



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0167MS-1 for Stone County School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b> |
| <p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>It is a strength that the district has developed career clusters that are using common core standards. It is also a strength in the proposal that student feedback is used to inform the career cluster course offerings. The proposal specifies topics for professional development to teachers that are connected to identified student needs.</p> <p>The proposal clearly presents the district's levels of implementation of Common Core Standards and their efforts to align the curriculum to the standards and assessments. Although the alignment is not complete at all grade levels and has not been adjusted to meet college and career requirements, the proposal indicates that the process is in place to complete the mapping.</p> <p>The proposal describes a personalized system of performance -based assessments but they are not identified or well described and it is difficult to visualize the connection between personalized learning activities and performance- based measures. The performance-based measures are unclear. An example would be useful to provide evidence of the type of performance that will be expected of students to demonstrate mastery and how those performance-based activities would be scored.</p> <p>It is not clear how the district will develop the individual learning plans for each student in the system and yet hold expectations that all students will participate in the same assessment process. The proposal is lacking in details necessary to visualize the day in the life of the student that would indicate a fully fleshed out system to provide comprehensive services.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b> |
| <p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district has a data system in place that was used to determine that all students in the district would be involved in program services. The proposal provides evidence that all subgroups of students to be served include Black, IEP, White, and ED students and that all schools were identified through data analysis and provides baseline data and reasonable targets for each group. Students, teachers, neighboring districts, community businesses and resource agencies are evidenced in the appendix as being involved in the process of reviewing the basic proposal intentions.</p> <p>Estimated numbers of participants are presented for high needs students. It is not clear why the district is using estimates at this time for that particular subgroup. It appears that no evidence is available to support the identification of this group as 'high needs'. The table presented indicates that 100% of the students are low-income which is a discrepancy from the data the stated previously that 67% are in free/reduced lunch program. The proposal notes the district's intentions to address students needs and provides several strategies but is very lacking in detailed information that would support that this is a high quality plan. Time and place of supplemental services to students, teacher training models, the process to build the data system referred to, and the way in which assessments will be developed and adapted to Common Core Standards are not complete or comprehensive.</p>  |           |          |
| <b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district presents an appropriate strategy in its intention to use all teachers in the development of curriculum alignment. This will support their efforts to provide personalized instruction by ensuring staff involvement in developing the system of delivery. Staff training will include classroom coaches and teachers who have been identified as successful from within the district.</p>   |           |          |

The system or style of coaching is not well described or identified. It is difficult to visualize how this classroom coaching will lead to building capacity in teachers or deepening the learning experience for students. The one classroom example of a teacher walking around with a hand device to work with individual students at their own pace is not presented as a feasible or productive classroom setting. The lack of descriptions of timelines and benchmarks for program implementation do not support a high quality plan or the evidence that the program intentions will be able to be supported through comprehensive coordination between the various components.

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

**10**

**4**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal provides evidence that each and every student will be assessed as they enter the system and provides a focused approach to developing individual learning plans for students. State summative data is provided to support the district's evidence that a degree of data analysis is in place at this time.

The proposal states that the district is unable to track and provide data on college entrance rates currently. The data presented does not indicate that there are ambitious goals in place for the students. Expectations appear to vary from sub group to sub group without addressing the accelerated needs of students. The data presented appears to describe Black students as expected to achieve at a rate over 20% less than White students in elementary language. This does not indicate a plan to accelerate learning in the sub groups. There appears to be an expectation that IEP students at Stone High School will decrease in proficiency from the fourth year of the grant to the post grant year. The proposal estimates current college enrollment rates therefore it is difficult to evaluate the goals set for increasing the numbers. A rationale for selecting the growth targets is not presented. Accelerated learning goals are not evident that would support increased growth or ambitious goals.

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

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>5</b> |

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

The district provides evidence to support they were identified as a High Performing District by their by the state and received a Title I Distinguished School award in one school for closing achievement gaps for subgroups. Data is provided to support the improvement of language and math scores of African American students and economically disadvantaged students that slightly exceed the state's rates in these categories. The increase in these areas is attributed to a review of curriculum and professional development on best practices. Evidence is also provided that demonstrates an increase in graduation rates for all students, males, females, and in particular for students receiving services from Special Education. The proposal indicates that the district reviewed data to target needs of students and supported teachers through staff development through coaching and on topics relevant to best practices to initiate their reform efforts. A data system is described that allows parents view student data. A second data system is described that allows teachers to access formative and summative data.

The systems described do not explain how low -income families and others without access to technology are kept informed of their student's progress and needs. This is significant as there is much evidence provided that families support the application of the proposal. This level of parent support requires that their needs and access to technology be addressed with specific strategies. The student data presented is not convincing that a positive track record of success is well documented. Confusing student data is presented and therefore is difficult to evaluate in terms of past success in reform efforts. The clear identification of which schools were involved in turn around projects is not presented. There is not sufficient evidence to support data-driven decision-making is in place.

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

**5**

**2**

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

The district provides a sample of a link from their website to the US Census Bureau site to provide evidence that the information regarding salaries and expenditures is available to the public.

The district intends to increase transparency by posting board agendas and minutes on the website after the grant program is initiated. It is not clear why this information is not currently posted.

The proposal states that school level information is placed at each school. It is not clear if this information is placed in a location that is

easy for parents to access or if parents are notified that the information is available in a published format. It is also unclear which of the required information is published and available to the public as the proposal mentions that principals have a copy in their office. This access is not substantial or specific.

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

**10**

**5**

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

The proposal describes a system and process that was used to adopt Common Core Standards in the state of Mississippi and states the district's involvement in training. This is evidence that state support exists to assist in providing improved conditions for the local district students.

It is not clear what the depth of the training was or what the statement means that the state superintendent made regarding each district's role in implementing standards. It appears to be indicating autonomy but it is very disconnected from any description of how this autonomy looks. The training on personalized learning environments received by the district from their state department of education is not described in depth. State statutes, local policies, and district examples of how autonomy is evidenced are not presented to provide comprehensive evidence of support for creative and innovative projects.

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

**15**

**12**

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

The proposal includes many letters of support from parents, students, local agencies and businesses and other supportive entities for application for funding. The letters provide evidence to support the community meetings that were held prior to the application for the funding. There is clear evidence that many partnerships exist to support the district ranging from institutes of higher education to a behavior program to public safety services. Letters from teachers are provided that indicate their support for implementation of the project and their specific needs for improving instruction in their classrooms. The student letters of support clearly identify their perceptions of the current lack of access to technology and textbooks.

It is not clear from the many signatures that check 'yes' on school sign in sheets what exactly they were supporting. The statement that the parents agree that they need and want funding is not evidence that they were aware of the components of the grant proposal or that they understand any reform specifics that the program might bring to their children's educational experience.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>   | <b>20</b> | <b>9</b> |
| <b>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The proposal describes a learner-centered environment that will provide access to students from grades 3-12 to experts, internships, and coursework designed to target their interests and needs in order to support college and career ready students. A variety of opportunities are described for students to have access to review and monitor their progress and request support as needed. The inclusion of career and college coaches to support the students in this component is a viable approach to addressing personalized learning needs. A strong component is described in the student teen leadership program to build students' strengths in goal setting and provide them with community service projects. A great deal of flexibility is described for students' access to coursework online, by semester or by year, by subject area and through internships. An after school component describes students' access to opportunity through an extended day. An example of performance-based assessment is provided through students demonstrating mastery by developing media projects.</p> <p>There are such a varied amount of opportunities described that it is difficult to visualize how one student might access the opportunities. The day in the life of a student enrolled in the various services is not clearly described. The proposal states that individual learning plans will be in place however, the details of what these plans look like, how they are developed, the direct implementation of these plans is not well described. Although many activities are described in the plan, the specifics of the delivery of services are not presented in a realistic and achievable manner that would indicate a high quality approach to implementation of the strategies provided. The process is not well defined due to the lack of timelines and deliverables and other specifics regarding training, student opportunities to demonstrate mastery, and evidence that teachers will implement the proven practices identified.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>   | <b>20</b> | <b>6</b> |

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

The proposal provides specific topics for teacher training that will support their goals for students to receive personalized instruction. A coaching/mentoring component is included to provide support to teachers as well as specific training for teachers in the teen leadership program. It is a strength that administrative responsibilities are addressed that includes the support of school leaders in the program services. Requiring principals to understand and support the program through classroom visits is evidence of the commitment of the project to educator effectiveness. Descriptions of frequent assessment that include student surveys as well as summative assessments and performance-based assessments provide comprehensive sources to monitor and address student learning.

