



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0410NM-2 for Albuquerque Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) presents a Vision best characterized as the taking of some preparatory and/or partial steps toward the ultimate goals of this grant—enhancing student learning through personalized learning support for all the students who are designated as “participating students.”</p> <p>One of the projects, or “Elements,” in the District’s Vision is to provide provide extra days of mandatory professional development for two years to enable its teachers and principals to provide curricula, methods, and assessments which are aligned with the Common Core standards. Another is to enhance the District’s technology infrastructure so that it can support the delivery of the aligned curricula. The two projects address gaps acknowledged by the District to exist in the core assurances foundation on which each District in this grant competition is to build its reform Vision. These are important and necessary steps in putting this foundation in place. As preliminary steps, however, they do not and the District does not claim they directly affect the learning or create personal learning environments for the 89,000+ “participating students” which the District says are the focus of this grant.</p> <p>As another Vision Element, the District proposes to renovate a District building to house administrative staff and a “Parent University.” This, too, is a preliminary step to providing learning experiences to students and is not an action designed to directly affect learning by individual instruction and support. Few students will be directly affected by the renovation.</p> <p>Two of the Vision Elements” will directly benefit students. The “Elementary Effects” Element will add staff to create an after-school hour in 90 elementary schools. This Element will address an inequity in the District created when the District extended the day for some but not all of its elementary schools. The nature of the programming is not specified. Although this Element will directly engage students, the number affected will be a fraction of the 89,000+ designated as those participating in the grant funded activities.</p> <p>The second, student-focused Element is “Secondary Effects.” It will extend the AVID program to 15 previously unserved secondary schools. This will address an inequity created when the District implemented AVID in 25 other secondary schools. AVID will likely have a beneficial effect the learning of the students who volunteer to participate It is not, however, a program built on individual instruction or individual supports as required by this grant.</p> <p>The District’s Vision encompasses important preliminary steps—professional development, technological infrastructure enhancement, and parent training through Parent University—to the improvement of student learning. It encompasses two projects which will directly affect relatively small groups of the 89,000+ students who are to be impacted by the grant. For these reasons, the APS Vision partially meets the requirements under this sub-criterion.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a).APS has selected every student in every one of its schools to be a participating student. It does not say clearly or succinctly how this selection was made.</p> <p>(b).The schools are not listed by name. APS provides a table, “(A)(2) Applicant’s Approach to Implementation,” which includes in the second column the legend, “APS All Schools.” This seems to be intended as a substitute for a list.</p> <p>(c).Based on the table, there will be 89,498 participating students 63.9 percent of who are low-income. The table does not include information on high needs students or the number of participating teachers, and the nine pages of narrative which constitutes the APS response to this sub-criterion does not seem to include those numbers.</p> <p>The APS provided considerable information in addition to and extraneous to the information required under this sub-criterion. It did not answer any of the requirements directly and appears to have omitted two of the required data points. The response earns low points in the mid range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The content of "Attachment 6" contains elements of what is defined in the application as a high quality plan. The five major programs under the APS budget labeled in the table as "Activities" are linked to additional activities labeled "Outputs", and each of the latter activities include a deadline for completion. The "Outputs" in turn include measures of student performance.

The primary weakness in this response is a non-linear and fragmented explanation of "scaling up." The response earns points in the mid range.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The APS provides the requisite data points in its tables under each of the sub-criteria "(a)" through "(d)." That leaves the question whether the goals under each are achievable and ambitious as those terms are to be applied.

(a) Summative Assessments: The rate of improvement is a flat three percent from the baseline year through the first post-grant year. This suggests that the grant activities will have no impact. Were they to have an impact, it would be expected that the rate of improvement would accelerate rather than stay flat. Moreover, one of the primary goals of the grant is the acceleration of student learning—not the maintenance of the rate which existed before the grant began; i.e. the rate between the baseline year and the first year of the grant. Finally, a rate of three percent, even when accumulated over the four year of the grant, is a modest rate of improvement in achievement. Based on this reasoning, the goals are not ambitious.

(b) Reduce achievement gaps: The same reasoning regarding a flat rate of improvement as articulated regarding (a) applies here. Mitigating this is the following: A five percentage point annual rate when accumulated over four or five years can be seen as a commendable achievement among some of the more challenging sub-groups listed. That would make some of these goals ambitious.

(c) Graduation rates: The same comments regarding flat rates made regarding (a) apply here. Moreover, both the three percent and two percent rates applied to the various sub-groups seem modest. In most instances the cumulative effect of these annual increases will be modest as well. Therefore, these goals are not ambitious.

(d) College Enrollment: The projection of one percentage point increases in each year and in the post-grant year and their cumulative effect are both modest. Therefore, these goals are not ambitious.

This response earns points in the the mid range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	4

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The APS does not make a sufficient response.

- Closing gaps: The APS does not offer a systematic presentation of data regarding achievement gaps. What it does offer does not show a record over the past four years of success in this regard.
- Raising achievement: The APS does not offer a systematic presentation of data regarding student achievement for the past four years.
- Increasing high school graduation rates: The APS does not offer a systematic presentation of data regarding high school graduation rates for the past four years.
- College enrollment: The APS does not offer a systematic presentation of data regarding college enrollment for the past four years.

It must be concluded that the APS cannot produce a four year record of success in any of the required areas.

(b) The APS does not make a sufficient response.

- APS does not list its low and lowest performing schools; so it cannot be determined whether the three schools it named meet this criterion.
- Very little data is offered to demonstrate improved performance at the three schools. What is offered is not presented systematically and does not cover the required four year span.
- Some of the actions taken at the three schools are significant and ambitious. These include: performance pay, extending the school day, re-staffing the school, mandatory professional development.
- The lists of activities described under "Early Education and Literacy," "College and Career Readiness," the list of Supt. Winston Brooks improvements, and the State's efforts delivered state-wide to close achievement gaps, do not meet the

definition of "ambitious and significant school level reforms" as the term is used in the application.

(c) The APS does not respond.

This response earns points in the low part of the mid range.

