



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0152GA-1 for Richmond County School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan is of good quality for it does build upon the four core assurances that have been supported by the state Race-to-the-Top grant. This mission is clear that all students would have a graduation rate of 90% with the personalized learning environment that would be created and refined in this proposal. It is unclear the other two goals in the vision how the applicant would ensure that 90% of students would be successful in college or careers selected and that same percentage would be competitive among their peers throughout the United States and world-wide. The applicant did not discuss the plan to measure the success or effectiveness of the project in ensuring students met them. Teachers and students receiving additional and monitored support from the current curriculum specialists and coaches show coordination and collaboration of funds since they are supported with Title II funds. The plan will address the entire student from academic potentials and developing aptitude to emotional competencies including capabilities and talents that would serve them in a personalized learning environment which is important that it is first teacher lead before expecting students to take ownership on their learning.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicated it served 57 schools with grade range prekindergarten to twelve. By reviewing all schools to determine which had the greater number of high needs students, the applicant reviewed student data relating to economically disadvantaged and free and reduced lunch counts. The campuses that had more than 40% of its students identified and economically disadvantaged would be served in the proposal which includes 56 of the 57 campuses. One magnet school numbers were below this cut-off but the applicant plans to ensure that school still receive the benefits of a personalized learning environment with another source of funds. The schools are listed but the applicant omitted without explanation the number of high needs students participating.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan lack clear timelines and responsible contacts to meet project goals. There is a plan to serve 56 of its 57 schools in the project and provide services with other funds to the one campus not included in the proposal. Scaling up the vision for this project would include funding the infrastructure to make the remaining schools wireless since the state RTTT grant piloted this activity for three campuses. The wireless connection is needed to provide teachers 24/7 access to student data, lessons, strategies, professional learning communities, etc. but having such access does not ensure it will utilized or that true educational reform will occur. Since the applicant did not clearly indicate if only these three schools they serve were wireless that would leave 54 schools of which 8 serve high school students to be revamped and requiring a large portion of the budget, approximately \$3 million dollars per year under equipment.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Since the applicant plans to utilize a phase-in approach to serving schools, all students would not receive services over the full period of the grant. Only students in the first 16 schools selected to be serve the first year would have a full impact of the proposal. Schools would be phased-in at 15, 15, and 10 to cover all 57 without a clear plan of how they will be selected. For example the schools serving the most high needs students could be served in the first year to ensure more services would be applied to that population or all high schools would be served first since the graduation rate is calculated</p>		

based upon a cohort of students entering grade 9 and completing high school in four years would be reasonable. There is one career and technical education school that only serves grades 9-10 therefore with the way graduation rates are calculated it is unclear if these students would feed into another high school for graduation or how they would be counted in the graduate rate for the applicant.

The four goals designed to improve student achievement on state assessments in mathematics, social studies, and English language arts as well as increase graduation rates focus on students with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged, even though 76% of the applicant's students are considered high needs students, the applicant only identified those who were economically disadvantaged.

The applicant did not discuss how the proposal would decrease the achievement gap and increase college enrollment.

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	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The chart of SAT scores from 2008 to 2012 was not a favorable example of four year good track record because the increases were minimal or decreased and it was not clearly marked that the results were student average scores of all testers. The writing results show that over a two year period that six of the ten schools scores decreased, the magnet school, Davidson remained constant at 100% and another school had a one point increase and decrease that balanced to no change, and two schools had scores to increase by 2 to 3 points which does not appear to be highly successful. The three year summaries of state assessment results overall were not favorable for example 3rd grade reading scores indicated that the percentage of students below standards declined by one point but was still higher than the state and the percentage meeting standards decreased by nine points but higher than the state.</p> <p>The goal is to ensure that all students and within subgroups will reach a graduation rate of 90% yet graduation rates and projections are not included which makes it difficult to determine if the proposal will meet that goal. The applicant did not identify which schools had been designated as low-achieving or success in turning around persistently low-achieving schools.</p> <p>Applicant has a secure mechanism in place that will allow parents and students to access student information through its website via accessing with a login and password. This also enables parents to be involved by being able to see if their child is progressing and if not see the interventions planned by the teacher.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the applicant indicated that several financial components of the operation of the district were available on its websites through various department links and the salaries for all employees, it is unclear what information includes expenditures for non-personnel. The bid and request for proposal process is clear and available to the public through its website and in the minutes of school boards when bids are awarded. The link to the website was provided.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant appears to perform a self-check with its legal department in the loop to review any grants they apply for but it is not clear that the applicant is aligned with state statute that would allow the autonomy to implement the proposal. This process of additional eyes reviewing content has been a plus for the applicant as it has submitted various applications over time. This proposal will continue with the state RTTT grant component of extending the learning time for students through collaboration with the transportation department to get students home. The applicant may have the autonomy to building new schools with the wireless infrastructure but construction is not allowable under this grant but it may be able to upgrade existing buildings if reasonable. Another component that is not clearly part of the proposal is the plan to pilot wireless internet usage with students as they may provide their own wireless devices.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant administered surveys to teachers and students regarding the use and comfort of using technology to stimulate or assist with learning but it is unclear what information was shared with this group of how the survey responses fit into building this proposal. It is unclear if any stakeholders truly participated in creating the proposal. The applicant submitted letters to the appropriate governmental entities for the comment period but from the letters it is unclear if the application was attached or if just the information about the application to implement personalized learning and its benefits was all that was submitted.

Some schools that will be served provided a letter of support as evidence that at least 70% of its teachers support the plan. There was also a letter from the Mayor supporting the proposal. Georgia Regent University will serve as a partner in implementation of the proposal and provided a support letter as evidence.

The applicant did not indicate that parents and community members provided input for the proposal or support of personalized learning.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not have a high quality plan for two of the goals which cannot be measured therefore an increase or improvement cannot be tracked. In the goals of increasing college enrollment to 90%, the applicant does not have a way to track college enrollment because Georgia College and University offer students scholarships and grant programs when they enroll and is only able to track students who receive the award but not all students graduating from the applicant's high schools receive these awards. The second goal of 90% of students being successful world-wide in competing with peers is not measurable and the applicant also does not discuss acquiring the means to measure if met.

