



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0186FL-1 for The School District of Escambia County

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal presents comprehensive evidence that it intends to continue to build upon the four core assurances in a process that was initiated under previous RTTT services. It describes the level of progress made toward that effort that requires further support to focus specifically on the needs of middle school students. The approach described is visionary in that it accounts very well for individualized instructional support to students while also looking toward the future by developing cooperative learning activities that will address students' future needs for skills for working with others. It describes a setting that not only involves students working independently on computers but also requires them to connect in social academic settings to their peers to problem solve and develop collaborative skills. The data systems are well described and include specifics about the programs that are currently in place that allows access to state, local district, school, and individual student information. The training supports for teachers include specific programs and connections to local institutes of higher learning that are coordinated and ongoing. Positive supports are in place for students with behavior concerns. Excellent examples are presented to provide a clear picture in the day of the life of a student. Specific student programs are identified such as Compass Learning to offer options to students for accelerated learning. Project-based learning is addressed through another specific program, Renzulli Learning. There is clear evidence that resources are aligned to Common Core Standards.</p> <p>Significant percentages of ELL students reside in the district. Their needs are not specifically addressed in the scenarios presented as examples of instructional delivery although their specialists are included in the district's definition of 'educators'.</p>		
<b>(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal is very specific to the process used to identify the middle schools as the focus group of participants. The proposal provides a credible description with a timeline that indicates when discussions began, data reviewed, continuing collaboration across the district to determine services and students. There is clear evidence that the bargaining group of teachers were involved as it presents an example of how their feedback was used to modify plans and address teacher concerns and needs for support. Thoughtful planning is evidenced through anticipation of possible roadblocks and problems in order to address them prior to creating the proposal. Schools are identified and examples of the struggles of at-risk students provide a clear overview of their needs and how flexible access to information will be provided to them. The chart provided clearly identifies the numbers of students to be served through this focus on the district's middle schools and their intentions to serve 100% of the middle school students. The intention to serve all teachers is evidenced by the descriptions of the various supports to target individual teacher's needs that range from online courses, to in class coaches, to participation of teachers and leaders in 'academies' to address specific needs.</p> <p>The role of parents and community in developing the plan is not as specific to a degree similar to the support evidenced by district and school staff. The proposal intends to build parent and community involvement however, current levels of involvement are vaguely referenced.</p>		
<b>(A)(3) LEA-wide reform &amp; change (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<p><b>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal describes a forwarding thinking constructivist learning approach that is well described and presents an instructional paradigm shift model that will lead to high quality implementation of personalized services to children, teachers, and leaders. Several concrete examples of how this reform environment will be implemented in a manner to support individual learning while addressing the needs for social learning environments to train students for workplace settings. The district presents examples of ways in which they have replicated successful models of innovative practices in the past. The proposal comprehensively addresses the tasks that will be</p>		

required to implement change and anticipates the challenges to providing reform models. The coordination of the necessary tasks is presented in such a way that indicates implementation will be closely monitored and adapted. The development of instructional resources, thematic units, and personalized learning opportunities are evidence that the services will be scaled up as the project progresses. The evidence that the district has a history of innovative reform and replication of successful models is also supportive evidence that the district has a history of developing district-wide change. The timelines included present start up tasks as well as identifying key personnel and responsibilities.

Further evidence of specific supports for high-risk students such as the ELL students and the high poverty students would strengthen the proposal intention to serve all students to an equitable degree.

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

**10**

**9**

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

The proposal includes very clear visual representations of the goal areas and describes clearly the data, which will be used to determine growth in a variety of ways. Descriptions of summative assessments, formative assessments, performance-based assessments and close monitoring are clear evidence that the district has considered multiple opportunities for student measures. The proposal presents data to address the middle school students academically and by graduation rates and also address decreasing the achievement gaps between the subgroups of students.

The growth goals for each group increase for each year of the services but not at an accelerated level that would deepen student learning. Evidence of ambitious goals is not represented.

The proposal does not include disaggregated data for subgroups in the college enrollment rate data. This is attributed to the data available from the state and indicates the district has not completed its own system for tracking this information. It would be helpful to provide subgroup data for graduation rates in order to evaluate the vision for accelerated rates for those students most in need of the support provided.

**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>13</b>

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

The proposal provides evidence that through creative and innovative planning, model programs have been implemented in some sites that document success in turning around low performing schools. The proposal cites leadership, teacher developed programs, flexibility in design methods, and personalized learning as strategies employed to create improved settings and success for students.

The district indicates that improvement expectations for two elementary schools, which were the focus of past RTTT services, provided disappointing data but the proposal presents data to build upon for developing improved services. Data is provided throughout the proposal to support this evidence of implementation of charter schools, school within a school model and replication of successful programs support their ability to continue to improve student learning. This presents a history of creative reform efforts upon which it intends to build.

The proposal includes the accessibility of student data to educators through a data based online system. Many systems are in place and are proposed for online education that include immediate feedback options for teachers and students in order to inform and modify instruction as needed to target student interests and needs. Parents also have access to the district online webpage that provides student data.

The proposal does not adequately describe the role of parents and students in informing the decisions made that led to the increased performance and turn around in the examples presented. It is also not clear if the examples provided of successful reform include the persistently lowest performing schools in the district.

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

**5**

**4**

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

The proposal provides detailed evidence of access to district information from the website including policies, procedures, practices, investments and salary structure. It presents information that detailed reports including annual financial reports, audits, monthly statements, and budgets are available at the district school board office. The district took additional action to develop a citizen's guide to support community access to the data and information. Plans are addressed to provide internet access to low-income families and to

provide families with access to technology through local schools, churches, and other community based settings. This access will allow parents to review the processes and practices of the LEA as well as access to their student's progress in receiving the services of the proposed funded activities. The proposal includes a list of policies, procedures, and reports that are available on the website for public access.

The proposal does not address meaningful access to information for students and families who may not have transportation or information to allow them to physically access the information at the district office or board office. The proposal alludes to receiving the 'Sunny Award' for transparency but it is not clear who publishes and presents this award or what the criterion are for selection.

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

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**9**

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

The proposal presents a comprehensive review of state statutes and the language from those statutes that clearly describe the role and responsibility of school districts to develop innovative programs and address the diverse needs of students. District policies and procedures are also cited with language to support creativity and autonomy within the structure. The clear example of the group of teachers allowed to replicate a successful elementary school model within a middle school is an excellent representation of the district's efforts to be innovative and allow teachers to develop programs and plans to allow for personalized learning. The development of professional learning communities to review data and collaborate on a weekly basis is also demonstrative of the flexibility of the district to obtain teacher feedback and use that feedback to better inform the personalized learning settings. Examples of student choices are provided to further support the level of autonomy within each school site.

The proposal describes school leadership flexibility in developing budgets. Examples of how this flexibility is supportive of addressing student needs are not presented. A description of how the process through which leadership decisions are 'vetted' at the district level would strengthen the representation of their autonomy.

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

**15**

**10**

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

The proposal presents significant evidence to support the involvement of teachers in support of the project activities through teacher signatures of support. A high percentage (over 90%) of middle school teachers in the proposed middle school sites are included in the data provided. Local organizations from the PTO to the US Navy base commander provide letters of support that evidence community involvement and response. Tables are presented that indicate parent involvement in the schools and their responses to survey questions regarding student services. A letter of support is offered from an early learning organization. Letters of support from local businesses are included.

The role of parents in developing the proposal is not well described. The statement is included that the superintendent completed a 'call out' to all parents but the process is not described except for a reference to a survey monkey site that parents might access. There is a table included in the appendix that does not support evidence that all parents have access to technology in order to complete a survey monkey. There is one parent letter included although the PTO submits a letter of support. It is not clear that meetings were held with parents to discuss the proposed components and activities to be included. It is not clear how parents who speak languages other than English were offered opportunities for participation in the proposal development. There is no explanation of how the parents of high-risk students were involved in any discussion of proposed services. Their input would be valuable in determining specific needs for their children.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>

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

Specific approaches to implementation of personalized learning environments are evidenced in the proposal. The appendix describes the Renzulli Learning program approach with detailed information to support substantial online learning opportunities. This resource will allow student to determine his or her own personalized learning interests and needs. Student access to feedback on their own progress is clearly evidenced through the use of the identified programs. Other resources are clearly identified as available online to provide feedback and connect student needs to resources. Benchmarks assessments schedules are presented that will allow students to move at their own pace once needs are identified. The proposal's strength is in including cooperative learning strategies to ensure that students develop interpersonal skills and are not focused on technology in isolated educational settings. Comprehensive descriptions of learning modules are provided to support a high quality of flexibility in the design of student opportunities. Substantial descriptions of comprehensive

teacher training, involvement, and support are included. All resources will be translated for parents who may not speak English as their first language. This will provide them with more meaningful involvement.

The proposal notes the students will have access at home to continue to work at their own level and will allow parents to support and participate in the educational process. There is evidence that there will be community resources available at the closest schools for parents to access training in technology however, specific topics for parent training and how the technology training for parents will be rolled out and delivered is not well represented.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

One of the strengths of this proposal is a coherent description of how students will be working at their own pace, using technology, to track their individual progress while also connecting in academic social settings with other students to problem solve and develop necessary social skills for the workplace. The support for these students is well described through the training program for teachers that includes an intensive summer institute, weekly professional learning community meetings, online professional development for teachers through a variety of programs that are directly tied to learning expectations and activities of students in working toward building personalized learning environments while also developing cooperative learning skills. Several instructional systems are described that will provide extensive opportunities for teachers and students to review data online in order to monitor progress and needs of both groups. The evaluation system that is currently in place provides a coherent process for principals to provide observational feedback to teachers and address specific needs for improvement. The plan provides evidence that all middle school students will be served as well as their teachers. The proposal indicates specific dates for training that are appropriately placed throughout the school year and summer.