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

(a. through d.) The APS puts actual salaries at the school level for instructional staff, support staff, and teachers on its website. The APS does not directly respond to the requirement under "(d)" regarding actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. The response includes much extraneous information. The response earns points in the mid range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

APS cites a number of statutes, practices, and expectations with which it must comply. Although this is not a direct response, it appears that the framework created by the State by these requirements support and encourage the projects the APS has listed in its program budget. This response earns points in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Description of the involvement of students, families, teachers, and principals in the development of the proposal and how it was revised based on their engagement and feedback: The APS does not respond directly to this requirement. Instead it provides a calendar of 47 meetings among grant writers, central office personnel, and stakeholders and added additional comments on the process in the narrative. In addition, the APS established a call-in line and attached a transcript of the responses. The APS regards 80 percent of the comments to be positive.

Among the meetings on the calendar, there is no specific mention of students or families. The calendar does indicate at least two efforts to disseminate information to parents and families by what could be characterized as one-way communications; e.g. newsletters. Several meetings were held with the teachers' union bargaining representative (ATF), and the form acknowledging "engagement and support" was signed by an authorized party. The support of the teachers' union and administrators' associations are strengths. The efforts to engage students and parents is a weakness.

(b) Letters of Support: The appendices contains 12 letters of support. All twelve of the letters can be said to be from "key stakeholders" of the kind described in the application. There are no letters from student or parent organizations. There are three groups from the list of example "key stakeholders" from whom there are no letters: student organizations, parent organizations, and tribes. Among the letters, ten of the 12 contained between two and four duplicate or "canned" paragraphs. This casts some doubt on the actual knowledge and enthusiasm of those who signed.

Comments by the State: The state commentator did not use the criteria in the application for this grant to review the APS proposal. For that reason its comments and conclusions are not considered here. The response earns points in the mid range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The APS provides an analysis of gaps and needs rather than a high quality plan for such an analysis. The APS analysis describes its current gaps and needs in the following areas:

- budget cuts and resulting reductions in projects, operations, and services
- District demographics and their implications for academic achievement
- early childhood education
- professional development to align curricula and assessments with the Common Core Standards
- technological infrastructure

In its narrative, the District suggests how has or would like to address the last three issues. The logic in the District's approach is not explicitly or systematically described. It has to be extrapolated and inferred. This is a mid range response.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The APS does not offer a high quality plan (as that term is defined) to personalize the learning environments of all 89,000+ students designated by it to participate in its grant-funded activities. Overall, the narrative does not contain a systematic and methodical response to the requirements under this sub-criterion. Some of the requirements are addressed; some are not. Additional comments are organized by the sub-parts of this sub-criterion:

(a) As noted elsewhere, three of the "Elements" proposed for funding--professional development, enhancing the technology infrastructure, and the building renovation--will not directly result in students meeting all the requirements listed under sub-criteria "(i)" through "(iv)." The "Parent University" to be housed in the renovated building could have some positive effect on an undetermined fraction of the "participating students" depending on the programming and the amount of parent participation. The "Elementary Effects" could have some positive effect on a fraction of the designated "participating students" depending on programming for the after school hour. The "Secondary Effects" will have a positive effect on that very small fraction of the "participating students" who are added to the AVID program as a result of grant funding. Because the specialized schools and assessments which are listed in this response are not part of the proposed grant-funded activities, they are not relevant to whether the APS meets the requirements under this sub-criterion.

The "Secondary Effects" Element for the extension of AVID will enable students to meet the requirements under (i) through (iv). This will, however, involve a small sub-set of secondary students who are picked to participate and then stay engaged in this multi-year program. The effects of the "Elementary Effects" project are much less certain. The project adds staff for 90 elementary schools to to add an after-school hour to the days of second through fifth graders in 90 elementary schools. The effects are uncertain because the programming was not described in the narrative. The number of students who will participate are a small fraction of the 89,000+ students who are to benefit under this grant.

Improving parents' skills through the Parent University, which is connected to the Element for the building renovation, will have an indirect, but likely positive effect on student learning and attitudes as required under (a). The District did not describe how it will induce parents to enroll and attend Parent University. It seems likely the number of parents attending will be a small fraction of all the parents in the District. This means that relatively few of the 89,000+ designated students will actually benefit from this program.

The District also said its specialized secondary schools and the various skill and attitude assessments which it already has in place meet the requirements of (a). This is likely true; however, because these are not items to be funded under this grant, they are not of direct relevance to an assessment of the District's grant proposal.

(b) The professional development Element will contribute indirectly and over time to the implementation of personalized learning programs for all--a primary goal of this grant. The training will indirectly and over time raise the quality of the content to which students across the District are exposed. The enhancement of the technology infrastructure will enable students to receive more frequent, individual feedback. It can be inferred, although the District does not say so directly, that this feedback could result in personalized learning recommendations--a key component of personalized learning environments. The narrative does not contain a substantive response to the requirement for high quality accommodations for high needs students.

(c) The District asserts in a general way that it will ensure that its students are trained to use the tools and resources it provides so that students can personally track and manage their learning. More detail would make this assertion more credible. The response earns points in the mid range.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Training: professional team or communities: The APS approach to these requirements is positive and promising. The reasons include:

- i. The APS will require all site-based educators to train together over the course of the next two years regarding Common Core Standards and Student Learning Objectives (PLE). It adds four days to each year--more would be better especially after the staff had attempted to implement what it learned after the first year. Although this is not training directed specifically at the creation and operation of personalized learning environments, it is an appropriate start. Having all site-based personnel learn the same thing at the same time is likely to result in more uniform and thorough implementation. There is not sufficient detail regarding the structure and time allotted to site-based "collaborative learning groups" or professional learning communities to evaluate the degree to which they will contribute to this initiative.

- The APS will require site-based educators to train together regarding the grouping of students, the construction of interactive and engaging lessons, and more flexibly using instructional time. Adding mandatory training on these subjects and requiring all site-based educators to training together are likely to result in successful implementation.
- ii. The APS has or will enable site-based educators to take frequent measures of student progress at the individual and group/class levels through its “interactive data platform.” The training scheduled as part of EPICC for all site-based educators will make its frequent use of this data more likely.
- iii. Whether APS educators will make use of its proposed evaluation system is not established in this narrative. It appears to have some excellent features: measurements of student growth and perceptions, Student-focused Learning Objectives, and rewards for creating PLE's for students and working with peers in professional learning communities. In addition, it has the teachers' union's strong support. The teachers' contract with its provisions for new teacher and struggling teacher support are strong features. It is not clear whether and how it will be used for teachers who are not teaching Common Core reading or math. It is not clear how the concerns raised by the State in its comments will be resolved.