The applicant plans to make accessible to students various methods through personalized learning that would enable students to discover the own learning styles then actively pursue learning opportunities whether it is credit recovery via on-line or virtual courses or project-based activities. This does provide students other methods of mastering content and receiving credit for classes but this would benefit high school students and would be difficult for a student with disabilities to access. Also, any student utilizing the internet would need a wireless device and internet services at home or have access during a reasonable time of day. It is unclear and there was no assurance discussed that teachers would respond to students outside of the classroom/school day with assistance on projects either assigned or student selected.

The applicant plans to serve over 31,000 students of which over 22,000 are not high school students or need of credit recovery courses, eligible for dual enrollment courses, or complete virtual courses but there is little to no discussion as to how accessing the internet will benefit this group and enable them to meet the college-and-career readiness standards as well as the state's Common Core standards.

If students choose to work on projects in collaboration with other students on-line from various parts of the world which would expose them to other cultures but it is unclear how the various cultures in their surrounding area and within their schools would be incorporated into learning. The applicant did not include parental support in the personalized learning for students as they move from grade to grade. Parents may be able to access certain information such as grades, attendances, and progress reports but there was not any discussion as how parents would be provided the resources or training to assist students.

The applicant did not discuss the setting of individual learning goals for students to be able to self-monitor or revise. The on-line system would allow teachers to recommend interventions as they monitor student progress which is an excellent way to know if a student is on-track for course completion and graduation.

Digital access appears to have more focus on instruction that classroom delivery therefore teachers would receive professional development on the effective use of technology in the classroom also providing students and parents with the district's acceptable use policy of technology. It is unclear how the students in the earlier grades would access multiple delivery methods of subject area content.

Students receiving special education services accommodations appear in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and other high needs students such as English language learners, overage students, students who have been incarcerated, or

students in foster care have not been identified by the applicant and accommodations to be successful in the proposal with personalized learning plans was not adequately discussed.

The applicant is aware that students would need training as well on the effective use of technology in their coursework but does not have a mechanism in place to provide training beyond staff through the district Technology Department. This staff would also provide technical support to teachers but not to students or parents which will make it difficult for all who are involved in the learning process would be on the same page and have access to the same materials.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	8
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The research cited supports components of high performing schools including providing teachers the time to share knowledge and strategies which will be part of this proposal. To utilizing and provide access for all teachers an on-line professional learning community platform is a great way to support teacher growth and encourage use of technology in the classroom. It is unclear when the teachers would access and collaborate in small groups to building a better personalized learning environment for students. Each school has an instructional coach who is paid from other funds yet there does not appear to be any coordination with them in providing professional development since that would provide hands-on one-on-one support and immediate feedback to teachers in the delivery of content.

Unless the applicant with grant funds or another source of fund plan to purchase smartphones for every student in the proposal, over 31,000, it is unclear how teachers, students, and parents would be able to interact within the classroom portals. The portal provides access to classwork, school events and activities, communicate with parents about field trips and gain permission, as well as store information but little information is provided if the IT Department would be creating this portal, contracted, etc.

Since the classroom portal appears to be the on-line mechanism teachers would use to view student store assignments, it is the avenue for teachers to make accommodations and differentiate instruction for the students who may be struggling. This may be a quick/easier tool to access such information and manipulate for students but the applicant made vague reference to making this a reality and the security needed to ensure confidentiality of student information.

The applicant did not discuss the frequency in which teachers would assess and monitor student progress toward being college-and-career ready or review/revision of personalized learning plans for all students participating.

The applicant did not discuss the role of the teacher and principal evaluative system in the monitoring of teacher effectiveness in implementing personalized learning for all students or how feedback would be made available to educators.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	5

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The organizational chart provided indicates that all schools have supervision from central office staff. There are school leadership teams in place to supervise and evaluate instruction and programs to ensure all students are served.

High school students have access and approval to utilize the Georgia Virtual School to complete new courses and recover lost credits which is one additional means to demonstrate mastery and complete required credits for graduation. It is unclear if middle school students may also access the resource to retake courses they may have failed. The Response to Intervention (RtI) process which is a three tier intervention model would be available to elementary students who may be struggling with subject area content that provides them another means to mastery content.

The applicant discussed polices under review to provide school teams increased flexibility such as grading, scheduling, instructional materials, facility and acceptable use of technology which does not provide an adequate response to the criterion of providing resources to students and adapting for students with disabilities and English language learners. For example instructional materials are needed to provide classroom instruction and student materials so that they may participate in lessons.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant stated that it was difficult for economically disadvantaged students to access the necessary content, tools, and learning resources of that are part of the proposal but did not indicate how this would be changed to ensure all students and their parents have access. The applicant's technology staff provides maintenance and repairs on equipment, training, and technical support to school personnel only but there was not a plan to extend such support to stakeholders including students and parents outside of the school day. The newly adopted Technology Plan only expands current technical support to school staff and will not expand to serve parents and students after school. Parents may access their student's grades via the on-line teacher grade book to view but there was not a discussion as to allowing parents to export information even with their secure login.

The applicant listed several software programs utilized to administer assessments such as DIBELS and AIMSweb, instruction such as Carnegie Learning and V-Math as well as its connection to the state's longitudinal data system that stores attendance, assessment scores, and enrollment which allows storage and disaggregation of data and the generation of appropriate reports. The applicant did not provide adequate discussion regarding the addition with grant funds of a digital system to allow students to share resources and save media. This system would be installed on 41 campuses during the second year of the grant of which the benefits to personalized learning was not discussed and it is unclear if it already is available at the other 16 schools or what their options would be if it is not.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	2
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's recent five year accreditation review provided them with a model to follow for continuous review and monitoring of student improvement and professional growth of staff as it implements personalized learning in this proposal. As discussed earlier two of the three goals of the project cannot be measured therefore monitoring progress and gather feedback to revise project will not occur. Raising the graduation rates of all students and subgroups can be monitored but the applicant did not address this goal specifically in how the project would be adjusted as needed to ensure it is met. The applicant did not clearly indicate how it would share progress and results of the proposals with the public.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's media and technology departments maintain effective computerized systems to supports viable communication and sharing with staff and community stakeholders. These systems such as Global Connect is used to contact parents regarding attendance and school events which may be through a phone tree option or email but an example was not given to support the effectiveness of this system. Teachers may register for needed professional development through its iPerform system and teacher evaluative system are in place which shows support and tracking of professional learning by the administrators.</p> <p>The applicant's board of education member contacts, agendas, and minutes are made public via the web. The monthly meetings held by the building principals keeps the lines of communication of student achievement with central office personnel that is included on the school board agenda for all who attend those meetings or are able to access the website would have the opportunity to be aware but whether they may provide feedback is unclear.</p> <p>Each school is required to create a school council that includes representation from the community and parents, students are included on the council at secondary schools which provides at the school level input on programs and policies. The applicant has established a steady flow of support from the community in the form of PTOs, PTAs, volunteer programs, partnership with higher education institutes and community groups.</p> <p>The applicant is aware that sending hardcopies of information home via a student's backpack may not reach the parent or reach them in time for whatever the event may be but did not discuss alternative methods beyond electronic media. The use of social media platform to communicate with parents is innovative yet not highly effective as the applicant does not provide data to show that families they serve have adequate access by having a cell phone, smart phone, other electronic media to send and receive information.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant provided performance measures in a vague format with limited explanation or rationale beyond the measures that were required by the state. For example the college-and-career ready performance index for high school, the "percent of students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the Ninth Grade Literature End of Course Test (required participation rate ≥ 95%)" and the support chart indicates performance targets from 83.7% in 2012 to 91.1% by 2017. The cohort graduation rate does not have a % indicated in the chart but the proposal's goal is 90% for all subgroups which would not be met based upon the data in the chart provided showing all students at 83.7% by 2017.