The proposal cites research but it is not clear how the research points are connected to their proposed activities. A specific coaching/mentoring program is not identified or well described to support embedded professional development and support. Collaborative coaching, cognitive coaching, peer coaching are a various models that vary in their delivery of support. None are described as specific to this program. Although topics for teacher training are presented, it is not clear how and when these presentations will take place or when the time will be afforded to teachers to participate in these opportunities or in the opportunities for collaboration and coaching. Virtual coaching is also presented but no specific program is identified. The lack of timelines for delivery of staff development does not support a high quality plan. The proposal presents district 'beliefs' but does not address how these beliefs will be translated into high quality services to students that will enable them to receive instruction from effective teachers and leaders. A current system of evaluation is vaguely described and once again provides intentions without providing substantial evidence of how these intentions will be concretely accomplished.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
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| <b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>6</b> |

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

The proposal cites a wide variety of evidence to support a system through which students may move at their own pace and demonstrate mastery. The use of media projects as a performance-based measure is a good example. The proposal provides evidence that courses are developed for students that are flexible to their needs and will include internships and community-based projects. The needs of ELL students and special education students are addressed through broad teacher training topics. There is evidence of autonomy in the description of existing school leadership teams and in teacher developed school calendars that allow for flexibility. The district office flow chart is provided as evidence of district support that indicates the project director will be reporting directly to the superintendent.

Although the proposal describes the flexibility in student services and the continual review of data, it is not clear how the interventions will look when it is determined that a student needs more support. The day in the life of a student with this wide variety of options is not easy to visualize nor is it clear how the classrooms will be structured in such a way that will provide teachers with the time to monitor student performance, collaborate, develop and deliver interventions to students, and continue to address the needs of all individual learners. The broad topics for teacher training are not supported by specifics that would describe a well developed high-quality plan for services that would be sustained and delivered in such a manner to provide full access to all students. There is insufficient information presented to define the roles of personnel to be involved in the project. The role of the project administrator does not provide an adequate description of the qualifications of the administrator in supporting a high quality plan of service to students.

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| <b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b> |
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal describes training for parents to access data systems in order to monitor student progress toward their goals in college and career ready areas. The proposal describes the district's intention to expand upon current data systems which provide schools with assessment information to a system that will allow teachers, principals and parents access to attendance, behavior, and assessment data. Five key issues are identified that, within the expanded system, will allow teachers and principals to use additional data to provide early intervention and support for student needs. The district describes its intention to provide parents with training opportunities and schedules to meet their needs. The proposal describes providing computer access to parents at school sites.

The proposal focuses the support to parents in their participation toward the college and career readiness goals. It does not provide a comprehensive picture of the parent training. The district intends to provide 'intense' parent training but a minimal description is provided. It is unclear how the parents who do not speak English, do not have access to computers, or may not have transportation will be accommodated. A proposed message system for parents is not well described to promote their access to tools and data. The proposal does not provide a clear timeline for deliverables, responsible parties, or rationales for the components described that make it difficult to ensure that the intentions will be realized.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>5</b> |
| <p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal identifies data to be collected for evaluation of student progress that includes performance-based measures as an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery. The intention to utilize teacher evaluations to identify areas of weaknesses is described. Parent surveys and attendance at trainings and school meetings is evidence presented as opportunities for parents to provide input. The data accessed by principals and teachers is identified as a source of feedback to inform the project. The proposal presents student access to their own progress on computer-based systems as an indication of their intention to provide students with continual feedback.</p> <p>The proposal is limited in presenting clear and detailed descriptions to support the intended process of continual improvement. Timelines are not included that would describe a cycle of continual review to an adequate degree to demonstrate the district's ability to implement their intentions. For example, the parent surveys are not described in such a way that would support their input being used to inform the project goals. The proposal includes weekly teacher meetings to review services and inform their instruction but it is not clear how this time will be provided to them and whether or not these are collaborative meetings, professional learning communities or team meetings with open agendas. Broad intentions are presented lacking detailed explanations that would support success in implementing the project. The external evaluation component is not well described. Timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible are not clearly described or presented.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal provide evidence through the appendix of letters and sign in sheets that parents are involved in the system to some degree. Development of various teams to support components is presented as a method of collecting data and feedback in curriculum, technology, assessment and media and technology tools. A variety of meetings are described to obtain data from parents, teachers, leadership, teams, students, and proposal leadership teams. Online portfolios are presented as an opportunity for parents, teachers, and students to obtain feedback.</p> <p>School leadership teams are presented but not described. It is not clear what the composition of these teams is, whether or not they include parents and students, the frequency of their meetings, their agendas, or their opportunities to truly inform program services in a viable manner. The proposal refers to the high poverty levels of their families in comparison to other nearby districts but does not explain how the high poverty families will access the data to participate meaningfully as described for data access and feedback. The intentions of the proposal are not supported by timelines, deliverables, identification of persons responsible in this component, or their qualifications for supporting meaningful involvement, feedback for continuous improvement or anticipation for modifications as needed.</p>   |           |          |
| <b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <p><b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal appropriately includes performance measures for highly effective teachers and principals. Other measures include third grade math and attendance, fourth through eighth grade math and language, sixth grade students who have not been suspended, submission of free and reduced lunch application measures, and nine through twelfth grade career and college ready measures. The proposal also includes a measure for the number of students enrolled in an alternate social studies class. These are very grade level specific targets.</p> <p>The proposal does not describe the rationale for selecting the above targets and measures. It is not clear why the district is generally expecting a 3% increase for each subgroup in academic measures and college readiness targets. There is no differentiation in expectations or accelerated rates for any subgroup to meet their targets. The figures presented are often unclear and inconsistent. It appears that no students are currently receiving services from high quality teachers and principals. The charts provided include a group identified as 'ED'. There is no description of what students this abbreviation addresses. In some areas of the United States the term ED refers to emotionally disturbed students. It is not clear in this application if this is the reference intended. The lack of accelerated expectations for any subgroup does not provide evidence of ambitious goals.</p>   |           |          |

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| <b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>2</b> |
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**(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The proposal presents the intention to support the program review by maintaining the current level of leadership and teaching positions and increase the personnel through grant services by adding instructional specialists, coaches, technicians, and specialized teachers to support the teen leadership component. The investments include travel, training, and an evaluation team to support ongoing services to monitor effectiveness. The support for leadership, teacher training in data analysis, technicians, and specialized teachers to assist in the review of data are viable strategies to involve stakeholders in the review of the effectiveness of services.

The proposal does not present a high quality plan. The reference to training is not supported by a timeline or program specific training that would be necessary for the technology described previously for data analysis. The positions are not well described for the personnel who will be involved and what their qualifications would be to lead a school or district team in a continuous review of services. The coaching component is not described fully and does not identify a specific model of coaching that will be developed and implemented in such a way that a strong system of support is in place for teachers to support students with meaningful opportunities for data review in order to inform continuous improvement of services. The proposal is not fleshed out to describe fully a high quality plan that evidences success, rationales, deliverables, and responsible parties in such a way to create confidence that the services described will be well monitored, create opportunities for revisions or develop a solid continual review cycle.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |

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

The proposal includes a minimal description for each category of funds requested. It is appropriate to include the funding level for the technology devices for all students to be served in the project.

There is substantial information lacking in the details of the budget explanations. Descriptions of personnel positions are minimal and do not include professional requirements for the personnel listed nor do they include any reference to the availability of the appropriate personnel to meet the needs of the project. There is discrepancy in explanations of funds for the assistant as the funding refers to years one and two only. There is no explanation of why the funding for this position increases from year one to year two. The instructional coaches are not identified to explain their salaries. It is not clear if staff that currently meets the district's requirements or what those requirements might be will fill these positions. For example, it is not clear if the positions are certified, classified, or contractual at each level. The staffing of the contracted evaluation team is not clear to educational backgrounds or experience to meet the budget line item requested. The lacking information of staff positions makes it difficult to visualize the continuation of services to students following the end of the funding period. The supplies listed are not well described making it difficult to assess the request. The travel included addresses administrative staff and not teaching staff to access opportunities outside of their location.

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| <b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |
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**(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

A budget narrative is provided that addresses each component of financial support requested. The district presents evidence that states a degree of staffing will be maintained to support an intention for sustainability following the grant period with two technicians, two specialists, two coaches and one college and career coach.

The support from state and government leaders is not evidenced in the budget proposal. The proposal gives the responsibility of parent technology training to the technicians however it does not clearly describe the technicians' job descriptions or any other job descriptions that would support sustainability of the project. The proposal states that federal, Title, special populations funding and state and district funds will be used to sustain the project services but it does not state to what level and from which specific sources the funding will be found. Maintenance of supplies and technology is minimally described and not to a degree sufficient to support high quality services. Roles and responsibilities are not well described for the intention to maintain staffing to such a degree that sustainability is feasible.