The coaching component is not specific to the training received by the coaches or a particular model of coaching although the proposal does indicate a system to videotaped reviews of teachers in order to provide feedback in what appears to be a collaborative coaching model. Planning opportunities for teachers are presented however, the amount of time for planning is not clearly identified nor are the topics or agendas for the professional learning communities. The role of evaluating the effectiveness of principals and their involvement in training is not well described. This would affect their ability to support their teachers, participate in professional learning communities, and their ability to provide meaningful feedback to the teachers who have had the specific training.

**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>11</b>

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

The proposal provides evidence of district staffing levels, roles, and responsibilities that will provide support to the project. The composition of school leadership teams is described to include teachers and paraprofessionals involved in decision making at the school level. There is oversight explained from the district level to the school level in the decision making process. Multiple online resources are cited that will provide a variety of systems for obtaining feedback, mastery levels, and connections to learning resources and provide learning opportunities that can be specifically directed to the needs of ELL students and students with disabilities as well as the general population. Opportunities for students to provide performance-based examples of mastery are also included as well as opportunities for collaborative responsibilities for students. The proposal includes clear descriptions of the programs that will be in place, providing a clear picture of multiple opportunities. The evidence that the district allowed a group of teachers to replicate a model from an elementary school within a middle school is demonstrative of the flexibility and creativity allowed to schools in developing programs. A flow chart is presented to represent the instructional innovation task force designed to support the program services. This flow chart defines practices and responsible parties for ensuring each major reform effort is well supported by identifying key personnel, schedules, and responsibilities.

More detailed timelines connected to the intentions of program services would strengthen the proposal's evidence of organized leadership to support the project goals. The middle school director is referenced as the person responsible for coordinating grant services however the proposal does not do an adequate job in describing this position or the time this person would have to devote to project oversight.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

A comprehensive support plan is presented for the hand held technology to be provided to every student in the program. The proposal describes a relationship with a local internet provider who will assist in providing equal access for all parents to online resources and the

ability to monitor their child's progress, regardless of income status. Training opportunities for parents are described that will include translation services for ELL parents and training in a variety of community-based settings. Take home technology is well described to provide equitable services to all students through access to online resources, text support online, and to allow parents access to a district program that is currently in place for monitoring grades and attendance. A timeline and commitment for export of data to parents and students is evidence of the district's intention to provide access to families. The proposal does a good job in acknowledging that students may also be resources for their peers and families in the use of technology.

More specific details in how the delivery of training to parents will be accomplished would strengthen the proposal's vision. Parents may not have transportation to the locations described. The system and staffing of the parent training component is not well described in terms of the qualifications of staff who will provide parent training and support access to families.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The proposal provides a comprehensive description through eight specific steps that will be taken to analyze data and inform the plans for the program. The proposal is also strong in anticipating and planning for challenges that may lead to revisions. The proposal addresses issues that may arise in technology support as an example. The steps provide for brainstorming among a variety of stakeholders to identify barriers and address them from a wide perspective of views. Specific actions steps to determine responsible parties and allow for follow through also address fidelity of implementation. Data from formative and summative assessment is clearly identified through a description of benchmark assessments that are currently available for common core standards and are also available for each student. The district intends to use this data to provide remediation and acceleration as needed based upon individual student progress. Surveys to provide input from parents and students as well as staff provide a variety of tools to supplement computer driven assessment data for review. The district demonstrates its flexibility in anticipating roadblocks and establishing a system that is not locked in but is changeable depending on the barriers that are encountered. This is a realistic and practical perspective that supports ongoing review and revision of services.</p> <p>The proposal is lacking in a clear description of how the information and input will be presented to parents on a regular basis to support their role in the cycle of review. The role of the students is not well described in how they may have opportunities for feedback regarding the program services in assisting them in reaching their personal goals. More specific information regarding the benchmark timelines within the steps identified would be helpful in determining the effectiveness of the continuous improvement process.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The proposal describes an extensive system that is in place at this time to implement the eight-step process for review and intervention. It is comprehensive in describing a system of continual review within the current school improvement plans that will support the proposed activities and allow for adjustments. A system is described that identifies key personnel in the review process. The district describes sound strategies for sharing their review and revision process and program updates at school advisory meetings, district advisory meetings, and school board meetings. Parents' involvement is described as having access to the information at school advisory council meetings and board meetings. The information provided indicates that progress monitoring of the program will be posted on the district website. The proposal extends the extent of review by including surveys as well as online data.</p> <p>It is not clear how parents who do not attend advisory meetings will be notified of program progress or provide feedback to add input in a continual review cycle. Community partners and stakeholders are also limited to accessing information on the Internet or attending meetings. It would be helpful to describe a system of parent notification that does not require them to have access to computers or the knowledge to analyze data in order to provide input into the program's progress. The expectation that parents will return surveys to a high degree is not evidenced.</p>		
<b>(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b>		
<p>The proposal is designed to serve all middle school students and provides performance measures and targets for all students as well as for each subgroup included in their population. A goal and target is described to measure student out of school suspension, which supports the</p>		

intention to address social-emotional needs. College and career ready indicators are included as well as academic targets. The planned measures for teacher and principal effectiveness are appropriately addressed through basing the evaluation upon a state system of measurement of effectiveness. Rationales are presented in the proposal's descriptions of the selection of their students needs as analyzed through their current data systems and discussions during the planning phase of the project.

It is not clear which 'on track indicator' the district is using to determine college and career ready performance levels. Several measures are referenced "Discovery Education Assessments, Renzulli Learning, portfolio assessments, grades, and formative assessments" but none is clearly tied to the performance measure described. Performance measures are generally identified to expect a 2% increase for each subgroup. This does not provide evidence the program will accelerate student learning, specifically for the high-risk subgroups. The expectations do not evidence ambitious goals for annual targets. The data presented for 'out of school suspensions' and 'end of course Algebra' levels is confusing and appears to be contradictory in terms that the rates of success appear to be high for students who have been suspended at high rates.

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

**5**

**4**

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

The proposal identifies a specific evaluation team that will be contracted externally to provide feedback and guidance. The appendix includes detailed information to describe the qualifications of this evaluation company and their previous involvement with this district. A comprehensive design of evaluation is provided in identifying specific goals and steps to measure the extent of success in measuring each goal. This table provides a clear timeline for data collection, identifies the tools and instruments for collection, and evaluation questions to be addressed in the process. Technology resources are widely described as well as the process to obtain data for review in and out of the classroom or school setting. It is clear that the use of the hand held technology devices to be provided to each student would be addressed in the evaluation process. Annual summative assessments are described as a component of data collection. The proposal is extensive in providing information that will be collected following professional development sessions. The eight-step plan described provides a solid system for review and modification as needed to program components.

The proposal's intention to remain open and flexible to address the needs that will arise in data review is clear, however a connection between the frequent data review from within the classroom is not connected to the annual and by semester timelines for program evaluation.

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

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

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

The budget presented is reasonable and well -detailed to provide evidence that the funds requested will be adequate to support the proposal's intentions. An extensive explanation connecting the budget line items to criterion described in the proposal is included. Evidence is also provided that describes the district's support of the technology platform and the use of district funds for portions of the professional development currently available and accessible online to teachers. Title I funds are described as currently in place and supporting access to technology for the students in Title I schools. Rationales are provided for the development of the salary base, equipment purchase and repair, teacher training and incentives. The budget includes descriptions of one-time investments and on-going costs. Strategies are clearly described to provide evidence that the major goals of the project will be sustained through such strategies as video taped- teacher presentations, continued technology support from the district, anticipated state funds to support assessment data, and continued funding for two teaching positions.

The amount of funds from other sources used to support the project are not clearly defined with the exception of Title I funds to continue to support the project's goals and services. Identification of funds from local sources and partners are not provided specifically to provide evidence the partners who provided letters of support will be providing support to continue to support the program goals.

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

**10**

**8**

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

Building capacity through teacher training and ongoing mentoring by highly qualified teachers is a good example of how the project will sustain services to teachers following the grant funding. Local businesses will be contacted to continue to support credit-bearing classes for teachers through the local institute of higher education. The parent training component described, if successful, will also sustain program goals by providing parents with the skills necessary to work with their children out of school to access learning opportunities. A high degree of partnership with the local internet provider is described which would continue following grant funding and sustain adequate technological support for parent access. The proposal provides evidence that district and state funds were used in the past to develop a high degree of availability of technology. The intention to contract with an external evaluator is evidence the district will monitor the effectiveness of the program. There is also evidence that past investments in modifying programs to meet student needs for personalized instruction were monitored and used to identify needs for the current proposal. Letters of support are provided from local businesses, government leaders, an early learning provider, and the internet provider described in the project. Data systems will continue to provide support and there is an intention described that the state will be funding further technology support and data access as online assessments are scheduled to be implemented. Teacher training is supported through developing teacher experts, mentors, and a system of continued training. The budget is presented by sub-project and for each project year and clearly connected to the criterion of the RFP.

The proposal does not address the administration of the program services after the funding period ends. If the data systems are accurately in place ongoing monitoring should be easily addressed however the proposal does not identify this responsibility. Timelines, deliverables, and persons responsible for evaluating the ongoing services of the program following the funding period is not presented and would further support the adequacy of a sustainability process.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>

#### Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Partnerships are identified through letters of support in the proposal. Surveys are included to indicate teachers, students, and parents are involved in assessing needs. The district's strategic plan is also included as evidence of the infrastructure in place and the intentions of the district to address parent concerns. The described data collection system is appropriate for ongoing monitoring of services, progress, and needs. Anticipated challenges are addressed and flexibility is evidenced to support the plan and its efforts to maintain a system that will meet roadblocks the program may encounter. The local institute of higher education is identified as a partner in providing teachers access to credit-bearing courses. Social workers and community volunteers are described as anticipated trainers for students and families who may be struggling with social and emotional needs. A course in personal and career planning is described as in place and for the purpose of assisting students in making career and college decisions. Social and emotional needs are identified as a key goal and included in the training component to be delivered by the local institute of higher education for teachers to continue to support these needs.