The applicant did not discuss how the measures would be reviewed to for timely intervention to ensure academic improvement for students and that all targets were met for all grade levels.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant discussed the characteristics needed to implement an effective personalized learning environment for students but did not clearly articulate if this program had all characteristics or how it would be evaluate with a high quality. There is a vague plan to have the project evaluated by an external entity but the applicant did provide adequate information to review. Even though the project manager will be responsible for ensuring that all activities of the grant are implemented and share updates with assistant superintendents, it is unclear if formative and summative information would be collected and analyzed to be share during these monthly meeting. The role of the external evaluator is not clearly discussed or if an evaluation team would be in place to ensure data are collected from all schools on students, parents, and teachers to measure effectiveness of the project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide a budget summary that indicates the total requested amount for the project that would include a breakdown by category. Of the four individual project (component) budgets, the project manager budget is the only one that was reasonable with adequate discussion within the proposal. The technology budget appears to add three technology specialists to the existing staff of six specialist to provide support to teachers and students in the classroom yet the need as identified by the applicant is for technical support to parents and students outside of the school day will not be provided with additional personnel.

The applicant indicated that all schools have internet capabilities via a fiber network supported with its eRate approval and with board approval the wireless infrastructure was made possible at one high school with a PAYG funded initiative but the cost was not included that would show if the grant allocation of \$7 million dollars to this component was reasonable. The plan alos calls for an additional half a million in contracts to complete the process. Without the other funding amounts supporting this endeavor, is it difficult to determine if this is a reasonable expense when the equipment must be maintained beyond the grant period.

The applicant discussed staff utilizing on-line professional learning communities to increase knowledge, collaboration with other professionals on effective teaching strategies, and working in small groups with peers yet the professional learning budget includes \$4 million dollars for contractors to provide professional development. There is also an allocation of \$4 million dollars for staff to attend training but is it not clear if this includes time spent on-line after the workday which makes the total funds for professional development unclear and excessive.

The school and teacher innovation grants are subgrants within this grant that the applicant would award to teachers for specific projects with students which will not include all students in the proposal being served and providing subgrants with these funds may not be an allowable activity. The applicant did not discuss one time investment items but did indicate that the salaries for all project staff would end with the project. A list of funding sources was provided as an attachment but it was not outlined in the budget.

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

10

2

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not provide an adequate sustainability plan. It has budgeted for staff and training to be able to support the project beyond the grant period and will not maintain the additional staff or contracts in the proposal which may make it

difficult to sustain services in the proposal. The current technology staffs are overloaded per the applicant in providing technical support and maintaining computerized equipment in the schools and the grant includes a large budget to add equipment to at least 54 more schools and the plan does not include how this would be maintained after the additional three technology staff are no longer available. The applicant listed other funding available but did not indicate how these resources would support the proposal during the grant or after the grant period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has partnerships that support professional learning activities for staff and STEM activities for students but it is unclear if the partner provide these services as a contract from the grant or in-kind since there is a large budget to contracted services that does not have a description of services. The funding sources listed in the appendix that are available to the applicant are not aligned to the proposal and do not list any resources from partners such as community-based organizations of health care providers.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not adequately show how it would build upon the four core educational assurances even though there was discussion that the state RTTT grant had allowed and assisted in putting those key elements in place district-wide. The teachers may benefit from the multiple access to professional development through contractors, trainer-of-trainer models, school coaches, and on-line professional learning communities but the applicant did not provide a clear pathway of how that would transfer to students to meet the goals of the project or accelerate learning toward the state and college-and-career standards. It was also unclear how the student results from such instruction would fold into the teacher evaluation to reach effective or highly effective teacher designation. The applicant was unable to measure two of three goals which were more general than specific to ensure the standards were reached by all students served. There also was not a clear description of adapting the project as needed to serve students with disabilities or English language learners.

Total	210	71
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**Race to the Top - District
Technical Review Form**

Application #0152GA-2 for Richmond County School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The district has not demonstrated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision. They have included theory around the ways they might make changes if they receive the grant: embedded self-paced/project-based curriculum, online learning opportunities, adding wireless devices and infrastructure, and enhancing the professional development of educators. However, there is no specific description of how classrooms will look specifically different and how personalized learning will be implemented.
- The narrative makes reference to each of the four core educational assurance areas and there is some evidence that the State of Georgia has implemented some processes that support this (adopting Common Core curriculum, new data systems for districts, new teacher and principal evaluation system and a push to work with low achieving schools). However, the applicant has not described how the new project will specifically link to the current work done in Georgia, or how they as a district have addressed these four core assurance areas and how they plan to build on this work.

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

10

2

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Over the course of the grant, the applicant plans to include all schools where more than 40% of the population is classified as low-income. In this district, that means 56 out of the 57 schools in the district will be included. Approximately 31,000 students and 2200 teachers.
- The district plans to implement in four phases/cohorts, with cohort one being 16 schools that have been identified as having effective principals and teachers. There is little information about how this classification will be done or what data will be used to identify highly effective principals and teachers.
- As written, the narrative indicates that a majority of the school district will be part of the grant, however, there is little specific data about how high-quality LEA-level implementation. As written, the schools will remain working in silos with a train-the-trainer model for professional development. The sustainability of this model requires that staff remain at a school, and there is no accompanying data about staff retention to support whether the district can maintain this level of staff retention to support the project as written.
- The district has failed to provide information regarding the total number of participating high needs students and has left this column blank.