(b) educators' access to appropriate resources:

- i. The District's interactive data platform will give educators access to actionable information.
- ii. The alignment of the curricula and assessments to the Common Core standards will raise them to highest standards of quality. In addition, although they will directly involve relatively few of the participating teachers and students, the content of IB, AP, dual-credit, and AVID course are high quality.
- iii. The additional professional development which the APS is requiring site-based educators to participate in is a good first step toward providing tools and resources for educators to personalize educational environments.

(c) tools, data, resources:

- i. As noted, the evaluation system could meet this requirement, but it is not certain that it will be implemented as proposed.
- ii. If this approach is implemented diligently and fully, it is likely to result a substantial amount of on-going improvement among the participating educators.

(d) This work is likely to produce more effective educators as the term is defined. The APS does not offer a high quality plan to cause more students to be served by effective/highly effective educators. In the context of the requirements and goals of this grant, this is significant weakness  
 The response earns points at the low end of the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The diagram offered as this response shows how EPICC is organized and where it will be housed if the District receives the requested grant. It does not show how EPICC fits into the organization chart for the entire central office or how it fits into the governance structure of the District.
- (b) The response is not direct, methodical, or complete. It appears that high school leadership teams do not have control of their schedule and that middle school leadership teams will have limited options in the future. Principals can recommend to HR whom to hire. Leadership teams “work together” on school budgets—presumably this pertains only to supplies and some modest discretionary moneys.If the budget control is greater than that, it should be so stated because the issue here is site-based control of resources. The APS does not respond regarding school calendar, staffing models, or the roles and responsibilities of the staff.
- (c) Students can earn credit based on mastery rather than seat time.
- (d) It is presumed that the descriptions of the schools of choice, non-traditional school hours, and the on-line courses are intended to demonstrate that there are multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery without saying so directly.
- (e) It is presumed that the descriptions of the variety of high school programs are a way of saying that learning resources and instructional practices are adaptable and fully accessible to all high school students including ELL students and those with disabilities. It is not clear, however, whether ELL and/or special education services are available at all high schools. An unequivocal and direct response stating where these accommodations are available and/or where they are not would have made this response stronger.

Overall, this response earns points in the mid range. .

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) There is no comprehensive plan including timelines which speaks directly to the dissemination of content, tools, and learning resources to each of the 89,000+ participating students.

(b) The most complete plan within this proposal is that for the first two years of professional development. The APS proposes to expand its technical support coincident with the professional development. This supports the conclusion that the educators will have sufficient technical support. That the students will receive their support through the school is a generally successful strategy. The problematic aspect of APS's approach is that of leaving it to parents to enroll and attend Parent University to get technical support. Based on experience generally and more specifically with the population APS serves, the likelihood that a significant number of APS parents will get technical support sufficient to enable them to access information regarding their students through training at Parent University is small.

(c) The APS approach to enabling its students to export their information seems reasonable and adequate. That parents will get sufficient training to do so is less likely for the reasons stated above.

(d) It appears that the APS will meet the requirement for interoperable data systems. APS does not, however, share its deadlines for making this happen.

This response earns points in the mid range.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	4

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

This response does not include how APS would seek feedback on progress toward completing the five Elements which comprise their grant-funded activities. It does not contain an explanation of how it would correct or improve implementation, or how it would share information regarding the \$ 39 million-plus of grant funds to be invested in their completion.

It is conceivable, although it is not stated clearly or directly, that the APS intends that its student performance measures as stated at (A) (4) be understood to be the APS "project goals." If so, the example APS cites suggests that the APS will follow the described protocol of Harvard's Strategic Data Project. This would be to identify goals to be measured, conduct diagnostic tests, produce an analysis after which the APS would, as it says cryptically in the last paragraph of its response, "review data" and "retool strategies during summer months every year."

The failure to provide any plan regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the five Elements seriously weakens this response. Citing an example of how the SDP operates in the District as a description of how it might monitor and evaluate the (A) (4) goals still means that the District's "strategy" is vague and over generalized. This is because the APS does not explicitly identify which if any goals will be monitored, what data will be relied upon, who will collect it, when or who will analyze it, or on what standards decisions to correct/modify the goals and related activities will be made. In addition, the latter "strategy" ignores the requirement for a description of how the information gathered will be shared.

The response earns points in the low range.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District describes a reasonable and thorough process of engaging its upper echelon internal stakeholder—the school board and teachers' union through frequent meetings, "key staff" through quarterly meetings, central office departments through communications with the EPICC Project Manager, and the Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief of Staff through meetings with the EPICC Grant Manager and Project Director. Teachers can provide feedback by responding to questionnaires during the District-run professional development sessions. Given the importance of teachers to the success of all the Elements other than the renovation and to all of the projects the District has described which complement all of what the District is trying to do, a much more extensive approach to getting feedback from teachers should have been planned. Two groups of internal stakeholders mentioned in the application at (B) (4) (a), principals and students, are not mentioned in this response. Overall, this aspect of the plan is weak.

Under "Community Engagement," the APS lists 43 partner organizations\* and says that APS staff will hold "weekly EPICC-specific forums during with [sic] educators and partners can discuss progress, setbacks, and potential future programs." External stakeholders can also go on the District website, receive twitter feeds, or go to the District's Facebook page to find EPICC-related postings. The latter approach to engagement requires the stakeholder to be motivated, diligent, and tech savvy. The former approach is extraordinarily ambitious and strains credulity when consideration is given to the time, resources, and numbers of staff it would take to actually hold weekly meetings with all or groups of all of the 43 partners.

\*It is not clear whether the cited Attachment 17 is intended to add partners to the list of those with whom these weekly forums will be held.

The response earns points at the bottom of the mid range.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

There are significant weaknesses and few strengths in this response:

Required Performance Measures:

- Re. #/% of highly effective teacher/principals serving all participating students: The APS offers no data and no goals.
- Re. #/% of effective teacher/principals serving all participating students: The APS offers no data and no goals.
- GPA for grades 7-12: The rationale is too general. There are no goals for improvement
- Additional Measure: AVID students' grades for grade levels 7-12: There are no goals for improvement either in terms of academic achievement or enrollment.