Community partnerships are not well described. Business partners are presented however the degree and details of the partnerships is not presented. The role of public and/or private resources is not developed. The current role of the internet company is referenced but not detailed to indicate if the service is purchased or donated. It would be helpful to identify the ways in which the businesses that submitted letters of support are currently providing that support and more specifically what that support will look like in the future. Financial relationships with partners, services of partners, and identification of the volunteers described to work with parents and families and current supports in place in the community from non-profit organizations are not detailed.

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

#### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents a clearly comprehensive plan to address the core assurances by building upon current efforts and providing autonomy and flexibility in determining how the strategies will deepen student learning. The clear examples of collaboration of students and individualization of their learning plans is evidence that the district has provided thoughtful supports to their children. The anticipation of modifications to meet the needs of shifting the paradigm of educational models is a good example of a coherent plan that addresses future needs as well as current needs of children. Professional development opportunities to improve teacher effectiveness are

individual and collaborative. College and career readiness will be measured with a variety of tools. Anticipation of the needs of new teachers is included in professional development strategies. The proposal presents evidence and targets for decreasing the achievement gaps between economically disadvantaged students and non-academically disadvantaged students. The information on this subgroup is evidence of thoughtful consideration and a highly focused approach.

Targets for providing students with highly effective teachers and principals are not set at an accelerated rate to meet student subgroup needs. For example, the Native American population is expected to increase their access to effective teachers and principals at an increased growth rate of only 2% per grant funding year. Reaching the most at-risk populations with effective strategies presents a need for acceleration in the professional development targets. The targets for economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students do not appear to include reducing the gaps between the groups in addressing graduation rates and college and career readiness.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>169</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

#### Application #0186FL-2 for The School District of Escambia County

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

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

#### (A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The School District of Escambia County presents an innovative, unique plan introduced in this section. Escambia sets forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, providing sound evidence to justify its implementation. The projects set forth in the plan are based in large part upon scaling up initiatives that are already successful in other similar schools within the district.

Escambia has named its reform project PALMS (Personalizing All Learning in Middle Schools). The PALMS vision is clearly articulated in this section. Escambia provides convincing evidence that "when placed in a personalized learning environment based on student academic interest, these students become engaged and succeed." The PALMS project provides extensive opportunities for students to access the type of personalized learning environment described in this vision statement.

PALMS is divided into three clearly described focus areas. The first will focus on improving teacher practices to provide a highly engaging, challenging and motivating classroom environment, through personalized instruction and supports, tailored to meet the diverse needs of the at risk population as well as the gifted and advanced middle school students. The second focus area will provide supports for both students and families, especially the economically challenged families. The third focus area will build effective leadership teams and staff who excel at creating and supporting teachers, students, and families in a challenging, inquiry based environment that personalizes the experience for all students. It is reasonable to expect that focus in these three areas will lead to successful reform. When addressed successfully, reform in these three areas will directly impact instructional practices in the classroom, while providing support for families to reinforce teaching and learning outside of school.

(a) Escambia received a portion of the Florida RtT grant award, and began a comprehensive series of reforms and initiatives throughout the district. The proposal includes evidence of programmatic success (i.e. START program for mentoring and coaching new teachers, turnaround at Oakcrest and Brentwood Elementary Schools). Escambia describes the scaling up of initiatives and new initiatives to build upon these successes.

The district plans to continue its work in applying standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace. The district describes significant progress to address the alignment of standards to curriculum and assessment resources. The district's vision is that teachers, administrators and district level personnel will contribute to the PALMS program by creating additional high quality assessments developed for the specific units being taught. The district's plan is that these assessments will become part of the

shared bank of assessments that all PALMS schools and teachers can use for their corresponding units. This plan is thorough in that it proposes a detailed, sound, and well thought out process for assessment development for many non-core and gap courses. The process includes the creation of item specifications, assessment items, and test forms.

The district will continue and expand its data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals. The proposal describes an extensive and apparently interoperable set of data systems that are accessed via a single sign-on. Single sign-ons increase ease of use for stakeholders, and systems that are easier to use are accessed more readily. The proposal also describes a culture of transparency and routine communication surrounding data. School grades are widely disseminated to parents through the media, state web site, and district web site. The district provides a qualified vision for how this robust data system will support the RttT-District grant requirements.

The district will continue and improve its current practices around recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals. The district describes its current efforts to recruit and train teachers, and includes documentation of successful practices. The district does disclose that it is continuing to negotiate with the local bargaining unit to establish an acceptable "reward" system that goes beyond the standard salary for teachers whose students show academic achievement. This system is not in place yet. The proposal presents a plan to fill in the gaps in the current teacher training programs by providing additional training in project-based, interdisciplinary teaching and using individualized learning with technology.

The district documents its success in turning around its lowest achieving schools. It acknowledges that recently there have been declines in the gains made by some schools over the past several years. It specifies the middle schools as the places where the decline was felt sharply, and therefore justifies the selection of the middle schools as the impetus for this grant application.

(b) The plan articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. The proposal describes a plan to expand personalization at the middle school level. A key component of this personalization effort will be the purchase of RenzulliLearning. Renzulli is adequately presented as an innovative, thorough means to provide teachers with information about student interest, strengths and weaknesses. Another component of the plan will be to train teachers and administrators to incorporate more project-based, cooperative learning, infused with technology. The implementation of both components create a strong plan to personalize the teaching and learning system to accelerate student achievement while deepening student learning. The district presents a plan to address inequity by not only providing students with personal devices, but also partnering with a local cable company to ensure accessibility for low income families. Once the technology and accessibility are in place, it is reasonable to expect its use will positively impact the learning experience for students.

(c) The proposal provides evidence of past success at the middle level in two schools, and justifies the expansion of current programs to produce successful reform across district middle schools. The plan describes a PALMS classroom experience that includes opportunities to apply skills and knowledge across interdisciplinary content areas. It describes heterogeneous grouping. It describes opportunities to learn and apply transferable skills. It describes authentic assessments. The proposal includes a detailed example of these experiences in this section, which allows the reviewer to visualize what a PALMS classroom will look like. The proposal also describes a nontraditional classroom experience already in existence, and seeks to expand access to this program. It describes an environment complete with virtual learning opportunities, which will further personalize the educational experience for students and families.

The proposal details the Renzulli Learning program. It provides convincing support for the inclusion of this program as a means to enhance the personalization of the learning experience. Renzulli will "provide teachers with a tool for creating high quality, engaging, challenging, project-based, multi-disciplinary classrooms." Renzulli will allow teachers to enhance the instructional grouping experience, based on student strengths and interests. This type of grouping practice will provide depth to the learning experience for students, and remove limitations.

The proposal presents a feasible plan to create classrooms that integrate academics and social and emotional learning, while engaging and motivating every student. The plan is high quality in its inclusion of activities, deliverables, a timeline, and the assignment of responsible persons. The Instructional Innovation Task Force will be accountable for selecting the targeted training and overseeing job-embedded coaching and monitoring.

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

**10**

**10**

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

(a) In the previous section, Escambia pointed to a decline in student gains as measured by the FCAT, and described the decline as it affected middle schools especially. Escambia also detailed successful middle school reforms in one school, which were also successfully piloted in one other school. The PALMS project will be in all nine middle schools. The district intends that PALMS "will be a total transformation that affects all students and faculty." The proposal also documents that collectively the schools meet the eligibility requirements regarding numbers of students and percentage of students participating from a low-income family. Based on the information provided in the proposal, including documentation of an effective program which was successfully replicated with a higher needs population, it is reasonable to believe that Escambia's approach will support high quality district level (among the targeted middle schools) and school level implementation of PALMS.

(b) The proposal includes a comprehensive list of participating schools.

(c) The school demographic chart is complete in its inclusion of the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators.

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

**10**

**9**

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

Escambia's PALMS program proposal describes in detail the replication of two programs, one whole school and one a school-within-a-school, that have demonstrated significant success measured by school report card grades and student performance on the FCAT (respectively). Escambia presents a thorough description of the process for choosing the school-within-a-school pilot model, which includes the decision to replicate the whole school success at one middle school in a traditionally underperforming school. Submitted data indicates that in the second year of implementation, the "Connections" pilot scored 17 points higher than the general population of that middle school on the FCAT. Escambia demonstrates that its recognition that a paradigm shift is required to fully and faithfully implement the new program, but its claims that the shift can be attained are reasonable due to its convincing demonstration of prior success.

Escambia presents a detailed analysis of the required paradigm shift through the inclusion of a clear, comprehensive graphic. Escambia identifies the persons responsible for overseeing the programmatic shift. The Instructional Innovation Task Force (IITF) will be modeled after previous district wide task forces, with demonstrated track records of success. The narrative presents the concept of a phased adoption, to be overseen by the IITF. The IITF work will be based on a comprehensive list of pedagogical/methodological precepts. The detail embedded in these operational precepts are evidence of a well thought out plan for the work of the IITF. The precepts include references back to the core academic assurance areas and the three focus areas described in the vision section of this proposal. The proposal presents narrative details for the work of the IITF, including its responsibilities regarding technology.