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

10

1

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The application does not include a high-quality plan describing how the reform will be scaled up into meaningful reform. There are no specific key goals of the project, no specific activities, no specific timeline, no specific deliverables. The plan has mentioned professional development specialists as key personnel for supporting some implementation of PD for teachers, but there are no specific overarching description of activities and people who will be responsible.
- The narrative includes some specific theory and research that the district is using to design their program, however, they do not have a specific program design that speaks to how they will specifically implement.

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

10

1

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- As written, the applicants vision will not result in improved student learning. While the applicant provides statements of what will improve, they do not provide data or targets, or a clear understanding of baseline data.
- The narrative addresses academic achievement for students with disabilities but does not provide specific data or projections, no baseline data or numbers of students within the category.
- The narrative addresses that they will improve graduation cohort rates, however there is no baseline data and no projected growth.
- There is no data included for addressing achievement gap.
- Applicant states that 90 percent of their students will be successful in college, however, they have not provided any data for baseline, or indicated how this will be measured.
- Applicant states that 90 percent of their students will be competitive with their peers, however, there is no baseline data of indication of how this will be measured.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has not provided data to indicate a clear record of success for the past four years. • Data included does not demonstrate a trend for success, and is only comparing state level data to district level data. • There is no individual school data and no breakdown of demographics to demonstrate closing achievement gap, improving graduation rates or college enrollment. • No specific evidence to demonstrate reforms for lowest-achieving schools, in fact the narrative and data provided do not provide any information about lowest-achieving/low-performing schools. • Narrative indicates that student performance data is available to parents and educators, however, there is little description of how the data is used to inform and improve participant, instruction and services. Narrative indicates parents have access to the data, but now how they are supported in understanding it. Narrative also indicates that educators have access to the data every 15 days and that they look at it in grade level/subject-level teams, but no clear understanding of processes used and how instruction is improved by analyzing data. • Additional data was provided in section B4 - however, the graduation data as presented does not demonstrate increase in graduation rates. Performance data is provided with demographic detail for the 2013 year only - no comparison data with demographic detail. 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has not demonstrated a high level of transparency. They have not included specific information about how data is available or how it is accessible, particularly by individual school level data. • Narrative indicates that district level information is available on the district website as well as the state website with a specific web address provided for the state website. • There is no indication that any school-level salaries or expenditures are available or that they are easily accessible. The applicant has not provided evidence of this area, or addressed it in their narrative. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	1
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has not demonstrated evidence of sufficient autonomy. Narrative indicates that there are some current changes that have been implemented as a result of the state Race to the Top grant including changing bus routes, and developing a district specific RTI framework. • Narrative indicates that if funded, the district will insure that policies are in place to provide for the appropriate autonomy. This is not enough evidence to demonstrate sufficient autonomy. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	2
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has not provided evidence of meaningful stakeholder support or input in the development of the proposal. • 723 teachers responded to an on-line survey, however, there are 2241 teachers in the project plan and less than 50% of them responded. They also did not provide feedback on the project as developed. • 1291 students responded to an online survey, however, there are over 33,000 students in the district. This is a low response rate, and there is no indication that students provided meaningful feedback on the specific project. • Applicant indicated they have a survey they have sent to parents and community stakeholders, but no responses yet or specific feedback on the proposal. • Narrative indicates that summer board meetings included discussion of the project, but no specific details of how feedback from the administrators was included in the development of the proposal. • A community event was held in October, however, there is no indication of who attended, or how many people, or to 		

what extent they were provided the opportunity to provide feedback.

- There were a total of five letters of support included, but four of them were from schools in the district indicating that over 70% of the teachers were interested in being a part of the project. However, that is only four schools out of the 56 to be included, and there is no indication that teachers had the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback. The fifth letter is from a university. There is no indication of community-based stakeholder support.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant narrative does not include a high quality plan for implementation. The applicant has not identified key goals for the project, there are no specific activities associated with the project, no specific timeline, no specific deliverables and no definition of who will be responsible for implementation.
- Narrative includes statements about why personalized learning is good for students, but no specifics about how applicant intends to create personalized environments and learning opportunities.
- Narrative provides absolutely no evidence of a plan for how they will engage students and work to prepare students academically using college and career-ready standards.
- The applicant has failed to provide information that speaks to the projects learning plan. There is no information describing the plan for how students will be able to follow their interests and develop personalized learning goals aligned with college- and career-readiness. There is no information about personalizing instruction or environments for students, no information about providing feedback for students including the use of data, and no information about how the district will work to support high-need students. This section is severely lacking detail and content and has not provided enough information to evaluate.

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

20

2

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has not developed a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching. There are no identified key goals, there are few specific activities identified, there are no timelines for implementation, few specific deliverables and no indication of how responsibilities will be shared.
- Narrative provides few examples of the types of professional development opportunities. They intend to create online learning communities to look at student work and work collaboratively, but there are few specifics of how this will be done.
- There is no discussion of specific tools, data and resources that educators will use to increase student achievement.
- The applicant has failed to provide a clear and comprehensive plan and description of how they will improve teaching and learning. They have failed to address how they intend to develop a personalized learning environment for students; how instructors will work to adapt content and instruction; specifically how educators will be supported to learn new teaching methods based on best practice, how data will be collected and used to improve instruction, or the extent to which school leaders/leadership teams have effective structures to support the learning environment for personalized student learning.
- This section of the application is significantly lacking enough detail to provide an evaluation of their project.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant does not have a high-quality plan to support implementation. While the narrative includes some information about restructuring that happened at the district and some indication of expertise in the evaluation

system, there is little info to support a high-quality plan.

- Narrative does not addresses how schools will be provided flexibility and autonomy; there is no indication of how students can earn credits based on mastery; there is no indication that students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times; and there is little information supporting a plan to support students with disabilities or English learners.
- There is no timeline associated with a plan, or deliverables or goals and activities aligning the current district structure to the project implementation.