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

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|  | Available | Score    |
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| <b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This proposal is developed more fully toward the intention of preparing students for college and career by presenting evidence that in that component students will be allowed to demonstrate performance through media projects as well as formalized assessment. There is evidence students needs will be addressed by career coaches and a leadership program, and through addressing training for teachers of students involved in that component of the proposed activities. There is evidence of parent support for the project provided in the appendix through letters of support that clearly identify specific needs of their children and schools.</p> <p>However, the proposal is not fully described in a comprehensive detailed manner that would support evidence that there are strong partnerships in place as the roles of the partners and community are not well described or connected to services. The letters of support from local businesses do not describe partnerships that currently exist or how those businesses will provide support during and after the grant-funding period. Parent support is evidenced but the evidence that they will be continuously informed is not strong due to the lack of timelines and deliverables. The training of parents by two computer technicians does not appear to be adequate to prepare them for full involvement in the program services. The role of the local institutes is not clearly described in a meaningful way that presents clear partnerships working together in an organized manner. Many of the processes, including the decision-making process appear to parrot the language of the RFP and do not expand upon the intentions of the LEA to develop routines, engage parents, or provide a sustained vision of school improvement. Performance measures and desired results appear to be disconnected in terms of how each measure supports the desired results in creating a coherent plan. This disconnection is due to the lack of timelines that would indicate how each component supports the other in helping students meet targets.</p> |           |          |

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

|  | Available | Score          |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Absolute Priority 1</b>   |           | <b>Not Met</b> |
| <p><b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>This proposal makes a valiant attempt to describe a system of support for the district's students that focuses on the college and career ready needs of the students. However, the lack of detail, lack of connection between the performance targets, and disconnect between what the district wants to do and a comprehensive explanation of how the district will accomplish the described activities does not describe a comprehensive or coherent program. The proposal is similar to an outline rather than a fully developed plan. The details regarding qualifications of personnel and the lack of a timeline for the deliverables are weaknesses. It is not clear if adequate resources exist at the district level to support implementation of a highly technologically based program. Asking technology assistant to not only maintain equipment but also train parents is an unfeasible task without fully describing the background and qualifications of this staff.</p> <p>The lack of timelines and deliverables for any of the major assurances do not support the feasibility that the intentions of the proposal will be met. Teacher training timelines would be important in developing a comprehensive plan to support the many expectations described for the teachers to work with students, monitor data, provide feedback, and inform their instruction with research-based strategies. The role of leadership is not well described to support ambitious reform among the schools. The purchase of hand held technology for students does not assure personalized learning nor does it address the need for students to also work collaboratively to problem solve. The lack of detailed explanations for purchases requested in the budget for materials, travel, and incentives for teachers to participate is a concern. Timelines to identify teacher participation in collaborative settings and training that supports proposed activities does not provide reasonable evidence that this proposal is going to be successfully implemented to provide students with high quality instruction.</p> |           |                |

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| <b>Total</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>83</b> |
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**Race to the Top - District**



## Technical Review Form

### Application #0167MS-2 for Stone County School District

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

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |

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

(a) Stone County School District describes a vision that requires significant reform across all four core assurance areas. The elementary and middle schools have aligned their curricula to the Common Core State Standards, but grades 9 - 12 have not yet achieved alignment. Full implementation and assessment is not complete at any level, as the district lacks aligned instructional resources and assessments. The extent of alignment at the K - 8 levels is ambiguous. In one paragraph the proposal indicates the K - 8 curriculum has been aligned to the CCSS, but further in that same paragraph, the proposal indicates the alignment of the K - 8 curriculum will be adjusted to the new alignment for common core and college ready requirements. The proposal describes the need for curriculum mapping, benchmark assessments, and a method to identify students for remediation. While these goals are fundamental to education reform and student achievement, in this district they are ambitious in that they are not in place at present. The district describes the introduction of personalization to its curriculum and assessment mapping and alignment through the use of hand held devices. It is unclear if the aligned learning guides placed on the device are personally linked to student mastery checklists which are linked to assessment results, or if the students are responsible to monitor their own progress through the aligned guides and mastery checklists. Aligned checklists that are personally linked to student assessment results would be more focused and provide students with a specific roadmap to reach their goals. Teachers will assign individualized work through the device, but it is unclear whether the entire conversation between student and teacher is electronic, including the submission of student work product. The district will also update technological access for parents though an improved data page. It is unclear if the the learning and the expectations accessed through the data page are personalized or general. Because the initiatives surrounding the adoption of college and career ready standards are fundamental and necessary, it is unclear that even full implementation will accelerate student achievement to high levels.

The proposal describes a plan to extend the current data system to monitor student mastery of standards, and to provide teachers and administrators the ability to monitor student progress. The system will also provide parents with access to their child's data. It is not clear if the parents will be supported through the implementation of the new system. The proposal states that the data system will address five key issues. It is unclear how the system will address these issues, as the list of five issues include data to report, and provides no plan to address any perceived problems evidenced through the data. One issue to address includes inconsistencies in performance. It is unclear how an inconsistency will be defined or measured, or why some inconsistencies might be considered important.

The proposal discusses plans to recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teacher and principals, especially where they are needed most. It states that the district will enrich and personalize professional development opportunities, but then says it will invest in online opportunities and resources to automate coaching. It is unclear how online opportunities and automation with further personalization. There is no evidence of personal one-to-one coaching. The district references the identification of its effective teachers, but uses a confusing and subjective justification for that identification (teachers who use the ability of students who meet or succeed the targeted curriculum to measure their own performance). The proposal also presents a plan to place these effective teachers in high needs areas, and to place them as coaches. It is unclear if the same teachers will be teachers and coaches, and if so, if there is time enough to assume both roles. There is an inadequate reference to incentives. The proposal states the organization will recognize and reward teachers, but does not say how it will accomplish this goal. There is no evidence to state how it will attract its identified effective teachers to high needs areas or coaching, or how it will attract the high quality external candidates it references. The plan for providing effective tools of learning and training is lacking in that it does not state how or through what specific professional development means it will ensure the teachers develop the skills and abilities stated.

The district expects that all schools will achieve A status, a rating issued by the state as part of an A - F rating scale, as a result of this grant and the funding it provides to implement stated initiatives. The middle and elementary schools, however, are at a different start point than the secondary school. The high school is currently rated lower on the A - F scale. It is unclear why all schools are expected to achieve the same status, when that achievement represents a higher level of growth for the high school.

(b) The proposal is confusing in its statement that "students will not use information through independent channels such as the library or a textbook, but will move instead to a model where students obtain information from a growing medium of resources that they select and organize." Is unclear why students would not access a library, whether traditional or virtual, to obtain information and consult resources. The proposal is limited in its articulation of a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening

student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. It is unclear how the Personalized Learning Environment Classroom will provide adequate support for the independent tasks referenced as there is no clear alignment between the PLE and the tasks described.

(c) The description of the classroom experience is vague. The proposal describes a classroom climate, but does not sufficiently detail what the actual learning experience will be like for students. It provides only one example of one activity from a fifth grade science class, but does not provide other applicable details.

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

(a) The proposal articulates a list of data points the district could use to improve student learning outcomes. It is unclear if this list was used as final justification for the grant proposal submission. The proposal points to a SCtT leadership team, and states that the team had responsibility for identifying which grades and students to include in the proposal. But the plan does not include a description of the process used to select the schools for participation.

(b) This section did not include a list of schools for participation. Two elementary schools, a middle and a high school were referenced earlier in the proposal, but there is no comprehensive list in this section.

(c) This section does not include a comprehensive chart or narrative to indicate the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high need, and educators. There is no approximate number included in this section. Demographic information on the county is referenced earlier in the proposal.

Later in the proposal, the district includes a chart of the four participating schools, including the demographic data required in this section. The chart indicates that all students are participating. This chart presents contradictory data in that it lists the number of low income students in each school as significantly less than the total number of students in each school, yet it shows that the percentage of participants from low income families is at 100%. This discrepancy makes it impossible to consider these data points from this chart in reference to this criteria.

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>1</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|

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

The proposal presents a list of professional partners who will collaborate with the district on grant activities. The narrative is incomplete in that it does not clearly articulate activities, deliverables or a timeline. It includes the names, titles and affiliations of the partners responsible, but does not reference district employees who will be responsible for oversight and accountability related to these activities.

The proposal describes a new data system that will lead to personalized learning plans for students, including remediation. It describes summer workshop professional development to train teachers on using data to determine a prescription for students who do not score proficient on the state assessments. It is unclear if the professional partners from surrounding institutions will lead these workshops, or if the district will support its own development through internal personnel. If the development will be supported internally, there is no comprehensive plan to articulate the activities, deliverables, timelines or responsible persons.

The proposal references the development of internal, school-based teams, but it is unclear if these teams will be staffed by high quality, effective educators, or how the team members will be identified and selected.

The proposal is completely lacking in the elements of a high quality plan in that clear goals are not articulated, to start. Activities, deliverables and responsible parties are unclear. A clear and definitive timeline cannot be determined.

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>2</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The district proposes a plan that lacks the elements of a high quality plan. The overarching plan goals are not specific, and therefore the deliverables are not measureable. The overarching plan is vague in its assignment of responsibilities, and there is no discernable timeline. The plan states the district does not possess the capability to track college rates, but the process by which it will develop this plan is not sufficiently articulated.