Grade PK-Grade 3 Performance Measures:

- Grades Pk-3: The Measures immediately below lack ambitious goals because a flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year, and the rate of improvement for the Anglo sub-group of one percentage point per year is low in absolute terms.
  - K, and grades 1-3 Reading/KDPR
  - K, and grades 1-3 Math/KDPR
- Truancy Rate, K and Grades 1-3: There are no sub-group data. A flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year. This is not ambitious.

Grades 4-8 Performance Measures:

- Promotion: The baseline promotion rate of 99 percent for all students and each sub-group suggests that the District has a policy or practice of promoting students regardless of their meeting any specified set of standards. There is no sufficient explanation of why in the face of this, promotion is indeed a valid indicator of either academic or social/emotional/health attainment.
- Grades 4-8 DBA for Reading and Math: These Measures do not represent ambitious goals because a flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year. The rate of improvement for the Anglo sub-group of one percentage point per year is low in absolute terms.
- Grade 8 Algebra I: A flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year.
- Truancy Rate, Grades 4-8: There are no sub-group data. A flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year.

Grades 9-12 Performance Measures:

- FAFSA Completion: The increases for "all participating students" are ambitious. There is not sub-group data and no sub-group improvements are projected.
- Promotion: There is no explanation of the standards which are applied to promotion. The rate of improvement is flat but the rate of five percent per year is acceptably ambitious There are no sub-group projections.
- Grades 9-11 DBA for English 9, 10, 11; Algebra I: Geometry; Algebra II: These Measures lack ambitious goals because a flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year. The rate of improvement for the Anglo sub-group of one percentage point per year is low in absolute terms.
- Truancy Rate, Grades 9-12: There are no sub-group data. A flat rate of improvement is projected from the baseline year through the post-grant year.

Note: A flat rate of improvement from year to year applied to a learning measure suggests that the project will not accelerate learning—which is a stated goal of the RTTT-D grant. When the stated rate of improvement is both flat and the same as that between the baseline year and the first year of the grant it suggests that the grant activities will not make any change from what would occur without the grant funded activities. For these reasons projections of flat rates of annual improvement are not

ambitious. Because of this, they detract from the District's case for its reform activities to be funded. This response earns low points in the mid range.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The APS describes a number of tools to measure student achievement, college and career readiness, effectiveness of educators (evaluations), and school progress. With one obvious exception, however, the projects for which it seeks funding, professional development for educators, "Elementary Effects"—adding an hour of after school programming to 90 elementary schools, "Secondary Effects"—extending AVID to 15 schools, renovating a building to create the APS Center, and enhancing the District's technology infrastructure cannot be said to directly effect what the APS says it will measure. Conversely, the assessments the APS lists cannot be said to measure how effectively these projects are implemented. The one partial exception to the above is the proposed CEPR contract which would measure the contributions of AVID to student achievement, college awareness, college going culture, and college preparedness. AVID, however, will affect only a small fraction of the 89,000+ "participating students." Therefore, the CEPR contract will produce a relatively insignificant measure of the effect of all the work proposed under APS's \$39 million request. The APS does not directly respond to how it will use time, staff, or other resources to improve results.

The response earns low points.

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

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The table labeled "V. Budget" includes the sources of the funds that will support the projects described in the table.
- (b) The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the projects described in "V. Budget."
- (c) (i) & (ii) The information contained in "V. Budget" and the narrative for (F) (2) identify the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those for on-going operational costs. Competent strategies for sustaining the projects described in "V. Budget" are outlined in that table and the response to (F) (2).  
The response earns points in the high range.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The APS says it will need a total of \$2.7 million to sustain the three projects whose costs will be on-going after the grant expires. It attempts to meet the requirements under this sub-criterion as follows:

- The APS obtained letters of support for EPICC from the Albuquerque Mayor and one Congressman. Neither letter mentioned monetary support.
- The APS says it will "need to proactively seek" \$1 million from the State to fund its 'Elementary Effects' project. There is no communication in the APS application from any elected or appointed official at the State level addressing such support. The District says that it lobbies the State annually for funds to support elementary school projects and implies that it is/will be successful.
- The APS says it will need \$600,000 of the cost of its "Secondary Effects" project to sustain it. In the (F) (2) narrative and in its "V. Budget," the District says it will absorb these on-going costs.
- In "V. Budget," the District says it will absorb the on-going costs from its technology enhancement project to sustain its to-be-upgraded band-width. No dollar figure is mentioned.
- The APS does not provide a three-year budget. It can be speculated that because it is folding the technology and "Secondary Efforts" costs into its operational budget and because, as it implies, it has successfully lobbied for elementary school support from the State in the past, it will be successful again and, therefore, does not need to show a three-year budget.

This response earns points in the mid range.

### Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) Partnerships: APS offers descriptions of two partnerships. One is among the APS, the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at the University of New Mexico (UNM) and the Central New Mexico Community College (CNMCC). Through the CEPR this partnership has studied efforts to cooperate among the three educational institutions and has produced a study of the effectiveness of their collective efforts. CEPR has also produced data regarding challenges and conditions facing students within the APS District which enabled the ABC Community Schools (ABCCS) program to identify two feeder school areas in need of an ABCCS initiative.

The second partnership described is one among the APS, Bernalillo County, the City of Albuquerque, and the CEPR. It is designated in APS's response as "The ABC Community Schools program." The purpose of the ABCCS is "to provide basic services and a safe place for children to go in schools with large populations of low-income families and high-risk children." Moreover, within the APS District, the ABCCS "is an educational reform strategy which includes a philosophy, a set of partnerships and a variety [word omitted] systems and activities which align and coordinate resources with and for schools in order to maximize student achievement and development."

APS has been in both partnerships for some time. The APS describes plans and funding for each which suggests that they are sustainable over the life of the grant.

(2) Not more than 10 population-level results for students: The APS identifies educational outcomes for the ABCCS as the installation of ABCCS programs at the schools in two of its high school feeder systems, Highland and West Mesa. The APS chooses to have the Performance Measures under (E) (3) be its education results.

Using the installation of the ABCCS programs as an outcome measure is somewhat problematic because it is not clear from the narrative whether the installations will occur within the life of the grant. As noted in the comments to (E) (3), the APS approach to these performance measures is problematic, and as presented they do not seem well calculated to yield significant improvements in the learning of the participating students.

(3) How the partnership will:

(a) Track the selected indicators: Presumably the (E) (3) Performance Measures will be tracked using the APS data systems. As to tracking progress on placing ABCCS programs in the feeder patterns, the narrative describes positions in the ABCCS partnership which will have oversight responsibilities, but there are no deadlines for placing the programs in either of the two feeder patterns. Without valid measures or deadlines, there can be no competent tracking.