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

10

1

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has not provided evidence of a high-quality plan to support project implementation. The applicant has not provided goals, activities, timelines or deliverables as part of a high-quality plan. There is insufficient detail to demonstrate the the applicant has an LEA and school infrastructure that will support personalized learning.
- The narrative identifies a gap in resources for low-incomes families outside the school day, but does not include a plan for alleviating this gap.
- Narrative mentions some supports through partnerships (library, local youth centers, etc.), but no specific way to utilize these resources or how they plan to connect parents/families to community partners.
- Narrative includes a description of the current gaps and assets of their technology system, but no alignment to a plan specifically for implementation of this project.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has not developed a high-quality plan for continuous improvement with this project.
- Narrative provides some information of the Georgia School Improvement process, but does not connect it specifically with this project implementation.
- There is no indication of how they will collect data for regularly feedback and improvement, and they have not identified any goals, activities, timeline or deliverables associated with a continuous improvement plan.

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

5

1

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has identified three goals associated with communication: Provide timely and regular feedback; engage and communicate with internal and external stakeholders, and measure and track performance. However, there are no specific activities, timelines, deliverables or identification of who will specifically work to help meet these goals.
- Within the narrative, the applicant has described some existing activities that have been utilized in the past to deliver information to stakeholders, but none of these activities have been included in a plan specifically for this project implementation, or tied to continuous improvement.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has not included narrative to describe how performance measures were chosen, or to provide details on how projects were developed. Charts indicate that there is a performance measure for 4-year cohort graduation rate, but no specific narrative to support the selection; include elementary, middle and high school academic performance measures as indicated on standardized tests - but no specific narrative to support selection; a page describing college and career ready performance measure for elementary, middle and high school, but no specific targets identified or information by demographics.
- There is insufficient information regarding specific measures, rationale for selecting measures, how they will review

and improve the measure. It is unclear if the applicant has thoughtfully determined the performance measures they are hoping to include - no evidence of a plan or rationale.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has not included a high-quality plan for evaluation.
- They have identified how the district evaluates students and teachers, but not linked specifically to this project or a high-quality plan.
- While the narrative identified that the program manager would be responsible for keeping track of evaluations, it is not part of a high-quality plan that includes key goals, activities, data associated with activities, timeline, or deliverables.
- The applicant has not sufficiently provided a plan for evaluation.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has not sufficiently provided details of how funds link to the project implementation. There is a significant amount of money allocated for technology, and contractual services with little narrative as to why this is necessary to support the project.
- Because the project as described in the narrative is far too vague, the numbers associated with the budget do not provide enough detail to determine how the investments and priorities have been developed.
- Applicant did not include the total budget for the project, and did not clearly label the tables included.
- Applicant did not include information about which expenses were one-time expenses, or identify any budget items that would be supported by external funding.

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

10

0

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant has failed to provide a high-quality plan for sustainability. The narrative in this section is scarce and references that the district will invest in Human Capital to support sustainability. This is not a plan and there is no evidence that the district has the capacity to sustain this project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

- Applicant did not address the competitive preference priority and did not include any information/narrative for this section.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant has not met absolute priority one. The plan they have set forth in the narrative is insufficient and does not comprehensively address how it will build on the core educational assurance areas. The description of personalized learning environments is vague and does not specifically address teaching and learning and how they will work to support students and educators or align with college- and career-ready standards.
- Narrative provides theory and an understanding of the necessity to develop a plan, however there is no specific plan to actually implement this project in a specific way.

Total	210	22
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0152GA-4 for Richmond County School System

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that it addresses the core assurances through its current collaboration with the State's RTTT program and claims that this work has made "significant changes to the traditional model" used in the school district. It proposes three components to further support RTT-D implementation: "personalizing" school and classroom interactions, installing wireless technology throughout the system, and increasing professional learning.

The initial vision statement paints an enthusiastic picture of the possibilities of constructively changing teaching practices by enhancing wireless access to resources, but lacking from this positive picture are concrete examples of specific changes in teaching practice, use of technology, or professional learning that are proposed. The vision does not distinguish between program modifications that have already been achieved and those that are to be implemented in a future program, and it does not show specific ways that new grant-funded programs will enhance initial success of current innovations.

The text of this section is largely a literature review, with few references to research-based evidence for claims made. The text does not include a clear theory of action that complements the existing activities implemented with the State's RTTT support. Because of the lack of research-based documentation for the ideas presented (few research sources are provided), it appears that the plans advocate for an untested technological product rather than a new example of proven best practices that are the foundation of structural and substantive classroom changes.

The discussion of proposed new classroom practices and relationships among educators and families is sufficiently non-specific that the reader does not obtain a clear picture of how classroom experiences will change for students and teachers in the proposed future program. The ideas presented also do not show how parents of highly at-risk students will have more and improved access to teachers and resources for supporting their children. New technology is known to be ineffective without deep structures of support and one-on-one assistance for helping parents help their students.

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

The approach to implementation in this section does not make a strong case. The applicant states that it proposes to

work within 56 of the district's 57 schools and to roll out its work in three phases. The three phases are not explained in detail, although there is a brief description about the selection criteria for the schools to be involved in the first phase of the project. There is no clear differentiation of how the proposed program will roll out differently in different school levels or in the three phases.

The lead-off idea of the innovation is to "establish a wireless environment for all schools," but a wireless environment is simply a tool and not a substantive program. Whether it promotes a programmatic innovation depends on the substance of what information can be accessed wirelessly and how much knowledge and skill professionals have about how to teach in a wireless context. It is the relationships between teachers, content, and students that are keys to personalizing teaching and to learning and making it more relevant to learners' lives and capacities. How the wireless environment will improve these relationships and achieve better teaching is not defined.

The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities which meets most of documentation required by the RTT-D application requirements, although two requested columns are left blank, the number of participating high needs students and the percent of incomes from low income family. The missing information limits the applicant's capacity to establish a baseline for evaluation impact and outcome in later phases of this project.

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

This section does not meet the requirements of a high-quality plan, leaving unclear how the proposed project elements will be scaled up. The description suggests a phase-in process over the four-year grant period, but the phase-in components are not clear. The applicant indicates that the first 16 schools will be selected from schools with effective principals and teachers, but the criteria for meeting the standard of "effective" are ill-defined.