(a) The proposal includes a chart of student performance goals, with ambitious yet achievable targets over the years of the grant, and into the post-grant year. Earlier in the grant, the district references that specific assessments are not yet created. The proposal does not sufficiently address its process for determining the growth and proficiency trajectory in the chart, taking into account the need to create aligned assessments.

(b) The plan does not provide ambitious goals for decreasing the achievement gap in all areas. For example, the special education gap at

some grade levels and in some content areas is permitted to remain high (8th grade language post grant gap outcome is expected to be 46%; 4th grade language post grant gap outcome is expected to be 39%).

(c) The plan expects 100% high school graduation rates for all subgroups, but does not include a baseline, trajectory or target for students on an IEP.

(d) The college enrollment goal for students on an IEP is confusing, as it exists without the inclusion of a high school graduation target for the same subgroup.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>(a) The proposal documents a 15% increase in the language scores and a 32% increase in the math scores of African American students over a three year period. The proposal also documents a 13% increase in the language scores and a 28% increase in the math scores of Economically Disadvantaged students over the same period. The narrative did not expand the data to include a fourth year. The proposal includes graphs to demonstrate the ED and African American score increases, but the charts were not located next to each other. The proposal also includes a graph that compares the district to the state, using the 8th grade language and assessments. The district outperformed the state in both categories. The proposal includes a graph to demonstrate its performance in relation to the state's graduation rates. The district appears to outperform the state, but there is no clear indication of what year the graph depicts.</p> <p>(b) The proposal states that previously each elementary school was placed on Academic Watch <u>or</u> School Improvement, but does not clearly identify which school was placed on which status. It does not provide the definition or terms of each low performing status, but does say that both schools were moved to High Performing status. It does not clearly state how long it took to move the schools to a higher status, or how many level changes the new designation represents. Because the details presented are vague and unclear, the district's ability to achieve ambitious and significant reform has not been sufficiently demonstrated.</p> <p>(c) The district uses three separate data systems. The systems seem to contain some overlapping information, but appear to target different stakeholder groups. It is unclear if there is interoperability between systems, or if the district considers that an important feature. Elsewhere in the proposal, the district references using data to inform more personalized instruction. But this section does not sufficiently detail the process or plan for doing that, or which data points listed here, as they are available now to specific stakeholders, will be part of the reform.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>(a)(b)(c) The district publishes actual salaries of all staff members including building administrators, teachers and non-certified. School level information is placed at each office at the school site. It is unclear if this statement refers to physical placement or electronic placement of this information. The County Courthouse will also give individual salary information upon request.</p> <p>(d) Financial reports for the district and school are posted on the school website, presented at public board meetings, and can be received by request. It is unclear if the financial reports sufficiently detail actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. It would be important to provide details of these line items for full transparency for all expenses not salary, such as equipment and travel.</p> <p>The proposal indicates that in year one it will post board agendas and minutes on the school website. Documents such as expenditure reports and fiscal year-to-date reports will be added after board minutes are approved. It is confusing that the proposal details a plan for year one, but not the future years of the grant.</p>   |           |          |
| <b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>8</b> |
| <b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The proposal indicates that each of the district's primary proposal components fits within current state legislation. The proposal does not cite specific legislation to support this indication. It states that the Mississippi Superintendent of Education told districts that the state has adopted standards and that each district will decide how to implement them. The proposal indicates that the MDE adopted the CCSS in 2010. The proposal also details some specific evidence of professional development provided by the state, which would support the grant initiatives. The letter of support from the Mississippi Department of Education acknowledges the district's plans, and calls them "bold," while offering support. This is a good indication that the district will possess the autonomy required to implement the initiatives. The</p>   |           |          |

details provided regarding the CCSS adoption and the new teacher and principal evaluation systems are insufficient to demonstrate conditions required to implement personalized learning environments that are aligned to college and career ready standards, and reflected in the evaluation of teachers and administrators who must implement them.

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

**15**

**8**

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

(a) In preparation for submitting a proposal, the superintendent of the district held community meetings to discuss the grant requirements, and asked for questions and suggestions. Meetings were also held at schools, classrooms and open houses. It is unclear how these meeting locations, all seemingly within a school building, differ from each other. It is unclear if the multiple meetings in similar locations would have elicited repetitive input. There is no description of who was notified of the community or school meetings, and how notifications were made. This may negatively affect the proposal's ability to present input from a variety of stakeholders from different representative constituency groups.

A Race to the Top leadership team, comprised of the superintendent, district and school leaders, teachers, parents and community members was formed to decide whether to apply for the grant and determine the process for submitting the proposal. This team will become the leadership team for implementation if the grant is received. There is no evidence that students were included in this planning process. This may negatively affect the proposal's ability to successfully meet goals as secondary students figure prominently in several performance measurements, but have not been encouraged to develop a vested interest in the grant's success through early participation in its program development.

There was a comment period allowed for MDE, the mayor, and faculty, and final decisions were disseminated through the district online message system. The evidence presented to confirm teacher support include signed sheets with the statement "I support the Race to the Top Proposal," middle school grade level meeting minutes, and meeting sign-in sheets. It is unclear whether these documents provide a clear and appropriate indication of 70% approval. The names are signatures only, with no reference to title or position. There is no point of reference regarding the full number of faculty.

There are letters of support from principals, parents, students, potential partner institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, businesses, the local and neighboring municipalities, and the MDE. The student letters do not indicate that the goals of the grant were clearly articulated to the students, and therefore some students may be disappointed when the grant is not used to purchase items from specific wish lists (i.e. physical education equipment).

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

|                                    | Available | Score    |
|------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| <b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>7</b> |

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

This section lacks a high quality plan for student learning. The goals are not clearly articulated. The activities identified to move implementation are not sufficiently detailed. The plan lacks a clear system of accountability, and is inconsistent in its identification of responsible personnel. For example, it is indicated that teachers will receive professional development and training related to several activities. But the plan does not clearly identify the persons responsible for delivering the professional development or training, nor who will oversee the successful implementation of this development.

This section begins with an apparent contradiction in that it states student attitudes have not been fully addressed in the Learning-Centered Model, but several paragraphs later goes on to state that students in the classrooms will spend more time interacting with their teachers using the learning centered model. It is unclear if the district intends to abandon, modify, or favor the learning center model as it is structured. Yet the learning center model is repeatedly referenced as a key initiative. It would be reasonable to expect that any weakness in the predominant reform model would need to be addressed for the model to be successful. The proposal did not present a clear plan to address this weakness.

The proposal indicates that if this grant is funded, the middle and high school will once again participate in the Teen Leadership program. This program includes a curriculum that develops goal-setting, teamwork, and acceptance skills. This curriculum does not appear to address the development of learning goals. It does support the development of leadership skills.

The proposal indicates that it will train stakeholders in the Learning Center model through a tiered approach, beginning with principals and teachers and ending with students. There is no indication that parents will receive training in or information on the model. Without a knowledge base, it is less likely that parents will be able to support students through their training and the program's implementation.

Teachers, students and parents will receive training on learning guides. The proposal is ambiguous, but it appears these guides and the

training include a schedule for student/teacher/counselor/parent meetings that cover topics such as college and career plans. In grades 6 - 12, students will create college and career plans. This includes a benchmark assessment of readiness. The plan indicates that critical information, presumably related to student progress on the plans will be available for students and parents to view. But there is no indication of the technical support that may be required to help students and parents access the applicable databases. Community training will be provided for technology, job skills, building education skills for the home, and issues requested at community meetings. The proposal references training for parents on how to "interrupt" all information in the student portfolio. The term "interrupt" is ambiguous, but it may be a typographical error and this may refer to how parents will be trained to interpret information.

The digital learning system will be used to personalize the learning experience by identifying students who would benefit from enhanced opportunities. Students will be given multiple opportunities to reach mastery, and there will a variety of assessments used to determine proficiency over time. These will include projects, papers, presentations and traditional assessments. It is not apparent that assessments will be tailored to meet the needs and styles of each student. Therefore, it is unlikely that varying the types of assessments over time will produce true personalization. It is unclear how robust the data system is, how often it is populated and with what specific information. It is unclear which of these assessments may morph into the assessments to be used as a final performance measure. References to academic areas of interest are sparse. There are no references to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives to motivate student learning.

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

**20**

**3**

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

The graphic provided to explain this section of the proposal is unclear and ineffective. It appears to indicate that four categories of personnel all contribute to professional responsibilities.

The proposal states that the district does not currently possess an aligned curriculum and assessment system. The proposal states that in order to address this challenge, the district will facilitate a series of high quality professional development opportunities that will enable every staff member to identify learning targets for each class. A similar process will be used to develop common unit assessments. This is a confusing plan in that it will be difficult to identify learning targets before a curriculum map is in place. The plan does not articulate a clear end goal, nor does it provide appropriate benchmark deliverables or a timeline. The plans is ambiguous in its statement that the district will facilitate these professional development opportunities. It does not identify responsible persons or establish clear activities related to the goal. The process to be used describes a plan for using substitutes and stipends to facilitate the professional development, but does not present a definitive timeline for the associated activities.