(b) Use the data to target resources: The CEPR has provided data which enabled the APS to identify the two feeder patterns as locations in need of ABCCS programs. Based on the comments regarding the (E) (3) Performance Measures, it does not appear that they will be useful in targeting resources.

(c) Scale up: Although there is no concrete discussion of scaling up, per se, the process described in this response for the addition of the two ABCCS programs in the Highland and West Mesa can be seen as a scaling up strategy which could be used elsewhere in the District. The process is weakened, as noted above, because there are no deadlines for having the ABCCS programs up and running.

(d) Improve results over time: The narrative contains aspirational statements regarding what community schools programs in the mold of the ABCSS programs can do in general, but there are no specific services yet chosen for the two new sites. Since there are no specific services for the targeted sites or deadlines for implementation, because the student performance measures are questionable, there is no specific approach to improving results over time.

(4) How the partnership will integrate services: The APS asserts that each ABCSS program integrates and aligns core instructional programs, out of school time and cultural enrichment with services designed to remove barriers to learning and healthy development. It is also noted that "Community School coordination functions at school sites will be conducted by various methods." There are, however, no specific services identified for the two target feeder patterns; therefore, there is nothing specific in this response regarding the integration of services at either the West Mesa nor the Highland feeder pattern.

(5) How the partnership will build the capacity of staff to:

(a) (b) Assess needs and assets: The EPICC proposal contains funding for a Community Schools Executive Director, a Community Manager, and Feeder Coaches who are to collaborate with one another and support school principals and community partners in developing the ABCCS at the selected feeder sites. Apparently these staff members are the resources and can access the tools which will enable principals, school staff members, and community members to assess the needs and assets of the students, schools and communities in the targeted feeder patterns. There is nothing more specific regarding this assessment process.

(c) Create a decision-making process to select, implement, and evaluate supports: There is nothing specific in the response beyond what is described and commented upon in (a) (b), above.

(d) Engage parents: There is nothing specific in the response beyond what is described and commented upon in (a) (b), above.

(e) Assess the applicant's process in implementing its plan: As noted there are no specific services designated yet for the two feeder patterns, and there is no timeline governing the Executive Director, Community Manager, Feeder Coaches or the staffs at the schools regarding implementation. Because of this, it is not clear how progress will be assessed.

(6) Identify its annual performance measures and describe the desired results for the students: As noted, above and in the comments at (E) (3), the performance measures chosen are of questionable validity, do not seem to take into account the projects to be funded, and are not ambitious. The desired results are that ABCCS programs will be placed at the two feeder sites. The problems with this is that specific services and timelines for implementation have not been established. The approach of the APS to the competitive priority does not seem likely to produce the results or the outcomes it desires for its students. The response earns points in the mid range.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The plan which the APS seeks 39 million dollars in funding for is not one which builds on the core assurance areas as required. Instead, the plan is to fill in gaps which currently exist in two of those assurance areas, to renovate a building for central office staff to work in, and to correct inequities resulting from earlier APS initiatives which were not completed.

The first project for which they seek over 17 million dollars is to align curricula, assessments, and instructional methods to the Common Core standards. Alignment of this type is the first of the core assurances on which the District is to build its grant request. The presumption created by directing applicants to “build” on this and the other assurance areas is that the core work should be substantially complete before the activities anticipated by this grant are begun. In addition, the grant is designed to primarily benefit students rather than staff or other adults. This project reverses that priority.

This request has another weakness. A primary goal of the grant is increasing the number of effective educators serving students. Apparently because it lacks the data, the APS does not attempt to show that funding this request will increase the number of effective educators serving its students or the number of students served by them.

The almost four million dollar project to enhance the District's technology infrastructure is similar to the previous request. A core assurance area is to have in place a data system that measures student growth and success. The APS is candid in saying that its current infrastructure cannot meet these demands. Like the project to conduct professional development, the project to enhance of the technology will help educators do their jobs better. but it will not directly affect students. This project, too, reverses the priority set on benefiting students.

The primary beneficiaries of the proposed eight million dollar building renovation project will be the staff members who work in it. Few direct services are to be delivered in this building, and most of those will be directed to adults—the parents who attend the Parent University. Few students are expected to use the building, It can safely be estimated that they will be a very small fraction of 89,000+ students whom the District has said are to be affected by the grant.

The APS has not been able to complete an earlier initiative to extend the school year in its elementary schools. Ninety elementary schools do not have the extended day which the others do. As a self-described stop gap, the District seeks nine million dollars to staff an after school hour for the schools which do not have the longer day. The programming for the “Elementary Effects” project was not described in the APS proposal; so it cannot be determined whether the activities are likely to affect student learning or address any of the other primary student-focused goals of the grant. Regardless of the programming, the students involved in the extra hour will be a small fraction of the 89,00+ students the District asserts are to be benefited.

Like the after school hour project, the “Secondary Effects” project to expand AVID to 15 secondary schools will correct an inequity created under an earlier initiative which left 15 secondary schools without the program. AVID is a structured skill development program emphasizing the reading, writing, and thinking skills needed in college. It is not, however, a series of strategies to personalize instruction or customize supports. Because it is a voluntary and selective program, it will reach a very small number of the 89,000+ students the District asserts its grant projects will benefit.

Despite the focus in the grant application on learning, the APS does not set ambitious goals for any of the required measures—increased success on achievement tests, closing achievement gaps among student sub-groups, increasing graduation rates and increasing college enrollment. The District projects a flat rate of annual improvement from baseline year to post-grant year in every one of the required measures. By doing so, the District signals that the projects it wishes to have funded are not likely to make things significantly different than if the projects were not funded. By projecting low levels of annual improvement in absolute terms, the District also suggests that it does not see that its projects will have any substantial impact. .

The APS's choice of scale which in effect asserts that several extra days of professional development spread over two years, increasing the bandwidth of its intranet, renovating a building, adding an after school hour to for 90 elementary schools, and

expanding the AVID program to 15 more secondary schools will significantly improve 89,000+ students' achievement test scores, increase their graduation and college attendance rates, and reduce the achievement gaps among them defies reason and does irreparable damage to the credibility of the entire proposal.