The proposal provides a summary of the high quality plan. It is reasonable to expect from the comprehensive details presented that when implemented the plan includes the necessary actions and outcomes to help the district reach its stated goals. The summary graphics and accompanying narratives assign responsible persons for the actions and tasks to be accomplished. The actions are clearly delineated into start-up and process tasks. These tasks are further divided into specific deliverables. For example, a start up task assigned to the IITF and appropriate committee chair and defined stakeholder groups is to research and present regarding CCSS pedagogical philosophy and IITF learning environment implications. An associated process task is to define and develop exemplary CCSS practices and activities for subject area project-based instruction and for interdisciplinary project-based instruction.

The high quality plan includes a focused vision of IITF/CCSS classroom implications, which are the reasonably expected outcomes of the start up and process tasks. This section includes specific example scenarios of classroom implications, describe in detail as the example scenarios of cooperation for delivery of CCSS in Math and ELA & Literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

The exhaustive details presented support a plan to scale up existing reform initiatives to impact all middle schools in the district.

The plan describes a logically phased-in implementation, but does not provide a concrete timeline based in calendar dates.

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

**10**

**7**

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

The proposal is qualified in that it details the methodology for determining proficiency status and growth. The proposal includes baseline data from two years of testing, and tracks goals through the post-grant year.

(a) The proposal presents ambitious yet achievable proficiency and growth targets for student performance in the aggregate and across subgroups.

The proposal is qualified in that it details the methodology for identifying the subgroups targeted for decreasing the achievement gap, and the methodology for gap reduction.

(b) The proposal presents ambitious yet achievable targets for reducing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and the control group. The proposal chose not to address other, at times more significant achievement gaps, such as the gap between white students and African-American students. The proposal does not present an explanation for this choice or omission.

(c) The proposal presents achievable targets for increases in the graduation rate in the aggregate and for subgroups. The target post-grant rates, however, are still low in the aggregate and in many subgroups. The grant activities will target the middle schools (grades 6 - 8). Current 8th grade students will be in the 12th grade in the post-grant year. These students may have insufficient exposure to grant activities prior to high school, and therefore the graduation rate during their senior year may not be significantly impacted. Still, I would expect to see a stronger trajectory leading to the post-grant years.

(d) The proposal includes generic college enrollment data, and does not present a potential plan to supplement the data for future tracking

purposes following grant activities.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal summarizes evidence provided earlier to demonstrate a track record of success in two distinct schools, with two different populations. The program adopted in these schools will be replicated through the PALMS program. The narrative also repeats an earlier section of the proposal, citing examples of success at two elementary schools. The data presented includes school report card ratings for the two elementary schools, and an increase in proficiency status percentages in reading and math at one elementary school. The reforms described for both middle schools and for both elementary schools can reasonably be called ambitious. Schools previously designated as failing, or receiving an F grade, are now receiving A or B grades.</p> <p>The proposal does not address high school graduation rates or college enrollment.</p> <p>School report cards and grades are public, but this section did not explicitly address a record of making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. From the description of the origin of the Bellview Connections Team, it is apparent that the pilot team used demographic and performance data when it chose to expand the Brown Barge program to a different location, and one with a more challenging student group.</p>		
<b>(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<p><b>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Escambia has earned the "Sunny Award" from the Sunshine Review for outstanding transparency on its website for two consecutive years, including 2013. Stakeholders are able to access detailed information about the district policies, procedures, practices, investments and salary structure for all groups via the district website. In addition, detailed financial information is provided, including comprehensive annual financial reports, audits, monthly financial statements, budgets and tax roll information. The district also publishes a citizen's guide to the budget brochure, to support accessibility. There is a link to school level data on the district website, as well. General salary information is provided on the district website, but specific salary information by school level for all groups is only available through the National Center for Education Statistics. The proposal does not include reference to how a stakeholder is directed to the National Center for Education Statistics. Nor does it include information about how cumbersome the process of requesting information might be.</p>		
<b>(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal includes comprehensive reference to Florida statutes, citing chapter and verse of applicable regulations. State regulations provide that Escambia is able to demonstrate evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the proposal. The proposal describes previous opportunities to develop innovative programs with the support of the school board. The proposal details offerings already in existence that focus on a personalized environment, such as the hospital/homebound program that allows students to work at their own pace to catch up with classmates or to move ahead of their peers upon their return to school.</p>		
<b>(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>
<p><b>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The district details several ways in which students, families, teachers and principals were engaged in the development of this proposal. The proposal presents a comprehensive narrative that begins with the initial meeting of internal stakeholders. The narrative includes a summary of annotated meeting minutes from the first meetings of the initial stakeholder group. The district invited union representatives to participate in these initial meetings, as well. The district contracted with StuderEducation to create and disseminate surveys. The surveys solicited input regarding educational practices and the classroom environment. The district details that several surveys meant to target various stakeholder groups were created and rolled out during the process of proposal preparation. Teachers and students were among survey participants. Parents were also targeted for survey participation. The proposal acknowledges, however, that the parent survey results are less than fully representative due to accessibility issues in the parental community.</p>		

Union representatives were involved in the identification of acceptable and effective incentives. The proposal provides examples of how the union redirected plans to propose equitable and related incentives.

The proposal includes a clearly articulated section that details three ways in which the original concept of the application was altered based on stakeholder input.

The proposal demonstrates via signatures that 90.08% of teachers support this application. Signatures were gathered independently from all schools.

The proposal includes letters of support from the administrators/mayors of municipalities and the county, the principals and assistant principals of all nine participant middle schools, business partners (i.e., StuderEducation, Cox Communications), the Parent-Teacher-Association, education organizations/associations, community organization, institution of higher education, parents, teachers, and the Department of the Navy,

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>

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

(a) The proposal describes a strong partnership with RenzulliLearning. RenzulliLearning and the Personal Success Plan initiative will be used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and career interests, and to define personal goals for success. If a subject area of interest is identified, but not offered at a school, a student may study it through other virtual course options. The technological components of the proposal, including the personal devices and the provision of Internet accessibility to all homes, will allow students to extend learning to include virtual "international" experiences. But there is no structure to require exposure to diverse cultures, contents and perspectives. Because the technology is available in homes, parents will be able to partner in this process. The PALMS classroom environments are described as collaborative, cooperative, and project-based. The proposal provides extensive details of the innovative curriculum and instructional program available at one middle school and in the pilot school-within-a-school at a second middle school.

The PALMS program will replicate these environments. The proposal provides reasonable indications that a full, scaled up implementation of the existing model will lead to deep learning experiences and the development of skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication and problem-solving. The proposal describes specific initiatives that will assist its Students with Disabilities population to attain the same knowledge and skills. These initiatives include comprehensive professional development.

(b) The proposal describes a plan through which students will continue to meet the CCSS, but to do so more efficiently through the use of the technology and infrastructure which will be provided through the grant for use at home. The proposal describes a partnership with Discovery Education Assessment, which will provide the participating schools, as well as elementary schools in the district with diagnostic data and resources to measure progress towards meeting standards. Discovery Education resources are accessible through the personal device at home, and by this the proposal presents a reasonable scenario including parental and family involvement. Specific tools will be available to improve parental capacity with the Motivation Station and Homework Help.

High needs students, English language learners and Students with Disabilities will be able to access remediation portions of the program to facilitate learning. But the proposal describes a plan whereby these student access this learning at home, so they do not miss class time with peers. While this is admirable, it makes an assumption that these students can and will access remedial services on their own, at home.

The proposal presents four necessary approaches to personalized learning, and describes how the PALMS program will meet those approaches. The first is a blended learning environment, with will expand learning opportunities beyond the classroom with online and digital learning opportunities for all participating students and their families. This approach could reasonably be assumed to be extensive in its outreach, and thereby produce higher levels of parental engagement, understanding and support to increase student success. The second approach is to utilize individualized college and career readiness learning plans, which the proposal describes in extensive detail as an outcome of its partnership with RenzulliLearning. These learning plans will direct student learning activities towards personalized goals, and at the same time, promote student self-monitoring of progress. The proposal also describes real world/work experiences and service learning projects, which will be based in student choice, as well. The third approach is the utilization of competency based models. The proposal describes a system of multiple assessments, including personalized assessments to meet the needs of diverse learners. Assessments will be administered regularly throughout the year, and teachers will have access to student performance data for planning. Personalized environments require a strong, cohesive positive classroom management plan. The proposal presents the research-based Charlotte Danielson model to meet this need. The final requirement is the ongoing engagement and empowerment o of key stakeholder groups. The proposal describes an extensive system of professional development and coaching to meet this need.

The proposal provides an exhaustive description of a Personal Development and Career Planning course that all seventh grade students

take. This course has been in place for many years, and is not necessarily enhanced through the grant project. This fact is not reflected in the reviewer's score.

(c) Escambia has presented a clear plan to ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning. The district presents a training schedule that includes summer training to assist students and families with the best practices for using their new technology. Students will receive training throughout the year, as well, especially during the first six weeks of school. Parents will access face to face and virtual training opportunities. The district has provided a mechanism to address transiency within its middle schools by requiring the same training plan to be implemented across schools. The the technology coordinators will be responsible for this deliverable.

The district presents a high quality plan to meet this criteria, including key goals, a timeline, responsible persons and deliverables.

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

**20**

**15**

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

Escambia responds to this criteria by introducing a three pronged approach to a high quality plan. It proposes the plan prepares teachers and administrators to provide a personalized learning environment while utilizing project-based learning to support the collaboration between students to prepare them to be part of the future work force; continues to better prepare teachers and administrators to utilize and disaggregate data to inform instruction; provides additional resources and time to have teachers adequately prepare for the increased demands of project-based, collaborative curriculum.

(a)(i) Through the grant, the district will provide all students equitable access to technology and online resources to access personalized learning opportunities. The grant will also purchase Renzulli Learning. The proposal has presented extensive evidence of the benefits of Renzulli to meet the differentiated needs of students.