The proposal includes the development of performance assessments for authentic application of acquired knowledge and skills, but it does not articulate a clear, high quality plan for the development and approval of these assessments. Nor does it include a plan for scaling up these assessments for use as final performance measurements to satisfy the grant criteria.

The proposal describes a personalized system of professional development for teachers, but is contradictory in its extensive discussion of online, digital and virtual coaching. It is not clear from the proposal that the online, digital and virtual coaching will be personalized for teachers. True embedded coaching must take place within a classroom, where a coach can actually observe teaching and learning, and then offer specific suggestions for improvement.

The proposal is confusing in its statement that "administrators will analyze data to determine the effectiveness of teachers and student mastery on large targets." It is unclear if this statement refers to scaling up the initiative, and if so, from what start point and to what end point.

The proposal describes its plan to make student data available and accessible to counselors, but includes this confusing statement: "There are times when individual students receive remediation and support and other times when individual students are served." These statements do not appear to be unique, and therefore this activity is unclear.

The proposal presents some of the details of the administrator and teacher evaluation system. It is vague in the way it fails to definitively link coaching, evaluation, and a vision for what the learning center model will look like in its most practical application. There is no clear picture of what a classroom looks like, and how the learning center model is innovative and unique.

The proposal indicates the District Office will provide training for administrators in this project. The plan does not indicate when the training will occur, or what format or shape it will take.

There are insufficient references to high quality learning resources and tools, and their place in the learning centered model.

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

|  | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
|--|-----------|-------|

|   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>  | <b>15</b> | <b>7</b> |
| <b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>  |           |          |
| <p>(a) The organization of the district's central office and leadership team in relation to the project leadership is confusing. The district plans to hire a project director and assistant, but the plan presents a leadership team and structure, including responsibilities for oversight, training, and evaluation. The district leadership and school leadership teams do not explicitly include the project director or assistant among their members. The graphic indicates the project director is a high level member of district administration, but the hierarchy is not clearly articulated in the narrative. It is unclear that this governance structure will be sufficient or effective.</p> <p>(b) The plan does provide for school leadership teams in participating schools. It does not clearly articulate the level of flexibility and autonomy the leadership teams will have over personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators and school level budgets. The schools do have autonomy over the yearly schedule, but the district decides the annual calendar (using a teacher team).</p> <p>(c) Advanced students are able to take semester classes and earn additional credits. Advanced students also take Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment classes to receive college credit. There is no evidence that students other than the advanced students have access to these opportunities. There is no evidence that these opportunities represent the ability to earn credit based on mastery, and not on the amount of time spent on a topic.</p> <p>(d) Students will have an opportunity to demonstrate mastery at the end of every unit. If a student does not demonstrate mastery, the student will receive remediation and be re-assessed. Some students at the secondary level may attend Saturday and after school, as well. The plan for remediation is unclear, and is not presented in sufficient detail. There is no evidence that students will be able to demonstrate mastery in multiple comparable ways after remediation.</p> <p>(e) The district will provide professional development to address the ability to work with diverse learners, including special education students and English Language Learners. The district will train school administrators on methods for facilitating implementation of an organizational change, which will address supporting methods for planning, assessment, instruction, personalized learning environments, practices, and data-driven decision making. The training will be provided by district office staff and a school improvement group contracted through grant funds. The plan lacks the full elements of a high quality plan in its omission of responsible persons, a timeline, and a clear articulation of activities.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>  |           |          |
| <p>Parents will have multiple opportunities to receive training on how to access their student's electronic portfolio and standards mastery data, as well as their student's progress in meeting school to career expectations. Each family will receive training on the data system, college and career meetings, and support available from the district. The plan is not comprehensive in that it does not describe a process by which parents are able to access the technology required to use the data system if they are without the means to secure their own private technology or Internet access.</p> <p>There is insufficient evidence present to determine whether the system allows parents and students to export data for use in other electronic learning systems. Several data systems are referenced throughout the proposal, but it is unclear that the systems are interoperable.</p>  |           |          |

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>   | <b>15</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |          |
| <p>The narrative presents the applicant's plan to address the methods of data collection and process monitoring, and a description of methods used to publicly share the district's progress towards meeting the key goals in the project.</p> <p>The narrative does not present a high quality plan to implement and monitor progress on the key goals and initiatives. There is inadequate attention to the activities, deliverables and timelines associated with the proposed plan to evaluate each initiative. Some sections of the plan lack reference to the person responsible for the ensuring that the evaluation is on track and occurring within an acceptable timeline. The section indicates that the teachers' participation in professional development will be evaluated through the weekly monitoring of teacher plans. This is insufficient to monitor full, and effective participation in that the evaluation does not include routine visits to classrooms to observe the implementation of these plans, and their effects on student learning. The section also indicates that successful professional development will be determined through teacher evaluation of sessions, but that method may be considered</p> |           |          |

subjective, and does not involve a related teacher work product to demonstrate the acquisition of skills or knowledge presented in the session. The section presents a plan to assess teacher mastery of content, and to provide additional support for teachers who do not establish mastery, but does not detail who will provide this support, how it will be provided, and if mastery will be reassessed. It does not indicate if additional in-class content coaching will be provided in the interim, to support student acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills. It does not present a timeline for the expectation of teacher improvement, or a timeline for teachers to demonstrate improvement..

The section indicates that student progress on meeting assigned goals will be evaluated through weekly monitoring of student portfolios. The section does not detail a comprehensive plan or process for how and when the review of portfolios will occur, and whether or not an iterative process involving guidance and direction to students will be part of this process. The section indicates that copies of the evaluations of ineffective teachers will be sent to the Project Director. There is no plan detailed for the process of evaluating teachers, and it is unclear from the rest of the proposal that a robust evaluation system is in place. The PD will meet with the principal to discuss non effective teachers, and plans, but there is no indication of what happens next that would further enhance accountability for principal oversight and instructional leadership, and for teacher success. There is no timeline established for teacher improvement.

The section indicates software will be reviewed every nine weeks by teachers and principals, but does not provide details for the process of review, and does not include specific activities, deliverables or a timeline for the software review process. Student results and student progress are cited as the means to evaluate equipment and effective student assistance, but there is no process in place for these reviews. Parent participation will be evaluated via sign-in sheets and evaluations, and later, surveys. There is indication that parent participation in the data system will be monitored for use. There is no indication as to who will be the responsible party when it comes to evaluating parental participation effects on student performance.

There is a vague plan presented to monitor overall school reform, using a team of external evaluators to determine the progress of the proposal. There is no process presented to identify and contract with the team of external evaluators. The district does not propose its own activities in relation to this external evaluation, does not include a timeline for activities and deliverables associated with the evaluation, and does not indicate a system of oversight for the process and goals of the external evaluation.

The district technology department is identified as playing an important role in monitoring grant progress. Their activities are presented, but no timeline and no deliverables are associated with these activities.

This section does not present a plan to publicly share information on the quality of the investments funded by the grant. This section of the plan is without a process for making the results of the evaluation public.

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

**5**

**1**

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The district proposal does not present a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The specific activities and strategies for communication are limited in detail. For example, there is a vague reference to using student motivation and success to evaluate the Learner-Centered model. But then the plan points to student mastery, and indicates that students who do not reach mastery the first time will have multiple opportunities to gain knowledge or skills. The process will include specific feedback from teachers so that students clearly understand their weaknesses, but does not include a timeline or targeted number of opportunities to achieve mastery. The data system provides opportunities for student and family participation. But there is no plan presented, and no inclusion of responsible persons and timelines. Beyond these limited references to student and family engagement, there is no evidence of a plan for ongoing engagement with other external stakeholders, such as the institutions of higher education or community organizations included with letters of support or earlier partner references.

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

**5**

**1**

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

The district has presented performance measures, and its system to monitor progress through the use of the grant-funded data system.

There is no documentation for the process used to identify the performance measures presented in this section.

The benchmarks and targets in the effective and highly effective teacher and principal charts are the same. It is confusing whether the district intends that all students have a highly effective teacher and principal by the end of the grant period, and whether or not the highly effective expectations will supersede the effective expectations. The goals present are ambitious, but the trajectory for both teachers and principals to become 100% highly effective during the grant period, starting with a baseline of 27% and 0% respectively is unlikely to be achieved through the implementation of the plans included with this proposal. They plans presented are incomplete in explanations of specific activities, deliverables, timelines and responsible parties for goals associated with this measure.

There is no PreK-2 measurement included. The grade 3 measurement includes one content area and perfect attendance. There is no indication yet of the assessment used to determine proficiency in math. There is no justification presented for the inclusion of perfect attendance as a measure. The district did not present a link between attendance and student performance.

The grades 4 - 8 performance measures include 7th grade math, 6th grade language, and 6th grade suspension rates. There is no explanation for why these grade levels were chosen for these measures. The language goal for 6th grade IEP students is not ambitious in that it accepts a 34% proficiency goal, while expecting 80% for the aggregate population.