For these reasons and for the additional reasons stated elsewhere in the comments, it cannot be concluded that this application qualifies as a comprehensive and coherent proposal to attain the student-focused goals by which the proposal is to be judged. The projects described will not result in 89,000+ students being served in personalized learning environments, and it will not result in 89,000+ students significantly improving in the other areas required for this proposal. The APS proposal does not meet the Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	119
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0410NM-3 for Albuquerque Public Schools

### A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A.1.

The applicant has set forth a feasible reform initiative that is likely able to reform how students are educated across the District and impact student learning. It has as at its foundation the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), assessments, teacher and leader development, and turning around low-achieving schools. The standards clearly communicate what is expected of students at each grade level. This will allow teachers to be better equipped to know exactly what they need to help students learn and establish individualized benchmarks for them. Assessment will be an integral part of instruction, as it will help the applicant determine whether or not the any reform goals that have been set forth are being met. Assessment will also affect decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, and curriculum, and, in some cases, funding in the district. Additionally, changes in teaching practices are likely to result from professional development aligned with the initiative, thus resulting in increased student achievement and readiness for college and/or career. Overall the initiative focuses on five key elements - professional learning, early education efforts, secondary education efforts, technology to support online tools, and the creation of an Accelerated Progress for Students (APS) Center. The variety of assessments to measure college readiness, and variety of college and career focused high schools and programs provides students with information on their math, English, and reading levels to help determine college readiness and course selection in some cases.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A.2

The applicant provides detailed information on how the core elements of the initiative will be scaled up. For example, initiative consists of five core elements: (1) Professional Development, (2) Upgraded Technology to support Online Tools, (3) Early Education Efforts, (4) Secondary Education Efforts, and (5) The Accelerating Progress for Students (APS) Center. Elements 1, 2, and 5 will target all educators, students, families and community partners across the district in the first and each year of the grant period. Elements 3 and 4 give strategic attention to rolling out multi-tiered, age appropriate efforts for personalized, small group instruction to at risk (Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, ELL and non-proficient) students. These are programs that have already been piloted in the district with demonstrated success in helping to close achievement gaps. This scale up plan is justified and supports efforts to ensure proper implementation to a large number of students and teachers.

The School Demographics chart shows 89,498 students enrolled in schools in the district, 66,750, are designated as high need; and 56,871 are low-income. The number of PreK-12 teachers involved in the initiative is 9,540. These large numbers support need for the project and the need for a strong approach implementation of core elements.

Weakness: The applicant does not describe a process by which it used to determine that all schools would be included in the reform initiative. Further, the applicant states that all schools that will participate in EPICC (i.e., the reform initiative) qualify for Absolute Priorities 1 and 4, identified in this RFP, and participating schools will collectively have at least 40% of students from low-income families. This statement is confusing in that the applicant signifies that all schools will not be actually participating in the initiative. Evidence presented in the School Demographic chart is incomplete and does not provide evidence that all schools will be participating in the initiative. Schools are not listed.

Weakness: The applicant does not provide in a chart the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, or participating educators by schools in the district. A list of the schools that will participate in the initiative is not provided as evidence and support. Breakdown of the requested information by schools would help demonstrate the magnitude of the reform initiative and the validity of the tiered approach to be used in implementing some components of the initiative.

Overall, the approach to implementation is convincing; however, the lack of information on he target population lessens the validity and impact of the approach.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A.3

The applicant provides detailed information on how the core elements of the initiative will be scaled up. For example, initiative consists of five core elements: (1) Professional Development, (2) Upgraded Technology to support Online Tools, (3) Early Education Efforts, (4) Secondary Education Efforts, and (5) The Accelerating Progress for Students (APS) Center. Elements 1, 2, and 5 will target all educators, students, families and community partners across the district in the first and each year of the grant period. This interprets that the quality and effectiveness of

collaboration is the basic prerequisite that makes or breaks the initiative. Stakeholder collaboration is a full-fledged knowledge area essential for managing the implementation of the initiative. Elements 3 and 4 give strategic attention to rolling out multi-tiered, age appropriate efforts for personalized, small group instruction to at risk (Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, ELL and non-proficient) students. These are program are stated as having already been piloted in the district with demonstrated success in helping to close achievement gaps. This is documented assurance that students in need are being provided needed services that promote academic success, especially in terms of special populations. This scale up plan is justified and the pilot programs support efforts to ensure proper implementation to a large number of students and teachers. Included is a Logic Model that details the District's plan to improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps. The Logic Model is a reasonable tool to determine if components of the initiative are being implemented appropriately. The Logic model described is useful in determining the effectiveness of the initiative, thus providing a graphical depiction of the logical relationships between the resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of the initiative.

Weakness: Key activities and associated actions; a timeline; person(s) responsible; and deliverables are no specified to help ensure implementation. The information would be valuable guides to ensuring major tasks were accomplished.

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

A.4

The applicant reasonably demonstrates how the reform initiative is likely to result in improved student learning and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals.

- a. The applicant outlines some ambitious and achievable goals for performance on summative assessments. Goals for growth from 2013-2017 and post-grant are incrementally appropriate and achievable.

Weakness: The applicant presents information that shows no change in performance growth from the 2011-12 (baseline data year) to the 2012-13 (the first projected growth year). No information is presented explaining why no growth is expected.

Weakness: The applicant does not elaborate on how components of the proposed reform initiative will contributed to achieving stated goals, or is aligned with district goals.

- b. The applicant outlines ambitious and achievable goals for decreasing achievement gaps in the targeted service area for academic performance. Goals for reducing the achievement gaps by 5% points per annum have been set by the superintendent.

The district wide goal on student achievement aligns with the reform initiative in supporting achievement of all students and narrowing the achievement gaps. The 5% growth rate is also ambitious specifically in terms of the lowest underachieving children and children in special populations.

Weakness: The applicant presents information that shows no change in decreasing gaps from the 2011-12 (baseline data year) to the 2012-13 (the first projected growth year). No information is presented explaining why no growth is expected. Further, this does not align with district wide goal improving overall academic achievement, retention, and graduation rates.

Weakness: The applicant does not elaborate on how components of the proposed reform initiative will contributed to achieving stated goals on the decrease of achievement gaps.

- c. The applicant outlines ambitious and achievable goals for increasing graduation rates.

Weakness: The applicant does not present a methodology or explanation of determining the targeted increases in graduation.