A flow chart of staffing shows a management structure that includes coaches, technology specialists, trainers, teachers and students, but it is not clear whether this defines a school-level or district-level management structure and how many people or positions will be involved. Without evidence of the specific ratio of support staff to teachers, the applicant makes an incomplete case for the potential effectiveness of the district's capacity for promoting improvement.

The logic model provided makes some unsound logical leaps, suggesting that a teachers will change the way they "see themselves" and that "24/7 access" to computerized knowledge will automatically generate "anytime learning" and student engagement in "authentic" work. This theory is not substantiated with examples of policy changes that will support a plan in which teachers will be able to provide 24/7 educational services. No examples demonstrate how training and assistance will help teachers see themselves and their responsibilities differently. Finally, the applicant does not demonstrate the features of a high-quality plan, as defined in this notice, e.g., very specific tasks, timelines, benchmarks, actions, deliverables and the staff members who will be tasked with and accountable for implementation.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides four broad and ill-defined goal statements which restate the goal requirements of the NIA. The applicant's four goals set a low standard, and neither the goals nor the measurement strategies are explicit. It is not clear how goals vary for different age/grade groups; and outcome measures are not stated in measureable terms. References to the measures that will be used do not define the measures or provide evidence of how these measures fit with the system's overall assessment systems. (Note that measures are written as initials, e.g., CRCT/EOCT/CCRPI, and a reader cannot assess from these initials what the tools of measurement are or how they will provide valid and reliable student outcome evidence.) The goals suggest that ELA, Mathematics, and Social Studies are the target academic areas that will be addressed with this grant funding, but this subject focus is not stated in the criteria within this program element.

While these are not inappropriate long-term goals for a district to hold, they are not sufficiently grant specific and they are not clearly aligned with components in the project's theory of change or implementation plans or with the age and grade levels of students who would be served by the project.

The projected graduation rates are based on the current 9th grade cohort but the applicant does not include outcomes for students in other grade levels over the life of the grant.

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



	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	2
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The evidence presented does not meet the requirements of this criterion because it is not clear which students have improved on which outcomes, how much or little achievement gaps have closed across schools within the district, what high school graduation rates were in the past, or what percent of students enter college after high school. The statements and data do not show how the district has served its persistently lowest-achieving schools or students. It is not clear how the data from previous years has been used to improve schools' educational practices or students' performance. Charts of the criterion-referenced tests are also unnumbered, though they are labeled, but school-level data are not included.</p> <p>The evidence about the district's prior successes is unsystematically summarized, difficult to interpret, and it is challenging to assess what has been successful about the district's past programs. Data charts are not well-labeled or explained, and there is no coherent narrative explaining the charts. For example, the narrative says that the first chart presents "SAT" data - but the reader is not certain if the data reported refer to results from the Scholastic Aptitude tests or from the Stanford Achievement Tests. It is also not clear if the schools included are within-district high schools or some other group of schools. The second, unnumbered chart does not indicate what percentage of all high school students are "first time test takers." Since the pass rate is extremely high across schools, we know nothing about whether these are schoolwide measures or measures of schools' best students.</p> <p>Overall, the reader is not clear what conclusions are to be drawn about the districts past record of success. The statements about "digital literacy" and "personalizing learning" suggest a weak understanding of these ideas and raise doubts about the district's capacity to help students become expert users of technology.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative summarizes some of the publically available evidence about the district's academic, fiscal, and programmatic performance. It does not, however, provide examples of actual data that will increase transparency about LEA processes and practices. The applicant states that salary schedules and financial reports are available, but, again, no examples of this information are included in the application.</p> <p>From the data presented, it is not evident how transparent the district's processes, practices, and investments are. Of particular concern is the fact that the applicant does provide the minimum information that is required in the four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds (e.g., actual personnel salaries for U.S. Census Bureau's classification categories, school-level instructional and non-instructional staffs and non-personnel expenditures).</p> <p>Without specific evidence of publically displayed school-level data from State and local funds, the applicant has not met the standard of transparency stipulated in this criterion.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates that the district has had successful and cooperative relationships with its State agency, including obtaining flexibilities in meeting transportation requirements and organizing its Response to Interventions program. It also suggests that the state's Common Core Standards, Longitudinal Data system, and professional evaluation systems are consistent with the program components proposed in this application.</p> <p>The applicant does not demonstrate how specific components of the application align with opportunities to benefit from State flexibilities. It is not clear if waivers will be needed and what the applicant will have to do to make a case for waiving specific rules. The evidence is not clear how the State legal, statutory, and regulatory structure facilitates or restrains implementation of proposed program components.</p> <p>In this section, as in other sections, typographical and editing errors make it difficult to understand key components of the narrative.</p>		

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)	15	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of how they involved teachers and reached out to its community as it developed this RTTD application. Letters of support and engagement confirm some of these activities. The narrative describes examples of how the community routinely reaches out to its constituencies and indicates a plan to continue this practice under the proposed RTT-D program.</p> <p>Although the applicant makes a case for being attentive to and being transparent about providing key information to the district, it does not detail how stakeholders were engaged in developing the RTT-D proposal. Other than a teacher survey and letters to potential partners and the Mayor, it is not clear if and how the district included perspectives of students, families, teachers, or principals in participating schools or how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.</p> <p>There is no discussion of how teachers or other educational staffs were involved in the proposal development through their collective bargaining representation, and there is no evidence that teachers had a voice in any aspect of this proposal's development.</p> <p>As in other sections, the typographical errors and misplaced information distract the reader from the case the applicant seeks to make. In this section, for example, there appears to be several data charts and a long paragraph that belong elsewhere in the application, making it hard to assess how the applicant is addressing this criterion.</p>		