The 9 - 12 performance measures are not consistently ambitious. For example, the district expects the percentage of participating students who complete the FAFSA to move from 63% to 64% over the period of the grant. The district chose a decrease in the number of students in the Alternate Class in Social Studies as a performance measure. There is no indication why this measure was selected, or why the district expects the removal of an alternative class in social studies would lead to higher levels of achievement.

Other measures not specifically discussed do present ambitious yet achievable goals for improved student performance in content areas across grade levels, including subgroup performances.

|  |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>1</b> |
|--|----------|----------|

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

This section does not present a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top - District funded activities. It states the district will use internal procedures and a team of external evaluators, but does not detail the goals, associated activities, deliverables, timelines or persons responsible for the implementation of procedures or the oversight of the evaluators. The external team will consist of a team of experts in the different proponents of the proposal, and the team members will evaluate once each month to determine if progress is made. The lack of an internal plan to evaluate or monitor the external evaluators may negatively affect the district's ability to monitor progress and make decisions regarding effectiveness of the activities.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b> |

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

The budget lacks sufficient details and information. It does not include references to all funds that will be used to support the project. It also presents information that is incomplete, contradictory or confusing. The grant project appears to conclude in 2016 - 2017, yet the project director is only funded through 3 years, and the assistant appears to be funded through 2 years. The budget narratives, included in the proposal before the budget worksheets, reference items not presented in sufficient detail in the body of the grant narrative. For example, media carts are included as a line item in the budget narrative detail, but there was insufficient justification for the inclusion of the carts in the budget when matched with the narrative.

The budget worksheets are confusing as it is difficult to discern clearly articulated delineation between individual project budgets and their relation to the grant narrative. It is unclear which worksheet applies to which section of the grant narrative.

The budget does identify one-time costs, and where identified, those costs are appropriate as one time investments (i.e. handheld devices). The proposal defines costs that will cease when the grant period ends, and costs that may continue after the grant, but the identification of these costs is not completely clear within the budget presentation. There is little evidence for a focus on long term sustainability.

|   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>0</b> |
|---|-----------|----------|

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

The sustainability plan is undocumented in this proposal. There is no evidence of funds from other sources listed in the project level budget worksheets. It is unrealistic to expect the district will be able to support the initiatives beyond the grant period without a detailed, high quality plan for scaling up the operational budget. Because the plan to evaluate the effectiveness of projects lacks the components of a high quality plan (as previously discussed via other score sections, the plan lacks a comprehensive presentation of activities, deliverables, timelines and the assignment of responsible persons), it is unclear how projects and initiatives would be recommended for sustainability over time.

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

|  | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
|--|-----------|-------|

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>  |           |          |
| <p>In an earlier section of the proposal (A.2.), the proposal presents what it calls a "longstanding partnership with Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College." It also indicates more recent partnerships with the University of Southern Mississippi and William Carey University. The earlier section of the proposal indicates that professors at these institutions will work to professionally develop teachers. There is no clear or comprehensive plan outlined for these professional development partnership opportunities. There is no timeline presented for training or development sessions, and no process detailed for how and when the sessions will take place.</p> <p>Beyond this earlier reference, there is no explicit competitive preference priority presented in this section of the proposal.</p> |           |          |

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

|                            | Available | Score          |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Absolute Priority 1</b> |           | <b>Not Met</b> |

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The plan presented in this proposal lacks sufficient detail to be convincing in its ability to meet Absolute Priority 1. The overarching goals are vague, and the activities presented to lead to the attainment of goals are not specific, and do not support progress. Systems of accountability are undocumented. Expectations of deliverables are vague, and without sufficient links to project goals. Timelines for activities and deliverables are inadequate. In many cases, the persons responsible for implementation are not presented. The proposal does not present plans for active, effective partnerships to enhance activities. It references support and access for stakeholders, but does not detail how it will remain transparent in sharing progress related to the grant and the use of grant funds. Because the proposal indicates that the district is sufficiently lacking in existing structures to meet Absolute Priority 1, plans that lack sufficient support and activities designed to promote and increase vested interest are unrealistic in their abilities to achieve desired results.

The activities presented are not sufficiently detailed or monitored to successfully present a reasonable assurance that the grant activities would lead to a significant turnaround in the district's lowest performing schools.

The plan does not convincingly demonstrate its ability to personalize instruction in ways that are aligned with college and career ready standards. The proposal states that the district does not currently possess an aligned curriculum and assessment system. The proposal states that in order to address this challenge, the district will facilitate a series of high quality professional development opportunities that will enable every staff member to identify learning targets for each class. A similar process will be used to develop common unit assessments. This is a confusing plan in that it will be difficult to identify learning targets before a curriculum map is in place. The plan does not articulate a clear end goal, nor does it provide appropriate benchmark deliverables or a timeline.

The plans for professional development and evaluation of teachers and principals are not sufficient in their details regarding activities and timelines, and do not provide convincing evidence that they will lead to a higher percentage of highly effective or effective teachers. The plan is ambiguous in its statement that the district will facilitate professional development opportunities. It does not identify responsible persons or establish clear activities related to the goal. The process to be used describes a plan for using substitutes and stipends to facilitate the professional development, but does not present a definitive timeline for the associated activities. The proposal describes a personalized system of professional development for teachers, but is contradictory in its extensive discussion of online, digital and virtual coaching. It is not clear from the proposal that the online, digital and virtual coaching will be personalized for teachers. True embedded coaching must take place within a classroom, where a coach can actually observe teaching and learning, and then offer specific suggestions for improvement.

The proposal is confusing in its statement that "administrators will analyze data to determine the effectiveness of teachers and student mastery on large targets." It is unclear if this statement refers to scaling up the initiative, and if so, from what start point and to what end point. The proposal describes its plan to make student data available and accessible to counselors, but includes this confusing statement: "There are times when individual students receive remediation and support and other times when individual students are served." These statements do not appear to be unique, and therefore this activity is unclear.

|              |            |           |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>60</b> |
|--------------|------------|-----------|



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0167MS-3 for Stone County School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>  | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant presents a minimal plan to restructure all educational services provided by the Stone County School District. The plan articulated does build upon the four core educational assurance areas to a limited extent as noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The district has adopted the Common Core State Standards and began implementing them in 2010, the same year the standards were adopted by the State of Mississippi yet assessments are lacking for the learner centered model.</li> <li>2. The district does not have access to a limited data system but will use this reform plan to develop and implement a data system.</li> <li>3. A concentrated focus for using effective teachers, recruiting high quality teachers, and retaining effective teachers is described in the proposed plan yet fails to describe the criteria for determining teacher effectiveness.</li> <li>4. Schools within this district have not performed well on their State rating system, this plan addresses measures to provide the support needed to improve school performance.</li> </ol> <p>The applicant articulates the foundational measures needed to begin moving this struggling school district forward and also describes the limited infrastructure that currently creates barriers for them to begin the process of moving forward (curriculum, data systems, and the need for professional development). A very limited description is provided for the proposed personalized learning environments yet the applicant does provide a board view and understanding of an acceptable model.</p> <p>The vision articulated by this applicant is basic in nature lacking enough details to fully support the components of a high-quality reform vision. The applicant scores in the low range for this criterion by earning a few points for their adoption of CCSS which sets high standards/goals for student achievement and for presenting a broad yet vague discription of the enormous changes that are needed to accelerate student achievement, deepening student learning, and increase equity through the use of personalized learning environments based upon student interests.</p> |           |          |
| <b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>4</b> |
| <p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provided a limited description of the process to which the schools were selected to participate in this reform effort. The document states that "the district" used various data to determine if they should apply for this RTTT-D grant funding and also to decide what schools and students would participate. The description does not provide details as to exactly how this determination was made. All schools and all students in the district will participate. The total numbers and break down of sub-groups is not provided in this section but provided in pages beyond this section. All schools were listed on the table on page 26 with a breakdown of the numbers of student subgroups. It was noted that the data contains conflicts between raw numbers and percentage of subgroups participating. Due to the limited descriptions provided and the conflicts in data presented the applicant earns a low mid-range score for this criterion.</p>   |           |          |
| <b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>   | <b>10</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Section (A)(3) was not clearly identified properly within the document.</p> <p>This applicant lacks to provide enough details to support the development of a high-quality plan. Rather the plan describes a foundational plan that is needed to get this struggling district moving forward in a positive academic performance pathway. While not sophisticated in</p>   |           |          |

nature, the plan describes the foundational needs for putting in place an improved curriculum and assessment plan to help students who are most at-risk for failing academically and to offer needed professional development for teachers and administrators.

While this district appears to severely in need of this reform effort to help to turn the district around, the details and descriptions provided for this criterion are weak and fail to provide enough information to describe how this reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. Descriptions are vague and lack convincing evidence that this reform proposal will result in obtaining outcome goals. There is not enough evidence within the narrative to determine the type of model (logic or theory) for which this proposal is developed. There are also no clear timelines or identified deliverables.