(a)(ii) The proposal further details the ability of Renzulli Learning to support project-based learning through teacher development. Although other types of learning are referenced elsewhere in the proposal, this section does not include an extensive discussion of these alternate and varied types of learning (i.e. cooperative learning).

(a)(iii) The proposal presents multiple partnerships and assessment resources, including portfolio assessments, grades, and formative assessments. The proposal states that the data from these assessments will be used to provide opportunities for remediation or acceleration. The plan does not include a timeline for administration of these assessments or a process to receive and evaluate the data in this section.

(a)(iv) The plan details a robust, interactive administrator and teacher evaluation systems that permits real time observation notes, and the ability for teachers to redirect based on actual administrator or coach feedback. The plan also includes a mentor/coach program for new teachers. The True North Logic electronic management system is in place to facilitate feedback, evaluations, and responses. Principals also have access to electronic resources, including an online recording system that helps administrators make quick decisions about resources for specific teachers.

(b)(i) The proposal describes extensive training to teach teachers how to use data and resources. Some of the data includes the Renzulli Learning data regarding student interests and strengths. Teachers will also receive training to implement new content area curricular resources, including texts and online components. The proposal provides some detail regarding the training necessary for the shift to project-based, technology-infused learning, including the months and location of the training.

(b)(ii) The proposal repeats its references to CompassOdyssey and Renzulli Learning, along with Discovery Education as evidence of high quality learning resources that include digital components. These resources, along with the Internet accessibility provided through the district's relationship with Cox Communication, provide evidence of high quality opportunities for students to access learning and assessment resources. They also provide student performance data and tracking to monitor students' progress towards target goals.

(b)(iii) The proposal provides extensive evidence that the resources chosen match student needs, and include specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting students' needs. The proposal describes a system in which the Renzulli Learning, Discovery Education, CompassLearning and Escambia Virtual Academy work together to personalize access to courses based on student interest and student academic level, to enable students to meet personalized goals. The system provides regular, formative assessment data, which can be accessed and used to make decisions about the student's progress and path.

(c)(i) The proposal describes a robust, newly adopted teacher and administrator evaluation system. The action steps included in the system's evaluation process are detailed. The district supports the implementation of the evaluation system through multiple opportunities for training throughout the year. Student academic growth data, from the FCAT, makes up half of the teacher evaluation score.

(c)(ii) The proposal discusses a rationale for training in the use of data to improve instruction. This training is already planned, and the dates of training sessions are provided in this section. It is reasonable to expect that this plan will be implemented in a timely manner, and

that it will be effective to produce desired proficiency levels in teachers' ability to access and use data.

(d) The proposal justifies the definition of a highly effective teacher by citing the Charlotte Danielson model, which is the model on which the evaluation system is based, so the definitions cited and used are consistent. The proposal presents a reasonable assertion that teachers who are properly and effectively trained are more likely to be retained. The proposal gives some action details regarding proposed training around the technology and project-based learning. Earlier sections of the proposal referenced a teacher incentive structure approved by union representatives, but it is not referenced here.

Although the plan addresses each criteria above through the inclusion of initiatives and action steps, referencing partners and research-based resources as applicable, this response does not include all of the components of a high quality plan. Responsible persons are identified elsewhere in the grant application, but they are not matched to all activities in this section. The timelines are not clearly articulated, and therefore the vision of when benchmarks are expected to be reached is unclear.

#### 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>9</b>

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

(a) The proposal details an organizational structure built on assistant superintendents of major departments, who then report directly to the superintendent. These groups also contain a layer of directors. For the PALMS program, the proposal clearly indicates that the Director of Middle School Education will be the first point of contact when needs arise. The proposal also details a structure for the technology department, including dedicated tech staff at each participant school. The IITF will lead the professional development initiatives of the program, and it falls under the Curriculum and Instruction department via Professional Learning. The direct line to the Director of Middle School Education is vague. The Finance department is responsible for financial obligations and compliance associated with the grant. Human Resources is responsible for educator evaluation. An organizational chart is not included, and the hierarchical relationship between these departments is unclear. Although the Director of Middle School Education is the first contact, the oversight responsibilities of this person, and the relationship of this director-level position to other positions in other departments is unclear.

(b) The proposal describes a system of autonomy, but the involvement of level directors and assistant superintendents and the requirements to obtain approval present a contradictory picture. It is unclear as to what will happen if the Director of Middle School Education, or the department assistant superintendent of that department, disagrees with another department assistant superintendent.

(c) The proposal details how CompassOdyssey Learning and the personal devices combined with Internet access will provide opportunities for all students to move at their own pace. The proposal does not present a clear indication in this section of how students move ahead based on mastery, and not on time spent on a topic.

(d) The proposal describes a PALMS program that includes students working in an individualized environment with the ability to select from a variety of methods to demonstrate mastery. There is no clear indication of how frequently students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery through these various methods.

(e) The proposal states that the acquisition of resources and instructional practices will be fully adaptable and fully accessible to all students. Teachers will be assessed on a timeline (Spring 2014) for their ability to differentiate, and any teacher evaluated as deficient will have a related goal as part of a professional development plan.

This response did not include all components of a high quality plan. Definitive timelines for initiatives were not present. The identification of responsible parties was at time confusing and contradictory.

<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
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**(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

(a) Parents have had access to student data, but parents without equipment or access to the Internet were not able to take advantage of this resource. The proposal will provide all parents with access via personal devices to be sent home with students, as well as the provision of Internet access for those without it. The district will also provide training on how to utilize the devices. The timeline for completing this component of the project is not present, and the responsible party for oversight is not clearly assigned.

(b) This grant will fund additional technicians to support students and teachers at school. PALMS will also provide technical training for parents at a variety of venues. There is no clear timeline for this training.

(c) There is a clear timeline for the provision of data in a format which can then be imported into other systems.

(d) The district presents reasonable assurances of interoperability of data systems, including systems that utilize a single sign-on for access to data points across programs.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal articulates an eight step plan to monitor the progress of the PALMS project. The project will use "data teams" to do this work. The membership composition of these teams is vague, and there is no clear indication of the person ultimately responsible. A Director of Middle School Learning was referenced elsewhere in the proposal, but not in this section. The steps are described in sufficient detail and present a thorough plan for monitoring and addressing barriers to successful implementation of the project, but there is no set timeline associated with the actions.</p> <p>The proposal describes the continuation of the use of surveys to solicit input and feedback, and it will expand the use of surveys to include incoming students and outgoing students and associated stakeholders. The proposal does not present a timeline for the creation and dissemination of new surveys.</p> <p>The PALMS project will become part of the District Strategic Plan (as described in the Appendix section of the proposal). The Strategic Plan includes specific and well thought out goals, baselines and targets, but does not specify responsible persons or a timeline. The District Strategic Planning Committee is comprised of district personnel, parents, and community members. Each fall, the District collects data and reviews the goals of the Strategic Plan which are set and approved by the School Board at an open discussion meeting. The key goals of the PALMS grant will become the Focused Curriculum Plan for Middle School Education in the Strategic Plan and progress will be monitored and evaluated through that process. The Strategic Planning Committee reports direct to the Superintendent and School Board members. The key goals of the grant will be shared with parents and the community at public meetings.</p>		
<b>(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The PALMS key goals will be embedded in each middle school's plan and will be available to parents and the community on the web, at School Advisory Council meetings, as well as approved by the School Board. At the beginning of each year, progress is reported and new targets are set. This section does provide the identification of a responsible team that will assure continuous improvement. The plan is high quality in that it specifies the actions, timeline and deliverables, and establishes a responsible team for oversight. The notification to parents and the presentation to the Board adds a layer of transparency and accountability, to ensure compliance with the plan's design and to monitor effective progress towards goals.</p> <p>The proposal details a system of surveys to maintain engagement with stakeholders, as well as training opportunities for parents.</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 includes required performance measures, but does not detail its rationale for selecting these measures.</p> <p>The proposal presents a target increase in the percentage of students with a highly effective teacher or principal. It aims to increase by 10% across all subgroups and in the aggregate. The same increase is targeted for effective teachers or principals (10% increase).</p> <p>The application targets the middle school only. It does not present student performance targets for PreK-3.</p> <p>The proposal sets a 10% increase target in the aggregate and across all subgroups for college and career readiness. Although achievable, the target is not ambitious in all cases. The target expects that only 60% of students will be college/career ready in the post grant year.</p> <p>The Out-of-School suspension data is confusing in that what is represented by the percentage is unclear.</p> <p>The application does not present clear evidence for the required number of performance measures, unless the Algebra End-of-Course exams and Incidents of Out-of-School suspension are to be presented as independent measures for grades 6, 7, and 8. Because the intent is not clear, but could be interpreted as independent measures, the score was not impacted by the number of performance measures.</p> <p>There is no indication in this section for how these measures will be reviewed and improved over time.</p>		