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

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

<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>From the narrative, it is difficult to conceptualize the applicant's vision for the implementing the actual teaching and learning aspects of its technology advances. The program invests heavily in several large-scale computer management systems, which are being installed within traditional school environments. Though supports are proposed as part of the grant program, the application does not address how its coaching, training, and evaluation systems will create a new culture of teaching that reflects best practice evidence for aligning schools to the vision proposed.</p> <p>This section of the application lists activities that will be implemented in schools but it provides no rollout timelines, benchmarks, or milestones as part of the plan. The applicant advances the idea that "personalized learning" is important, but it does not show what teachers and school leaders will actually do with the technology tools to strengthen teaching practices, make them more responsive to the highest risk students, and promote more exploratory, responsive, or personalized learning experiences.</p> <p>The applicant proposes to introduce many new computerized assessment components, and it enthusiastically advances the idea of 24/7 access to information. It also suggests that it will train teachers and coach them to make a transition to a computer-and assessment-based strategies for "personalizing" learning. However, the applicant's discussion of this plan conveys a limited understanding of how skillful its educators must be to use online tools as resources rather than as replacements for the face-to-face teaching/learning experience. The narrative indicates that there will be multiple measures and tools available to teachers, but it does not discuss how these many new technological tools will deepen teachers' critical knowledge of content, capacity to make diagnostic judgments, or guide and personalize students' learning.</p> <p>A narrative also suggests little understanding of what is involved with helping parents and students access on-line tools outside of school. The hope is for digital resources to equalize access, but there is no plan to ensure that the most at-risk, and hard to reach students and families will have the access they need to digital learning experiences. Many high-needs students and their families live in circumstances where internet wiring is not available there is little likelihood that they will have the space where students can work with the computers they might bring from school. Also, the plan does not address how the district will minimize language barriers which can be considerable obstacles to non-English speakers. Similarly, no plans indicate how educators will ensure that income-stressed parents gain enough experience with computers that they are able to help their students at home or at neighborhood centers and libraries where computers might be available on loan.</p>		
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In the end, the applicant fails to demonstrate how "personalized" learning systems will support college- and career-ready graduation and a rigorous K- grade 12 educational program. The narrative provided does not show how the district will make the paradigm shift to offer all students new, more responsive and personalized teaching and learning systems. It also neglects to explain its planning for accommodating high-need students and families, including those with special educational or language learning needs. It does not demonstrate mechanisms for training and sustaining support that will assist students in understanding how to use the tools and resources that will be provided to them.

The applicant's apparent lack of understanding the system it seeks to implement is also evident in the limited information it offers regarding planning, strategies for introducing new program elements and trial testing them. As in other sections, the typographical errors and lack of attention to the application requirements distracts from the case the applicant seeks to make for funding its proposed program.

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

20

3

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

As in other sections above, the applicant uses ambitious language to make a case for "revolutionary revamping" of its teaching and learning systems, promising to make "enormous pedagogical paradigm shift[s]" in the way teachers teach and leaders lead.

The specifics of its program, however, do not demonstrate the method, plan, or evaluation feedback that will help educators achieve such ambitious goals. The application does not propose a differentiated structure for different school types or grade levels; it does not include plans for changing its professional evaluation systems; and it does not detail the content of the proposed training. And, significantly, there no suggestions that teachers will be invited as collaborating change agents in designing and implanting the processes.

The applicant proposes a job-embedded training structure but it does not demonstrate how such training will work on a day-to-day basis. It is also not clear how teachers will be able to work together to put to use the new tools and resources that the new technology will offer. The applicant mentions an "Edmondo-supported professional development," which is currently in place, but it is not clear what comprises this professional development or how the district knows if the system has been effective in accomplishing the project goals.

The applicant envisions new professional learning communities and collaborations in schools that enable collaborating educators to use computers that have not been available to them up to now. But true re-training requires one-on-one collaboration and truly personal collaboration, in addition to the exchanges that can occur electronically. Technology, properly used, can enhance communication and information access, but it does not provide extra time or nurture substantive, content-based exchanges that must occur to spark a paradigm shift in teaching and learning.

This section of the application suggests many ways that technology might streamline data management and expand book libraries to promote "global learning" opportunities. But no plan demonstrates a set of activities, timelines, deliverables or responsible parties who will install these new tools and advance educator learning of how to use them while they are teaching students or leaning schools. Missing is the road map that teachers and their students will take to move from books and libraries to global digital connections.

A particularly critical missing piece in this section is evidence of how the district's professional evaluation system will be redesigned to promote this new vision of personalized schools with technology-driven teaching. Finally, it is also clear how an upgraded and more rigorous course of study will be available to students through this project.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)	15	2

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant briefly describes the district's organizational structure, indicating a small central office and school teams in which principals and one support representative supervise and evaluate the instructional staff and schools' educational

programs. The district uses the Georgia Teacher and Principal evaluation system as the foundation of its own professional evaluation system. The applicant outlines basic features of its current academic programs and summarizes the technology that currently supports instruction.

The applicant's extensive narrative explains what currently exists in the district without explaining a plan for how existing programmatic features change to improve learning environments and teaching practices. In fact, the narrative specifically demonstrates awareness that new policies and practices are needed, and states a list of policies that should be targeted for revision. However, the applicant does not commit to what specific changes it must make in its policies and procedures to achieve its mission of providing "every student" with a highly skilled teachers and ever improved learning opportunities.

Important missing information includes evidence of how specific programs will serve specific schools with new services, practices, and policies. The schools and their specialized programs are itemized, but with little detail explaining the connection between the existing features and proposed new features. The narrative explains the current technology structure, but it does not explain how newly proposed technology components will align with what currently exists. It is also not clear which proposed technology and professional development features are new in the proposed program and what features are already part of the school district's organization structure.

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

10

2

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section addresses this criterion at a high level, providing little evidence of how new infrastructures will be created in schools across the district to support the goals of this initiative. The applicant states that the local student information system is connected with the State's longitudinal system and that the district's commonly used instructional assessments are already available on line for teachers and students to track learning as it progresses.

In the previous section, regarding rules and policies, the narrative indicates that the district works with neighborhood partners to lend computers to families and students. It also states that all teachers have their own designated computers and that many schools have wireless notebooks and other technology for creating projects.

All the indicators required in this criterion element are discussed very generally, without providing specific evidence about the extent of resource availability, the strategies for promoting engaged uses of newly proposed tools, or how the future digital additions would improve teaching practices and enhance learning if they were installed.

Most significantly, there is no information about what supports there are available to pay for home-based internet access. The applicant specifically does not indicate what policies or procedures ensure access to infrastructure supports for parents, educators, and other stakeholders regardless of income; details are not provided to make clear what and how new content, tools, and other learning resources will be available both in and out of school and no evidence shows how potential users a range of support for using proposed technology.

The applicant reports that its local MIS and the State's MIS are linked, so interoperability is presumed, but no information defines the types of data that will be connected in the various proposed data systems that go from school, to district, to State.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	0

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not address "continuous improvement" assessment as requested in this criterion. The information provided discusses the district's involvement with a national accreditation process and with the State's mandated "improvement process." The applicant describes the kinds of information that schools maintain as part of these monitoring

processes, but this kind of monitoring is not addressing the question of how the proposed project will be monitored.

