the requirements of Absolute Priority 1. They addressed how they will build on the core educational assurance areas to improve learning and teaching by utilizing a performance-driven instructional model to better support all students to meet college and career ready standards, accelerate student achievement, deepen student learning and increase graduation rates. The applicant will use the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to develop a performance-driven model which augments the four core educational assurance areas. As part of their move to a competency-based system, they will personalize and intensify the learning of every student in re-designed blended learning environments. Montgomery County Schools will include all seven facilities that include Pre-K through the secondary level in the grant.

Total	210	129
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