<b>(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<p><b>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal indicates that an independent grant evaluator will evaluate the effectiveness of the investments of funds. The high quality evaluation plan is based on goals and includes associated evaluation questions, data collection activities, data collection instruments, and a data collection schedule. The evaluation plan is comprehensive and exhaustive in its incorporation of three components: the fidelity of program implementation to ensure the program was implemented as intended, formative or process evaluation activities that provide information to guide student achievement and make process/program improvements, and a summative evaluation to assess how outcomes have addressed specific program goals and academic/professional goals.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<p><b>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant's budget is clear, comprehensive, and reasonable in its assignment of costs. The application clearly identifies all funds that will support the project, including grant funds and operational budget funds. The application presents a budget where all costs are in the applicant's words "necessary, reasonable, and allowable." The budget is justified, and appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. There is evidence for the thoughtfulness of the budget preparation, including the applicant's report of having met with experts in personalized learning and technology (two primary components of the program). The project level budget summary worksheets provide figures to demonstrate a scaling up or scaling down of costs over the life of the grant, as well as funds from other sources that will support the project. The project level cost descriptions and assumptions are detailed and focused.</p> <p>The project level narratives are especially comprehensive and convincing in their identification of funds that will support the project, their presentation of evidence or statements to present a budget that is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal, and their thoughtful rationales for investments and priorities.</p> <p>One-time investments are clearly presented and include training, contracts for professional development, some curriculum materials, and equipment.</p>		
<b>(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<p><b>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The proposal presents a plan to sustain the project goals beyond the life of the grant. It plans to sustain the necessary professional development by accessing the district's own Professional Learning Department. It plans to video highly effective teachers to share with new teachers. The district has begun this process in the middle school on which the PALMS program is modeled. The proposal indicates the district will restructure operational spending on technology to support the continued purchase of personal devices post-grant. The proposal states the operational budget will support the Discovery Education and Compass Learning resources, as they have been part of the operational budget in the past. The proposal states that the district will continue to support Renzulli after the life of the grant unless the state creates and implements a comparable resource.</p> <p>The sustainability plan is lacking in high quality components in that it does not include responsible persons or a timeline to study the effects of the grant and the feasibility of sustaining initiatives within the projected district budget.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<p><b>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>Although the applicant has described partnerships throughout the application, there is no response section that specifically addresses the Competitive Preference Priority. Partnerships with business organizations such as Renzulli and Cox Cable are referenced in the application, but there is no evidence to confirm that these are anything beyond a for fee business arrangement.</p>		

### Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments

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

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

The district has submitted a proposal that will replicate a successful program built upon the personalization of instructional strategies, technology tools, curricular and assessment resources, and a data system that will enable students to choose areas of study based on interest and needs, and to set goals based on individual achievement and performance levels. This program has been implemented with a high need, lower achieving population, and the district proposal presents a convincing plan that the success with this pilot group may be expected. The proposal references alignment to the Common Core State Standards, and their importance to this reform. The plan presents several ways the needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities will be addressed through a personalized learning program. The plan includes significant provisions for professional development and training, and a plan to increase the percentage of students with access to an effective or highly effective teacher or principal, and has established ambitious yet achievable targets for this provision. The plan addresses only one achievement gap specifically, and expects all subgroups to grow at the same rate, which would not decrease the gap across all subgroups. This omission alone was not determined to be sufficient to warrant a "not met" rating.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>162</b>
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0186FL-3 for The School District of Escambia County

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

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

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

This applicant elaborately articulates a strong comprehensive and coherent reform vision situated within a history of successful experimentation that addresses a critical need in their current middle school educational reform movement. The proposed reform effort will build upon the successes experienced at two schools elementary schools within the district since 2007. The impressively detailed plan is clearly built upon the foundation of the four core assurance areas defined in this notice. The Personalizing All Learning in Middle Schools (PALMS) proposed plan, clearly articulates how the plan continues to build upon the existing RTTT-S grant funding as well. Points to substantiate the further development of each of the four core assurances:

1. To complete the development of an "enterprise-level assessment and analytics platform" to consistently report student assessment data to the benchmark/standard level to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and stakeholders. Create additional high quality assessments for specific instructional units for the middle and high school level. (initial funding from RTTT-S started the platform)
2. The further development of an single sign-on technology between various assessment systems used for student growth and assessment data, state assessment data, professional development for teachers and principals, and evaluation data for teachers and principals. Specific programs that are currently used as well as an overview what the new robust data system will be able to collect and disseminate is fully disclosed.
3. Building upon the existing RTTT-S \$3 million award for recruiting developing and retaining effective teachers program the applicant describes further development of the elaborate plan which includes an evaluation for principals and the superintendent. The plan articulates a similar elaborate plan that is already in the development phases for teachers.

4. The plan expands on the success the district has experienced with successfully turning around two of the lowest performing elementary schools in the district. This plan will scale up and target the low performing middle schools in the district.

The applicant clearly articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement at the middle school level using highly personalized student support based upon the interest of students. A vividly clear view is offered into the classroom educational experience that will be provided to student by high quality effective teachers (based on teacher evaluation and professional development criteria). The view paints a dynamic teaching and learning experience that allows students to develop the skills needed to progress to working in collaborative groups to complete authentic assignments allowing for remediation along the way. Evaluations of student performance and mastery will be based upon rubrics and students self-assessment. Portfolio assessments will also be utilized.

A well-planned personalized program for remediation as well as advanced learning is described using online software programs in and outside of school. Accommodations for digital tools are provided as well as internet connection partnership with the local provider for the families who are unable to afford connectivity. In addition, training for parents is also included within the plan further personalizing the personalized learning environment.

The Applicant earns full credit for this criterion in that a high sophisticated and comprehensive and coherent reform vision is elaborately provided.

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

**10**

**10**

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

The applicant proposes a high quality approach to implementing the elaborately articulated plan at the middle school level. All nine middle schools are included within this "total transformation" reform plan and collectively the schools meet the eligibility requirements, 71% of the students are from low-income families with variations between schools ranging between 42-95%. A list of each of the middle schools to be included in this reform effort is provided with school demographic data across eligibility subgroups noted for each school as well as the total collectively.

The total number of students (8,294) participating and the number of students from low-income families, high need students, and educators are easily identified by the table provided and the data exceeds the requirements for this RTTT-D funding notice. A total of 545 educators will be included in this proposed project.

The applicant scores extremely high for the detailed provided for this criterion.

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

**10**

**10**

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

The applicant provides a **high-quality plan** that replicates the instructional practices of a successful program currently used at two of the nine middle schools included in this proposed plan. Bellview (Connections Team is a school within a school approach) and Brown Barge (Magnet with academic entrance criteria) Middle schools. Both of these schools have the highest percentage of students from low income families. The Connections Team "school within a school" is stated to be a district sanctioned effort to address the disparity found with student populations who have traditionally performed low academically by addressing deficiencies in instructional practices. The applicant illuminates disparity between traditional behaviorist instructional practices and Common Core State Standards which is based upon the foundations of constructivist learning environments. A comparison of the two instructional methodologies presents and highlights the differences between passive learning of traditional practices and active learning as required to prepare students for college and career readiness.

This proposed plan includes specific details for developing a District Task Force model, i.e. Instructional Innovation Task Force Team (IITF) that will be responsible for facilitating the districts definition, dissemination and ongoing refinement of the CCSS reform effort.

The tasks for the IITF is clearly defined with exceptional details including communication and partnerships with a multitude of community stakeholders and educational collaborations. Furthermore, the applicant goes beyond defining basic tasks for IITF to specific tasks:

1. Pedagogical/Methodological Precepts (all things included in instructional practices well defined)
2. Cognitive and Social Complexity Precepts (metacognition, knowledge construction and deconstruction, self actualization, engagement of intrinsically relevant issues, and autonomy and choice) Highly dependent on cognitive measures and very distant from traditional behaviorist approaches.

A well-defined mission statement is provided as well as a carefully detailed IITF leadership organization with responsibilities identified.

1. Start up Tasks
2. Curriculum Reform Processes

3. A comprehensive overview of the IITF/CCSS Classroom Implications including delivery, monitoring and remediation, assessment, instructional complexity, and team planning

The applicant **excels** providing additional evidence for this reform by providing a variety of example scenarios across disciplines of how this reform effort will look when implemented further supporting the expectation for this RTTT-D funding notice.

This applicant shares a comprehensive reform plan that is designed to move the middle school level students in this district from the old instructional paradigm of teacher centered instruction to student centered instruction through the use of personalized learning environments which perfectly aligns with the constructivist instructional approach which is also needed to meet the required guidelines of CCSS. Because this plan is a scaled up version of a plan already piloted by this school district within two of the middle school included in the plan, the applicant presents a reform replication that is highly likely to be further scaled up and will translate into meaningful reform district-wide. The applicant scores extremely high for this criterion due to the exceptional details and research supported information provided in this section to support the requirements of this notice.

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

**10**

**9**

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

The applicant shares a plan for assessing/measuring student summative proficiency status and growth outcomes by using FCAT (Florida's current State Assessment) scores for Reading and Math for grades 6, 7 & 8. Baseline data for SY 2011-12 and SY 2012-2013 was provided along with Goal years for the time period of the RTTT-D and SY 2017-2018 (post grant). A review of the baseline data between 2011-2012 & 2012-2013 reveals a slight growth improvement in overall scores for grade 6 reading but for grade 7 & 8 reading overall scores declined slightly. While in math overall scores for 6 & 8 grade were unchanged, a decline was noted for grade 7. The goals for the years of this grant funding seems ambitious yet achievable annual goals.

A concentrated focus on decreasing the gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged is outlined within this plan. A clear explanation for the methodology used in calculating the disparity between these groups is provided by the applicant before the actual baseline and projected goals for degreeing the achievement gaps is presented in table format. Proficiency gaps between groups in grades 6, 7, & 8 are provided for reading and math on the FCAT 2.0 with percentage of proficiency for the subgroup (economically disadvantaged) and the comparison group (non-economically disadvantaged) along with the number of points difference between the two groups and the projected goals for decreasing the points gaps.

Data was clearly provided for graduation rates for 2011-2012 with a projection for the 2012-2013 along with goals for graduation rates to improve during the grant funding period and 1 year beyond. Disparity is noted for subgroups as well as projected goals for decreasing the gaps between subgroups.

Limited data was provided for college enrollment rates for 2011-2012 but was not available for specific subgroups. However the applicant did provide baseline and goals for overall high school completers enrolling in college.