Weakness: The applicant does not elaborate on how projected goals were determined for 2012-13, 2014-15, etc., when data for 2011-12 has not been presented. No explanation is provided on the absence of data. Inclusion of data would provide a clearer picture of need and demonstrate impact of the initiative in terms of increasing student learning.

Weakness: The applicant does not elaborate on how components of the proposed reform initiative will contributed to achieving stated goals on increasing graduation rates.

- d. The applicant outlines ambitious and achievable goals for increasing college enrollment As evidenced in a chart, goals of increase are shown in comparison of baseline data presented. The postsecondary information on District students comes from the National Student Clearinghouse, which provides a nationwide database on most high school students attending most of the colleges in the United States. This is a valid mechanism for obtaining the information.

Weakness: The applicant does not elaborate on how components of the proposed reform initiative will contributed to promoting readiness skills to prepare students for college enrollment.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

B.1.

The applicant details information to demonstrate its efforts to advance student learning and achievement within the last four years. Ambitious and significant reforms have been implemented and specifically geared to persistently low-achieving schools that have resulted in demonstrated success in improving student learning, including graduation rates. The applicant's central network for services and support, learning through access, diversity of initiatives, engagement and care have adequately

resulted in improved student learning outcomes. While achievement gaps have not been closed, the record of success outlined demonstrates the use of ambitious methods to address the gap. Continued employment of such ambitious and unique initiatives will likely result in improved student learning for the district, and also meet many of the academic needs of students.

Weakness: While most of the initiatives described to increase student learning and achievement, the applicant does not elaborate on how the initiative employed will make student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. Further no explanation is presented on how efforts have increased college enrollment.

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

B.2

The applicant demonstrates sufficient methods of increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. The district includes public stakeholders in its decision making processes, including budget, curriculum, and programming. The district announces all meetings, which the public are welcome to attend, on the Events section of its website, on Facebook and Twitter. Meeting minutes are posted online. Individual schools also disseminate information on relevant meetings and policy events via mailings to families. Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and support staff and teachers as well as administrators are published on the District. Financial information on budgets, including a budget summary, budget history, and a breakdown of costs are also published online at a designated website. Transparency and public availability of educational information are all highly desirable elements of education reform. The availability of this information helps ensure the education system is as good as it can be and that it particularly serves the needs of the neediest students.

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

B.3

The applicant presents evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments. The New Mexico Public Education Department complies with federal and state accountability mandates for schools, as stipulated under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) and No Child Left Behind (2001). In early 2012, New Mexico obtained a No Child Left Behind waiver that allows it to set state-determined realistic yet high-level academic targets and strategies for turning around low-performing schools. For example, NM House Bill 212 that identified District Superintendents as CEO, set tier levels of teaching mastery and tied them to compensation levels, as well as set similar parameters for Principal evaluations. This was a sufficient method to prompt school districts of New Mexico to look at student success through the lens of teaching methodologies and classroom observations. The Principal can conduct classroom observations with attention given to teacher competencies leveled for each tier, which forms the substance of a collaborative evaluation process between principal and teacher at year end. Further, the Next Step Plan (first required in 2009-2010 SY) passed the NM Legislature (Bill 522) and mandated standardized procedures for compiling and reporting data. This is an appropriate way to help educators ensure students plan for post-graduation, extracurricular activities, set academic, personal and social goals, pursue career interests, high school courses and career pathways, and promote plans for staying on track for graduation, and plans for helping students achieve goals. The reforms in this proposal will strengthen individual schools' ability to comply with state requirements, promote college and career readiness standards and support teachers in personalizing education during implementation.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

B.4

The applicant demonstrates meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal. a strong plan was instituted to enage stakeholders in the process of developing the proposed initiative. As listed in the proposal, the applicant has held internal meetings with multiple stakeholder groups. This

wide variety of internal and external stakeholder groups, including collaborative meetings with union representation, was held to solicit opinions, feedback, and proposal approval. Comments, working sessions and think tanks provided a diverse set of perspectives that helped APS to gain a clearer picture of the resources, strengths, and weakness of the reform plan and what is needed to strengthen district performance in the wake of implementation. Letters of support in the Appendix demonstrate broad stakeholder support from representatives within Albuquerque, the District, and the State. Overall, support for the initiative appears has positive from a wide cross section of community and state stakeholders.

Weakness: The applicant does not elaborate on the statement - The state approves of the general program, with some hesitation as the District and the State finalize compatible educator evaluation systems. It is not clear whether the program has support of the State.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

B.5

The applicant describes analysis of needs and gaps that guide the logic behind the reform.

Gaps were discovered in budgets that support staff and initiatives, achievement among special populations of students due to language and poverty, and early childhood education, and technology. Without a proper head start in life followed by consistent educational supports throughout grade bands, students have been found to struggle as they progress through school. Poverty and students, who do not speak English well, are two indicators that strongly negatively correlate with student success. Technology tools significantly enhance access and support interactive learning and engaged classroom environment which impact student learning and achievement. These analyses allow the recognition of the need for an overarching, comprehensive system to improve teaching methods and resources across all grade bands in order to increase student proficiency and better prepare them for college and careers. This recognition aligns with the core elements of the reform initiative. These areas are likely to be impacted by implementing the initiative.

Weakness: The applicant does not describe a plan/process by which it used to identify gaps in current processes and practices of providing student instruction and support.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

C.1

The applicant outlines a strong plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The District proposes to reform how students are educated across the District through the context of parent and family engagement, mastering critical academic content and pursuing college and career readiness skills, and digital learning. It is likely that parent and family involvement will provide a level of support and context that teachers simply cannot provide to students. It is this wrap-around support network that helps students truly achieve. Personalized learning content using a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments to include the use of the common core standards; use of AVID, a college readiness system for elementary through higher education that is designed to increase school wide learning and performance; assessments; and routes to pursue academic interest, will improve achievement, increase student engagements, improve student attitudes t and provide students choices in how they learn and demonstrate what they have learned. For educators in the District, this is an explicit means of teaching and measuring student achievement and progress to prepare them for postsecondary education and encourages deeper learning of subject matter. Further, grounded in effective teaching practices, reform efforts will help the District turn around failing schools and to better serve its diverse body of students, resulting in improved learning and achievement; helping to ensure that students are college and career ready and able to competitive globally; and allowing teachers more flexibility to teach content, rather than solely being concerned with covering material on standardized tests. The digital learning tools will act as mechanisms to engage students using a variety of approaches and sensory stimuli in order to harness the potential of different learning styles. It is also appropriate that all students will receive training and coaching in

required technologies and tools, as it is crucially important that students understand how to use technological devices