The applicant scores in the lower range for this criterion for failing to provide enough support and clarity for how this plan will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform. One point was earned in this section for providing a foundational plan for that includes creating a positive school district climate and descriptions of how the climate would be expanded and used to improve the goal of creating a positive learning environment within the school district.

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

**10**

**4**

**(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant provided baseline data and increment goals for the years of the reform effort as well as the post-grant year for state tested areas of language and math as well as high school graduation rates for the same time period. Estimates for college enrollment was also provided noting that currently the district does not have access to this current data. This reform proposal includes the collection of college enrollment data.

Below are **concerns noted with regard to inconsistencies** with evidence required for this criterion were noted within the data presented:

1. A clear connection between the proposed reform effort and these measures. An explanation is not shared to support the link between the performance measures and the summative assessments.
2. In SY 2012-2013 76%; 2013-2014 70%; SY 2014-2015 67% and this decline is **projected to continue to decline** while all other groups continue to increase in performance. The data provided for summative assessments on the SATP2 Language (Proficient or Above) sets goals for the white student population to decrease during the years of the reform effort. Decreases in performance for any subgroup fails to meet the requirements of this reform notice for it does support a plan for ambitious yet achievable goals.
3. Graduation rates for **IEP sub-group is not provided** and goals for ambitious and yet achievable goals are not identified for this subgroup.

Due to the limited explanations for the connection between performance measures and summative assessments, and also for the goal for white students to decline in performance on the SATP2 for Language the applicant scores in the low mid-range for this criterion with some points given for providing adequate data for ambitious and yet achievable goals for subgroups other than white on the SATP2.

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

|   | Available | Score    |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>3</b> |

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

The applicant shares basic bar graphs to demonstrate a track record of success in language and math in 8th grade with decreases in achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students. Increases in graduation rates are also reported in limited bar graph format showing an increase between 2009 to 2013.

While the data and narrative regarding the track record of success mentions a positive track record, the applicant fails to provide enough raw student data and evidence to demonstrate their claim. Various bar graphs are provided within the applicant but years for the bars are not noted to determine yearly progress/decline. Evidence that student performance data is made available to students, educators, and parents is not provided.

The applicant earns a score in the low range for providing a some evidence of success in the areas as mentioned above.

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

**5**

**3**

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

In regard to transparency of processes, practices, and investments, the applicant states that the district publishes actual salaries of staff

members within groups or categories of administrators, teachers and non-certified workers. Actual personnel salaries at the school level is available by request at the county courthouse but is not readily accessible to the public. Within the document is a screen shot of the 2010-2011 school year fiscal data. A note at the bottom of the page clarifies that the 2011-2012 file will be released at a later date.

Current data from the previous school year is not provided as well as actual personnel salaries can only be accessed by request from the courthouse making access not truly transparent. Based upon the information provided by the applicant the level of transparency provided for this district is considered minimum or at the mid-range for the scoring of this criterion.

|  |           |          |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>8</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|

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

The applicant provides many letters of support from diverse stakeholders. One letter of significant interest is a letter from an office representative for the Mississippi Dept of Education. The letter was written by the Bureau Manager, not the current Interim State Superintendent of Education for the Mississippi State Dept of Education which leaves some concerns about the stability of the "letter of support" and the value of the comment as quoted at the end of the letter. "If MDE can provide any additional assistance, particularly as relates to removing barriers for successful reform, please do not hesitate to call on us".

The applicant provided an additional document in the appendix from the Mississippi Dept of Ed regarding the adoption of CCSS by the State, the document does states that the local school district would "retain the same level of authority as they had prior to the adoption", yet in the appendix document nor in the narrative is this autonomy fully disclosed.

The applicant scores in the high range for providing strong evidence that suggest this school district is encouraged by the State to make necessary changes in their instructional practices to rise to the standards of CCSS, yet a few points were deducted for stopping just short of providing clear evidence of successful conditions and autonomy.

|  |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>10</b> |
|--|-----------|-----------|

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

The applicant excelled in this area of the application criteria with regard of the **number of letters of support from a diverse population of stakeholders** for this reform effort. Most impressive were letters from young students noting that change was needed due to lack of resources (books, digital devices, even P.E. equipment) and clear excitement and hope was evident in their letters. The letters provided from the students illuminated their understanding of the need for reform and change and their engagement while not on the level of adult stakeholders was age appropriate and demonstrated support for this proposal. This same engagement and support is evidenced by letters from parents and former students.

A detailed description was provided for how students, families, teachers, and principals of schools included in this proposal were engaged in the development process. Minutes from various meetings is also included within the application. Letters from students, teachers, and various other stakeholders clearly provide support for this reform effort. However, the numbers and comparable percentages of teachers who support this proposed plan (at least 70 percent) is not provided.

The applicant did not provide sufficient support describing how the proposal was revised based on feedback gained from students, families, teachers, and principals and failed to include information about the number of students, teachers, principals, and stakeholders included in the collaboration or the percentage of those in favor or opposed to this reform effort. Points were deducted for insufficient information regarding the quality of the feedback process and the percentage of stakeholder groups involved in the process, specifically the percentage of teachers as required by the notice. The applicant scores in the mid-range for this criterion, with points earned for the diversity of stakeholders engaged as well as the enormous diversity in letters of support. The letters from students were given great consideration, for change will take place at the student level.

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

|                                    | Available | Score     |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>10</b> |

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

The applicant outlines a plan for improving learning by implementing a learner centered model with implementation dates. The elements of the model are provided in various disconnected segments within this section of the applicant. While the applicant does discuss some elements of the learner centered model, detailed comprehensive and coherent structure of the plan is missing. The applicant mentions using teacher videos and learning guides with digital portfolios used for assessment, yet little information is provided about the alignment to performance measures and assessment. Performance based learning seems to be the planned approach yet clear descriptions and

clarifications for which subject areas or courses will be targeted is not clearly provided. Rubrics are said to be created and used to assess the work of students with data to be collected via a data system.

The applicant shares information about the Teen Leadership Team based upon Bob Lens, "The 4 R's in a 21st Century School". This model provides support for the positive school climate goals of the proposed reform plan by implementing a Teen Leadership Team that emphasizes "Rigor, Relationships, Relevance and Results", all of which are aligned with this RTTT-D notice. The 4R's approach fosters an environment that engages and empowers all learners, and provides the greatest support for high-need students who may not come from families where this type of philosophy is modeled. This social-emotional model is slated to provide the climate for which this district plans to implement the use of learner-centered instruction. Based upon the information provided about the current school culture where the focus is on teacher centered instruction, the Teen Leadership Team provides strong evidence for helping students to understand what they are learning in their school coursework is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. The Teen Leadership Team program helps students to develop the skills needed to critically think, problem solve, and use written and oral communication to work in collaboration with others. Furthermore, the components of this program fully align and prepare students to meet college and career ready standards when supported with personalized learning environments. However, this model is designed for teens, the applicant does not provide for a similar program for younger students other than to say that a positive school climate will be provided and that interest inventories will be conducted for students in grades 3-12th.

The applicant acknowledges struggles with providing ongoing to parents due to the limitations of time, knowledge, and skill level. To provide support and training to parents for accessing the data system to be implemented with this plan, the district will offer comprehensive afternoon and evening trainings. No specific information or descriptions are provided for the types of training to be provided.

While many attributes for this criterion are scattered and mentioned within this criterion, the applicant fails to provide a convincing high quality plan for improving learning. For this criterion, the applicant earns a mid-range score with points with earned for the implementation of the Teen Leadership Team that will begin to foster a positive school climate to support the implementation of personalized learning environments. Also points were provided for noting the limitations for providing ongoing feedback to parents with good intentions for providing training at times to accommodate parents.

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

**20**

**3**

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

For this criterion the applicant provides a limited description of the teaching and leading approach that will be used. Professional development training for teachers and administrators is mentioned but fails to describe the types of professional development that will be implemented to help teachers and administrators. A need for developing learner centered instruction and unit assessments is needed, and while the applicant describes the need for training for teachers to develop these instructional practices, timelines and provisions that will be needed to assure such measures are not outlined in the plan. Moving from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction requires a enormous change in instructional paradigms and will require extensive professional development for teachers and administrators. The professional development plan described fails to provide evidence of a strong comprehensive plan that will support this shift. There is no mention of the specific curriculum theory planning model to be used or the system for developing instructional units, organizing resources, and for the development of valid assessment instruments. Overall, the training to be provided and the evaluation of educators and administrators to their ability to fully implement a personalized learning and teaching environment for all students is not adequately described or supported within the narrative. Vague mentions of professional learning communities and team leadership is included yet fails to disclose the theoretical principles guiding the instructional development, evaluation measures, as well as a time line for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the process for teaching and leading.