The applicant provided exceptional data clarification and methodology for calculating and presenting the data. Additionally, the measures and goals reported are reasonable, ambitious and yet achievable. The applicant earns in high range full points for presenting a exceptionally high quality description and clarification for academic achievement assessments and goals yet 1 point was deducted for failing to provide college enrollment data for subgroups.

**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>14</b>

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

The applicant shares and provides convincing evidence of a clear record of success in the past four years which extends to the past nine years. The data and narrative reports comprehensive information and detail that demonstrates overall success at two middle schools (Brown Barge & Bellview: Connections Team) and two elementary schools (Oakcrest & Brentwood) within the district for advancing student learning and increasing equity in learning and teaching. Evidence is provided through the use of data that shows improvements in overall school scores as rated by the State of Florida "grading system". The ratings show increasing or consistent high ratings of A or B scores up from F for most years. I was noted for the year 2013 at the Brentwood Elementary, the grade rating fail to a C. An overall improvement of the student population as a whole is clearly noted, however an increase between achievement gaps for ESE and non-ESE students in middle grades was noted as a trend for the past 3 years. Evidence was provided that reports an overall increase in high school graduation rates and data provided from the Florida Dept of Ed reports an increase in postsecondary plans for 2011-2012 high school completers.

The schools used to provide a record of success for this criteria were school with a history of being low-achieving and low-performing schools, they were once grade F schools. Using an ambitious and significant reform effort, this district provided evidence of turning these schools around to earn successful ratings of A or B.

The applicant describes a history and evidence of clear transparency for making student performance data available to students, educators. The applicant reports parental participation in workshops that provides them with support so that they can better help their children, as well as the school personnel includes parents in the "positive revival of the community".

The applicant excels at meeting the requirements for this criterion and earns points in the high range for clearly demonstrating and conveying a clear record of success using ambitious reform efforts that have improved student academic performance as well as communicating information except in the area of demonstrating improvement for increasing college enrollment rates, 1 point was deducted.

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

**5**

**5**

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

Without any hesitation, this district provides the highest level of transparency for sharing their processes, practices, and investments regarding all school affairs as required for this notice. For two years in a row, the State of Florida has awarded the Sunshine Review award to the district. This award is said to recognize governments that make transparency a priority. The school district website provides comprehensive information with the highest level of transparency for school level expenditures. Actual personnel salaries at each school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff, teachers, and non-personal expenditures. Additionally, the website provides a host of policies and procedures including items such as accreditation reports, technology and diversity plans, drug policy, code of ethics, student handbooks and a whole host of additional resources.

For the exceptional high transparency level as evidenced by the award for transparency given to this district by the State of Florida and for the plethora of information provided to the public on the school district website that fully exceeds the requirements of this notice, the applicant earns full points for this criterion.

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

**10**

**10**

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

The applicant provides clear evidence in multiple ways that this school district already has successful conditions and complete autonomy under the State of Florida legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to fully "expand" the proposed reform effort into all middle schools in the district. The reform effort includes the implementation of personalized learning environments similar to the reform effort used at Brown Barge and Bellview (The Connections Team) already. Given that the district has a scaled down version of this reform plan already in place at two schools and that the Florida Statutes and the Escambia County School District have recognized the positive results of the reform, and also have policies and statues (stated within the narrative) that allow flexibility for such innovative reform efforts, the conditions for successful implementation are clearly in place for this proposed plan.

For fully meeting and in some ways exceeding the requirements (a scaled down version of the plan has already been enforced with success and support from the district) for this criterion, the applicant earns full points for this criterion.

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

**15**

**15**

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

The applicant shares a detailed recounting/review of the development process that began before the official release of the notice. The narrative describes in great detail the process from initial brainstorming of the most critical needs in the district, analyzing school grades as provided by the State of Florida through the full engagement of stakeholders. A clear view into the "struggle" and decision making process of making the best choices for schools and programs to include in the personalized learning reform effort is provided in the narrative with great detail. This view allows for clear understanding of the purposeful decision process as well as the extent to which appropriate stakeholders were involved. The teachers union that represents the school district was included in the process and helped to guide decisions regarding teacher voice in the decision making process. A survey was provided to the teachers. Information and input from the teachers was used to make further decisions. Furthermore, students, parents, and other stakeholders were surveyed and the results from each of the instruments is provided within the application as well as the development of the instrument process.

A exceptionally large number of letters of support for various levels of stakeholders is provided with the application, exceeding the requirements for this notice.

For the exceptional measures used for engaging stakeholders (as noted in this notice), and for the respect given to the concerns expressed by various stakeholders and then addressed and taken into consideration by the applicant, full points are earned for this criterion.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(1) Learning (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>

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

The applicant articulates an exceptionally high-quality, well-designed comprehensive learning plan that includes middle school students as well as their parents (families), and professional development "learning" for teachers and appropriate school personnel. The plan proposes to implement and expand an existing successful reform plan across all nine middle schools in the district. Currently a smaller scale of the reform plan is used in two of the middle schools at varying degrees. The applicant fully acknowledges and seeks to include students, parents, and educators into the plan for personalized learning environments. The described personalized learning environment asks students along with their parents to identify their own goals for learning with the intention of preparing them to mastery the college and career-ready standards. The proposed plan seeks to provide students with opportunities to explore their academic interests by connecting with the world through technology rich, project based learning within and outside of the classroom. The plan seeks to provide each student with a digital device and connectivity to the online world. Furthermore, the plan describes ways in which the device can be used beyond regular coursework:

1. to access digital courses to extent the learning environment
2. access remediation courses
3. learn about new opportunities
4. practice word processing skills
5. exploring the world beyond their immediate community to learn "what is happening" around the world

Furthermore, the applicant envisions the digital devices and the programs as also being helpful for parents and families by providing online access that may even expand to helping parents to earn GEDs.

The applicant describes a four approach, plan for guiding students through the use of personalized learning environments to mastery of college and career ready standards.

1. Blended learning environments - using a variety of in class and beyond the class learning tools (digital programs)
2. Renzulli Learning - service learning plans based upon student personal success/learning plan. (real world/work experiences, service learning)
3. Competency based models - project-based, formative assessment
4. Social emotional instructional plan for creating positive classroom environments including Personal Development and Career Planning

The key goals and timeline shared for the plan seems adequate and realistic.

Overall, the learning plan provided seems comprehensive yet in some areas lacks enough detail to determine the extent to which the individual programs slated to be implemented within the plan provide support adequate high quality contributions. i.e. Renzulli Learning and Competency based models

The applicant earns in the high range for this criterion with two points deducted for lack of clarity for the individual online, software programs to be included in the personalized learning environment.

<b>(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>
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**(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:**

The applicant shares an exceptionally high quality plan that uses well-respected teaching and leading practices to prepare and support educators to effectively implement the proposed personalized learning environments that include digital devices and blended instructional practices. Information provided regarding the Renzulli Learning program and the CompassOdyssey resources will provide additional support for teachers to create learning experiences and assess student and monitor academic performance.

An elaborate plan based upon well-respected educator evaluation theorists and programs (John Hattie's Visible Learning, Charlotte Danielson and evaluation data system - True North Logic) is shared for providing professional development for educators as well as evaluating principals and teachers effectiveness. Additionally, a plan for training educators on programs and plans to develop the social and emotional guidance for students is included within the narrative. The social emotional plan is exceptional and also includes well-

pected philosophies and theorist models for providing students with the tools for success (Kagan, Capturing Kids Hearts) The applicant clearly identifies an exceptionally high quality plan for providing extensive training and resources for teachers to assure that they are highly effective from day one as well as a plan for providing continuous and ongoing training and support to teachers.

The applicant describes a high quality plan for teaching and leading this district through the implementation of this proposed reform plan. For this criterion, the applicant scores in the high range with a few points deducted for failing to present clear and definite timelines for assessing and providing ongoing feedback to students and educators which may influence the success of this teaching and leading plan.

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

	Available	Score
<b>(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, and rules (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
<p><b>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant provides a clear description of a well-organized school district central office and explains the support and services that will be provided to the middle schools included in this reform plan. The organization seems somewhat typical of a large school district and is described as a very collaborative district with student achievement as their top priority. Most importantly, a PALMS program director is clearly identified to be the connection between the schools included in the proposed project and central office. The various school leadership teams at various levels and schools are clearly noted and seems to adequate with a perfect balance (described in the narrative in more detail) of flexibility and autonomy over the factors that may need to be modified for the implementation of the project.</p> <p>Opportunities for students to progress at their own pace with multiple attempts in a multitude of ways is clearly described and provided through the use of CompassOdyssey Learning and the Renzulli Learning Plus Person Success Plan. Both of these programs allow students to complete mastery in various ways at various times. The applicant provides a clear glimpse into how multiple comparable ways might be seen in this plan. If a student is interested in learning about careers in technology, they will be trained to work within the school to triage computer issues, or do minor repairs.</p> <p>The applicant provides clear insight into how the district will address the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners by providing access to additional resources that can be accessed at home. Furthermore a team of educators and professionals will be used to monitor and further support struggling students.</p> <p>Overall, the district provides clear evidence to support that the district has in place the policies and infrastructure needed to support this reform effort and earns in the high range yet a few points were deducted for failing to provide specific timelines for the implementation of this plan.</p>		
<b>(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<p><b>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</b></p> <p>The applicant shares an strong and comprehensive plan for providing the necessary policies and infrastructure that will support the successful implementation of this plan within this school district and the schools participating. In 2012-2013 school year the school district implemented the FOCUS program that provides students and parents with real-time access to grades and attendance. For students and parents who lack digital devices and internet connectivity, they are unable to use this program to the fullest extent. This proposed plan will provide this much needed access. Additionally, students and their parents will gain access to a variety of additional digital learning content provided by the district (McDougal, Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, Discovery Education, CompassLearning Odyssey, and others). Adequate and appropriate levels technical support are already in place but will be expanded through this proposed plan. An comprehensive number of information technology systems are described within this proposed plan. However, there seems to be multiple systems possibly with multiple sign-in user names and passwords. While the systems seem to be in place to meet the requirements of this criterion, due to the multiple information technology systems offered, students and parents may struggle to utilize each one fully, especially students and parents that might not be proficient with the use of various technologies. The applicant does note that one system does not provide comma-delimited format which does limit the exportability of the data. Additionally, the applicant describes the use of an assorted websites to communicate and collaborate with students and parents. In thinking of students and parents with limited technology skills, this may decrease their "accessibility" to the information.</p> <p>Overall, the applicant scores in the high range for this criterion with a few points deducted for limited or confusing accessibility for students and parents given the number of data information systems used to communicate information regarding student academic performance.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
<b>(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>