In particular, the applicant does not provide information about how it will continuously monitor and improve the grant implementation, what feedback it will receive to assess progress on each component, or how evidence of successful implementation will be publically shared to confirm the value of the RTT-D investments.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section is very much a repetition of the stakeholder discussion in Section B4, above. It does not provide a plan showing how it will engage stakeholders in the proposed program components. Instead, the applicant describes the district's routine strategies for keeping the community informed about school and Board-related issues, such as achievement, budgets, annual system reviews.

The applicant indicates that the district has adopted a program called, Edmodo, which is designed to "assist ... districts in their efforts to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality and results of reform and improvement." This appears to be a MIS system for gathering, storing, analyzing and reporting student learning progress, although the details about this program are skeletal.

Much of this section address how the district will "use an online social learning platform" to strengthen instruction. Its discussion, however, confounds teaching to high standards with "social learning," not making at all clear how the two actually relate to one another. Social media might be one mechanism for getting the word out about new innovations to a community through stories, fast facts, pictures, tweets, etc., But the applicant does not explain how this kind of communication would build a foundation of support for the complex network of educational changes that the applicant envisions.

As written, the application suggests that the project's creators do not fully understand how an information system works as a tool for facilitating personalized learning. There is the assumption that the information system will streamline teachers' activities, although there is no actual evidence to suggest these systems would accomplish that aim.

Although the applicant provides a fairly lengthy description of proposed project implementation processes, it does not offer the required list of activities, timelines, deliverables, and names of responsible individuals who are responsible for ensuring that there is continuous feedback and engagement of both internal and external stakeholder audiences.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Although charts pertaining to many measures are provided, there is not a clear rationale for how each measure was selected, how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information tailored to the proposed plan, or how the project will review and improve the proposed measurement strategy over time to gauge implementation progress. Without a narrative to accompany and explain the charts, however, and it is not entirely clear how they will be useful measures of student performance that results from the grant implementation.

The value of these charts is weakened by edit problems and labeling problems. For example, one chart projects 4-year "cohort graduation rate performance targets;" and another chart projects "EOCT Proficiency Rates to 2017" (by demographic subgroup). This chart appears to be reporting results of end-of-course tests, but that is not specified. Similar projections are made for elementary and middle school ELA, mathematics and reading proficiency by demographic group. No accommodations are made to assess students below the third grade.

A set of "2013 College and Career Ready Performance Indices" are provided for each of the grade levels; and there are additional measures suggested that schools may earn for "exceeding the bar." Since it is not clear what the baseline and annual outcome measures are, however, the outcome required for "exceeding the bar" is also not clear.

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

5

0

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for how it plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the RTT-D investments. The narrative describes the State's teacher and leader evaluation systems, TKES and LKES, and it very briefly states that assistant superintendents will be tasked with oversight of each schools "innovation grant." Significantly, the applicant does not provide a plan for how that oversight will be carried out.

No outside evaluator is mentioned as part of the evaluation plan, and no plan is provided. Instead, the applicant itemizes outcome achievement targets for various grades on various tests. While these are worthy data points to measure and monitor routinely, this list of data points does not constitute a plan for measuring the RTT-D investment.

No narrative details how the district's plans to conduct a continuous improvement assessment of implementation. The applicant has not shown its plan for monitoring and evaluating the grant's value in achieving its goals in classrooms, for making mid-course corrections, or for determining short-, mid-term, and long-range outcomes or impact. The test scores will track student performance, but there is no proposed mechanism for assessing the implementation fidelity during the life of the grant or for reporting regularly to critical internal or external stakeholders, including participating teachers and school administrators as well as the School Board and families and community members.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	1
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's budget is difficult to interpret and the accompanying narrative is also not sufficiently specific to make clear how the district plans to use the RTT-D funds. Four sub-budgets are provided, but there is no overall budget summary.</p> <p>The four separate budgets include budgets for (1) technology and personalized learning; (2) professional learning; (3) school and teacher innovation grants; and (4) the RTT-Project manager. These budget categories not align with other parts of the proposed project. It is also unclear why the project manager budget is not integrated within the content category budgets. There is no indication what budgeted items are one-time investments or continuing costs.</p> <p>It is not sufficient in a project budget of this magnitude to explain budget categories with broad generalizations instead of with specific line item costs and explanations. The budget does not anticipate inevitable cost changes over a four-year time period.</p> <p>Nothing in the budget of its narrative provides a convincing explanation of how the grant resources will support new activities proposed in the application above and beyond the district's current initiatives.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan (as defined in this notice) for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. Specifically, the applicant does not provide the required three-year post-grant budget projection. Its brief narrative states that "many funding sources" are listed in the Appendix, but these sources were not detailed with evidence of specific funding streams and annually allocations that can be anticipated.

The project narrative indicates key grant-funded positions will be eliminated but it does not show how key activities of the grant would be sustained without continuing investments in the people and tools that the grant would support.

Finally, the plan neglects to include information about how State and local government leaders provide financial support over time, and it fails to address how the applicant will evaluate improvements in productivity and outcomes to inform a post-grant activity and costs.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

No information was located that describes the partnership that will support Absolute Priority 1. Specifically, the applicant does not address how resources will be aligned within school and out of school to augment the schools' supports of students and families. No plan addresses the strategy for enhancing programming that provides students and families with much-needed social, emotional, or behavioral supports that align with academic and teaching practice changes. The focus of this proposed application concentrated on innovations in technology, teaching processes, and professional learning, and it did not address out-of-school supports for these features.

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1		Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant has a vision of bringing more technology, school and classroom innovation, and professional learning into its schools, its case is not sufficiently concrete to ensure implementation success.

Many broad generalizations are made where specific plans and examples are needed. In particular, few specifics detail what new teaching and learning strategies will meaningfully change prevailing practices. The applicant does not demonstrate how the district has laid the groundwork for the dramatic innovation it proposes. In particular, it is not clear how district's educators, especially its teachers, were involved in advocating new approaches to teaching, leading, learning, and building learning communities and personalized learning opportunities..

The plan does not offer a consistent high-quality plan. Critical components of the application have not been addressed with the level of precision and detail needed to implement the proposed comprehensive systemic change, and, as a result, the applicant does not meet Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	33
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