This section of this applicant seems to restate much of the text found within the RTTT-D notice and lacks enough supportive details to support this criterion. The use of professional development and evaluations for educators and administrators may be helpful for determining educator effectiveness and additional professional development training that is needed during the time of this project. However there is no mention for the quality, validity, or reliability of the evaluation tools and/or professional development training. The applicant scores in the upper lower range for this criterion with some points given for describing the basic requirements for professional development and evaluation tools for administrators.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>3</b> |

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

The applicant offers a flow chart to demonstrate the organization of the school district educational system. The system includes the

members of the school board, superintendent, project director, various educational support programs to support the individual schools included in the proposed plan. The organization is quite typical of central office governance. A narrative follows the flow chart describing the organizational structure of the leadership team. The applicant noted that this plan has been approved by the school board and if funded the school board will adopt the proposed RTTT-D plan as policy for the district signaling that policy is not already in place to provide for the implementation of the proposed measures. The proposed plan seeks to hire a project director to implement the project yet provides very little evidence information is provided as to the specific qualifications to be required for the individual leaving questions as to the quality of the structure of the leaders for this plan. Project director will be required to oversee all grant procedures as well as manage each of the projects while working with central office staff to create the support structures. This position seems rather ambitious for a single individual who may or may not have been involved with the vision and plan of this proposed project. Overall, the school district seems to have the personnel to support this proposed project, however the applicant fails to provide enough evidence to support that the personnel has the qualifications or experiences to provide support and services that will be needed for this paradigm shift in instructional practices from teacher centered to learner centered.

A vague mention for school leadership teams is provided within the narrative, school teams are cited as providing information to the district team. The organization between school teams and district teams seem reasonable. Evidence to support the flexibility of schedules and calendars as well as school personnel decisions including staffing models is not provided. The roles and responsibilities of educators and non-educators as well as school-level budgets are also not identified within the narrative. However there is brief notation of professional development training for teaching for teachers. Later in the narrative there is a slight mention of teacher teams having the flexibility to make changes in the schedule for teacher and staff meetings, however there is no mention of flexibility for instructional needs for personalized learning environments. Overall the descriptions for the organization for school leadership is poor.

Broad, and extremely vague descriptions are provided for multiple opportunities for students to master standards. The narrative simply states that teachers will adjust their lessons or provide direct support to the students and will also provide remediation. The applicant lacks specific measures or guidelines for allowing student multiple and varied attempts at mastery except for offering Saturday or after school remediation for grades 9-12. There are no provisions mentioned for lower grade bands. There are also no plans stated for providing learning resources and instructional practices for students with disabilities and ELL students.

Due to the vagueness and incoherent narrative and plan provided for this criterion, the applicant scores in the low range with a few points given for providing basic descriptions and a flow chart to the school district leadership organization.

|   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| <b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b> |
|---|-----------|----------|

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

Very limited information is provided for this criterion. The applicant shares that school counselors and college career coaches will provide training to parents on how to use the tools to access the student school to career information, which seems to be the online student portfolio mentioned previously in this application document. Parents will have access to this information 24 hours a day. Provisions for students, educators, and other stakeholders are not clearly noted. The applicant fails to provide evidence of access to the necessary content, tools and learning resources in and out of school for those parents, students, and stakeholders who might not have the tools for accessing online sources. The use of interoperable data systems is not addressed in the narrative as well as the narrative does not provide evidence to support the use of information technology systems allowing the exporting of information in an open data format.

Due to the limited information provided, the applicant earns in the low range for this criterion with some points given for noting training for parents to use the student school to career information.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>2</b> |

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

The applicant describes a usual top-down structure for evaluating continuous improvement of this proposed project. A team of external reviewers will be used to evaluate different proponents of the proposed plan. There is no mention to the qualifications of the evaluators or the types of instruments they will use to measure progress or to provide feedback for making improvement. Timelines and deliverables are not noted within the application and specific details for timely and regular feedback are not noted within the narrative. Measures for publicly sharing the information is not stated however a mere mention for parent participation is noted at PTO meetings, programs, parent conferences, and through the use of surveys. Specific information about how the information will be used from parent participation in the continuous improvement plan is not noted.

The provisions for monitoring and measuring the improvement process is vague and fails to support a high quality, rigorous plan. The applicant scores in the low range for this criterion.

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

**5**

**2**

**(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant states within the narrative that ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders is skillfully designed, yet fails to fully describe or clarify the transparent system. The use of longitudinal portfolios are mentioned yet little discussion is offered for how the data and information from the portfolios will be communicated between groups of stakeholders. The applicant does describe quarterly training for parents on how to access information about student requirements and student performance yet does not fully disclose how training and communication with students, teachers, administrators and other external stakeholders will take place.

The applicant scores in the low range for this criterion with points deducted for failing to provide sufficient information for the plan to provide ongoing communication and engagement with all stakeholders.

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

**5**

**2**

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

The applicant provided a brief narrative providing a brief yet vague description of the performance measures for this proposed plan. Following the narrative, the applicant provided poorly aligned tables of the performance measures. Justification for the specific measures provided was not clearly described in the narrative. . A review of the performance measures reveals limited explanation for the rationale for using such data and there were no descriptions of how the data provided would provide rigorous, timely, and formative information to assess the implementation and success of the proposed plan. Within the narrative the applicant states that data from student created portfolios will be used to measure and monitor individual student performances, clarity is not provided as to how the portfolio data is linked with the performance measures stated in this section and support is not provided as to how the data points described in this section will be used as a track indicator. Specific measures for the various grade level bands, especially lower grade level bands are not fully identified as well as the explanations for the measures provided for the upper grade bands are unclear.

Due to the limited explanation and for failing to provide a clear rationale for the performance measures, and for the limited information regarding how the measures will be used to make adjustments and revisions of the proposed plan as needed during implementation, the applicant scores in the low range for this criterion.

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

**5**

**1**

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

The narrative for this section seems to provide a very brief overview of how the applicant sees the end of the project. The applicant states that evaluation will be completed by internal and external reviewers yet does not provide specific timelines or expected deliverables. No explanation or insight is provided for the evaluation tools and how each goal will be monitored or performance measures will be evaluated. The narrative does not provide a plan for making adjustments or revisions during the implementation of the plan that might assure the effectiveness of this proposed project.

The applicant fails to provide evidence or even the components of what would be expected as a high quality plan to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT-D proposed plan. Professional development activities and activities to employ technology were merely stated as events to take place without clear descriptions of a proposed detailed plan. For this criterion, the applicant scores in the very low range given that little information is provided to support evaluating the effectiveness of investments for this funding.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>3</b> |

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

The applicant shares a brief narrative of the proposed budget along with budget tables. It does appear that all funds are identified that will be used to support the project however, it is difficult to determine if the funds are reasonable and sufficient for the development and

implementation the proposed plan. Many items stated in the budget are not clearly identified in the proposed plan. For example, field trips for students are included in the budget not fully outlined in the plan. While travel is stated for professional development and was mentioned in the proposed plan, the actual purpose and venues for the travel are sketchy at best with some travel costs deemed unreasonable i.e. \$250 per hotel room. The budget mentions computers for parenting center yet the parenting center is not fully described in the proposed plan. The proposed budget fails to provide a clear strategic plan for using RTTT-D grant funds to support one-time investments and to ensure long-term sustainability of personalized learning environments. For providing such a weak and inconsistent budget, that is not fully aligned with the proposed plan, the applicant scores in the low range for this criterion.

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

**10**

**0**

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

Due to the lack of information provided to separate one-time expenditures from on-going expenditures as well as the lack of full disclosure of funding resources from State and local government sources, the applicant fails to provide evidence for sustainability of the project goals noted within this proposed plan. Additionally, the applicant fails to provide a high quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of past investments as well as a high quality plan for evaluating the future investments of this proposed plan. The applicant scores no points for this criterion for failing to provide evidence to support the sustainability of this plan after the RTTT-D funds have ceased.

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

|  | Available | Score    |
|--|-----------|----------|
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>         | <b>10</b> | <b>0</b> |
| <b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b>        |           |          |
| Competitive preference priority not addressed by this applicant. |           |          |

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

|   | Available | Score          |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Absolute Priority 1</b>  |           | <b>Not Met</b> |
| <b>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</b>   |           |                |
| <p>The applicant fails to offer a coherent and comprehensive plan for addresses the core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments that will support college and career ready standards and increase academic achievement across all student groups. The plan provided is vague and lacks convincing evidence that this school district has the autonomy, support and services, needed to make the paradigm shift described. Many disconnects are noted within the document, especially between the stated goals, performance measures and the proposed budget plan. The budget included items that seem needed and appropriate for this plan, yet the items were not described in the narrative for the proposed plan. Evidence that students would have access to the most effective educators was not clearly evident in this plan. Evaluations for teacher effectiveness and professional development was mentioned but a comprehensive evaluation plan was not defined. While this school district and especially the students who wrote letters of support offered a strong need and desire for this funding opportunity, the details provided for the instructional plan, evaluation, and budget fall short of presenting a coherently and comprehensively plan that would decrease achievement gaps or increase the likelihood that students would have access to effective educators.</p> |           |                |

|              |            |           |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>210</b> | <b>65</b> |
|--------------|------------|-----------|