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

The applicant describes a comprehensive plan for monitoring continuous improvement for the proposed plan. A collaborative effort is described where teachers, administrators, and district level leaders hold conversations to discuss student progress. It is not clear if the students progress will be discussed based on individual students or collectively in groups or grade levels (bands). But a plan to use "data teams" is described. The data team will use a well-designed 8-step plan to monitor the PALMS program. The 8-steps include:

1. Identify goals to help them achieve the targets
2. Brainstorming resources and potential barriers and solutions.
3. Address various barriers
4. Using partnership with parents, community partners and the union to find solutions to barriers
5. Identify action steps for for any adjustments (using stakeholders as well)
6. Strategies to monitor fidelity of implementation
7. Determine how progress will be monitored (includes a reflection component too)

The 8-step process builds upon the principles of effective evaluation models that will help this district to monitor, reflect, and make the ongoing changes that will be necessary during the implementation of the project. It is clearly evident that this district recognizes there will be barriers and issues to be negotiated as with any project, yet much thought has been given to how to remove barriers as they arise as evidenced in the 8-step monitor. Thinking wisely the applicant has included a variety of stakeholders to seek their expertise as barriers that might stand in the way of successful improvements arise.

To further support the success of this program as well as other program in the district, the district has already in place a District Strategic Plan. The plan is based upon five pillars of excellence: Service, Quality, People, Finance, and Environment, interestingly enough, this strategic plan include committees of the District, schools, parents, and community members. Based on the information provided regarding this District Strategic Plan, this structure will provide additional collaborative support for helping to improve the process of this proposed plan by increasing the investments of a full community of stakeholders and people vested in the success of this project. For 2012-2013, an elaborate strategic plan is presented in the application. This plan sets Goals for each of the five pillars with clear targets and measures for the targeted goals.

A plan for sharing publicly the information on the quality of its investments is already in place given the "sophisticated and complex accountability system" described in the application. The applicant shares the sophistication of the accountability by providing clarification on how the system can be used "to provide formative assessment by benchmark for common core standards with drills down to the student level by question". This type of accessibility will allow teachers, principals, and district staff to assess student needs in order to make decisions for remediation, advancement, and to accommodate specific individual students needs.

The applicant also shares its provides a plan and vision for scaling up this project to include grade 5 in the 5th year of the project, after the funding year has been completed. The applicant describes a clear, well-organized high-quality plan for continuous improvements and earns a score in the high range with only a single point deducted. The single point was deducted for not providing clear deadline/timelines for the continuous monitoring, adjustments, and targeted improvements.

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

The applicant includes a sufficient yet somewhat detailed 4 year plan that builds upon an already successful plan in which they have used for the RTTT-S grant funding. This new RTTT-D funding plan ramps up the ongoing communication and engagement to include the PALMS team members into the existing continuous monitoring and oversight process. The State of Florida developed a "sophisticated and complex accountability system" in which the district has "purchased several tools to measure achievement and student progress, as well as professional learning tools". While these tools allow for internal ongoing communication and reporting for the public as the end of reporting times. The district shares a plan for continuing to use surveys and various other communications to identify needs, concerns, and opportunities from other stakeholder groups (parents, students, etc.)

The applicant provides a high quality plan based upon an existing successful plan used for ongoing communication and engagement of RTTT-S funding. The plan includes the 8-step process as mentioned previously that includes a host of internal and external stakeholders

and also the District Strategic Plan members which also invites and extends in the community to include other stakeholders that includes parents and community members along with professionals. This district provides a plethora (as evidenced in the narrative and the appendix of the document which includes Internet websites) of ways that it reaches out to provide ongoing communication and engagement both internal and externally and earns full points for this criterion.

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

**5**

**2**

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

The rationale for the performance measures selected and presented is not clear as well the applicant fails to provide how the specific performance measures relate to the goals of the proposed to the project. For example: A performance measure for Algebra End of Course Exam (% of students scoring at or above "proficient") is noted for Grades 6-8. It is not clear if algebra is a middle school course or a high school course and how this measure relates back to the goals for the project. Furthermore, the baseline states that 94 % of all participating students will achieve this measure at the proficient or above level, while ED will preform at 89%. This is very confusing in that it doesn't not indicate justification for using this measure. Another example: A performance measure for Incidents of Out-of-School suspensions (# of individual student disciplinary actions resulting in at least one day of out of school suspension) reports an unbelievable % of participating students being suspended (86% of ED students, and 14% of Non-ED) while this behavioral issues was not noted in the narrative and was not included as part of the goals to decrease behavioral issues.

The number of performance measures required for this criterion (12-14) were not provided. It appears that only 4 measures were provided.

Insufficient information and explanation for the four performance measures selected and presented fails to provide evidence that the measures provided are rigorous, timely, and formative and ultimately impedes the districts ability to evaluate and make changes in the implementation process to increase student performance. Furthermore, a social emotional leading indicator for the middle school grades is not provided.

The applicant scores in the low range for this criterion with points earned for providing the number and percentage of students by subgroup to be included in this proposed plan. Additionally, points were earned for providing the number of highly effective teachers and principals for the participating students with a slight deduction for not providing the criteria that was used to determine highly effective teachers and principals. Furthermore, one point was earned for the number and percentage of participating students by subgroup who are on track to college and career readiness with again a slight deduction for not providing the criteria used to determine college and career track readiness.

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

**5**

**5**

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

A **high quality rigorous** plan to evaluate the effectiveness of this RTTT-D funding is provided with detailed described:

1. evaluation questions - pertaining to funded activities, professional development, technology (for students and teachers)
2. data collection activities - protocols are clearly defined, the person to complete the evaluation process is identified
3. data collection instruments
4. data collection schedule

A clearly outlined set of evaluations pertaining to Goals for the proeject, including process/formative, summative, and fideltiy of implementation is provided that describes the overall project with the targeted expectations for improvement for each year of the funded project. The details for the evaluating effectiveness of investments is exceptional and very impressive. The plan follows a solid research model. The applicant scores full points for this criterion for meeting and in some ways exceeding the requirements of this section.

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

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

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

A full description of all funding expected to support this project is clearly described with a great deal of clarification. Clear descriptions of all funds that support the project were clearly identied and seem reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed project. All nine schools are appropriately addressed with their expenditures and resouces individually noted.

Budgets for each year of the project is clearly presented in the summary table with reasonable budget categories.

The applicant provides reasonable rationale and details to support the proposed budget earning full points for this criterion.

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

**10**

**8**

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

The articulated project is high quality with ambitious and achievable goals that are easily sustainable for this district after the grant funding has ended. This district provides a history of success in regard to academic performance and improvement as well as successful grant awards. As evidenced by the narrative, the State of Florida and the local government leaders have consistently provided funding to update technology needs for this district. The district expresses complete confidence that the partnerships in with they have with a local university and the training that is slated to be provided to teachers and administrators during the funding of this reform plan will be completely sustainable once the funding period has ended. The plan describes videotaping and editing to create high quality videos for training for new teachers and professional development. Using an on-demand type professional development option for teachers will certainly help the sustainability of the project long after the funding years are over.

Clear timelines and evaluations are provided for the grant funding period however plans for improving in productivity and outcomes after the grant funding period is over is not fully provided.

Given the climate of the State of Florida and the history or progressiveness of this district, it is most likely this district will be able to fully sustain the efforts of this reform plan after the funding period has ended. Due to the overwhelming evidence and support for sustainability of this reform plan, the applicant earns in the high range for this criterion but two points are deducted for the lack of evidence for ongoing evaluation to evaluate improvements post-grant is not provided.

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

	Available	Score
<b>Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>

**Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:**

Competitive Preference Priority not met for this application. There are no cited truly defined collaborative community, business, or higher education partnerships identified that integrate public and private resources to provide social emotional support for students.

**Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments**

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

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Without any doubt this proposed plan comprehensively addresses Absolute Priority 1, through the creation of personalized learning environments by:

1. Using digital devices to deliver blended instructional opportunities
2. Allowing students to personalize their learning experience based on their interests and goals for college and career
3. The use of a variety of online instructional software programs that provide instruction, multiple attempts in a comparable ways, advanced instruction, remediation, and monitoring of achievement
4. Social emotional support through implementation of a positive classroom environment and various research supported programs
5. communication and collaboration with parents as well as provides digital and online access for parents to support student learning
6. Real-world service projects/authentic learning experiences

Each of these noted components of the personalized environments described within this proposed plan builds upon the four educational assurances with the ultimate focus on preparing educators to create learning environments aligned with college and career ready

standards.

The district shares a comprehensive high quality plan that includes all nine middle schools in the district with the purposeful intention of helping to accelerate student achievement and to provide rich personalized learning experiences. The district has set clear goals and targets to measure, monitor, and increase high school graduation rates, enrollment in college/university programs, and to better prepare students for adulthood.

<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>184</b>
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