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

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C.2

The applicant outlines a strong plan for improving teaching and leading to improve instruction and increase capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for students. This is evidenced by a structure to provide personalized professional development for educators presented in the proposal, and the provision of high quality resources that promote readiness, to include assessments to measure student progress toward college- and career-ready standards and requirements. More specifically, the applicant will employ a multi-element approach to district-wide reform that offers educators training, tools and strategies to improve student achievement, deepen student knowledge, and increase equitable access to personalized student supports using age- and ability-level appropriate lessons and materials. Educators will also participate in collaborative learning groups, which are opportunities for school-based educators to gather together to share best practices, data, lessons, and technologies. These gatherings are essential for building a sense of community and shared responsibilities among educators. They will become even more important under the common core standards implementation, as teachers develop new lessons and means of communicating with students that help them to excel and to meet necessary benchmarks, and efforts to promote college and career readiness. Teachers will receive regular feedback on performance and successes from the evaluation system, and from peers will help educators become more effective in leading and guiding the overall education of students. Overall the foundation of the plan is sufficient in creating highly effective teachers and principals by providing them with the training and tools that are required to do a thorough job, and with the data and reports that allow for complete information on student, school, and district performance. As laid out, educators will gain access to and knowledge on how to use tools, data, and resources to implement a personalized learning system that is beneficial to promote student learning and achievement.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

D.1

The applicant states Principals and Instructional Councils work together on budget and school Professional Development. Principals have authority to make recommendations for preferred new hires, and Human Resources verifies credentials, licensures and background check prior to making the final decision and formal offer. In recent years, school-level task forces have worked together to set a district-wide high school schedule. Currently, the applicant has a similar task force of middle school personnel, union and district leadership considering a narrowed set of choices for middle school schedules in the district. This helps demonstrate that the applicant provides school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.

Weakness: The applicant does not adequately demonstrate that appropriate practices and rules are in place to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student the support and resources needed. Information presented on the school-level infrastructure is weak and lacks detail. No information is presented describing practices, policies, and rules at the central office levels that support the proposed shift to personalized learning.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

D.2

The applicant describes Local Education Agency and school infrastructure that are feasible to support project implementation. All students, parents, educators, and other pertinent stakeholders will have equal access to the programs and technologies proposed by initiative. Multimedia components will be available to students in their classrooms or anywhere they have access to a computer or mobile device. For students who do not have computers, tablets, or smartphones available to them, the Albuquerque Public Library offers free computer access at all branch locations and eReaders available for loan. This is a sufficient manner to ensure all students have access to the resources needed to support and enhance their learning.

Educators will be provided with training on all technology used in classrooms, either by in-house staff or provided by the manufacturer of the technology. Students will have access to in-class support from teachers, or online support outside of class. Parents and family members who require support in understanding the technology their children are using in the classroom will be encouraged to attend classes offered through a Parent University or to contact the student's teacher for more information. Students will have access to these resources while at school and from home, or wherever they choose to do their school work. Parents will be informed of the technology used in their children's classrooms at parent teacher conferences and open houses. Parents who are interested in learning how to use the technology in order to better help their children study will be able to take courses at Parent University. Parents can utilize iParent, a web-based communication tool available across the district, to access students' attendance records, schedules, and grade books. The applicant describes an appropriate move toward a new interoperable, system-wide data management system that will be accessible and operable by all APS employees. Overall, the District offers many innovative ways to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Improving the quality of the infrastructure that is available to educators is essential to developing programs and systems that address the needs of students and their families in order to improve the quality of learning and personalization.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: E. 1  The commitment to continuous improvement is vaguely demonstrated in the applicant's participation in the Strategic Data Project (SDP), housed at the Harvard Center for Education Policy Research. The SDP had three main goals, which somewhat overlap with reform initiative goals. The project also conducted an analysis of teacher efficacy and student college readiness. The SDP fellows designed and administrated the District Teacher Evaluation and Performance Pay Pilot program, which, with modifications based on feedback from participants, will form the basis of the District's feedback on an evaluation tool for teachers. Participation in this project will likely show the applicant the need for developing a continuous improvement plan.  Weakness: The applicant does not outline a continuous improvement plan that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. No information is presented on how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: E.2  The District will employ multiple outreach methods to ensure ongoing communication and engagement. For example, the District website contains a wealth of information and is a valuable tool in maintaining an open dialogue with all stakeholders, internal and external. The district also uses online social media to keep stakeholders informed of news, events, and developments (i.e., Twitter, Facebook). The district will continue to use these platforms to disseminate information on meetings and to post meeting notes, budget updates, progress updates and reports. The district also holds regular in-person public meetings on pertinent topics and posts the minutes online for those who cannot attend. The district maintains multiple partnerships for planning and implementing activities and strategies that will improve both educational and health outcomes for our students as evidenced by the description of partnerships described. District staff members meet regularly with partners to explore options, make joint decisions, and implement programs. These meetings will be formalized into weekly forums during which educators and partners can discuss progress, setbacks, and potential future programs. Information presented ensures an appropriate line of communication and engagement. To be successfully implemented, the school reform efforts will require proactive communication and engagement efforts or they are destined to hit a wall of misunderstanding and challenges from critics possibly impede the school reform effort.		

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

E.3

The applicant has specified fifteen performance measures by subgroups and across grade bands to track over the course of the grant period to gain insight assesses effectiveness and guide successful implementation of efforts as evidenced in data tables at end of narrative. Measures are required annual targets and for applicant-proposed performance measure, and are ambitious and achievable. Measures that are described by the applicant are critical to making every student outcome visible and holding schools accountable for those outcomes. They are actionable at the school level meaning that school leaders, teachers and staff can use them to make changes that will have demonstrated impact.

Weakness: Some applicant-proposed measures are broad and lack detail and measurability. Target goals have not been set as the District wants to track student achievement for AVID participants. Additionally, rationale for selecting those measures is not provided, nor is information presented on how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the reform initiative. Information is not presented on how the applicant will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation of progress.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant outlines how it will utilize its enhanced data gathering and processing capacities to evaluate students, teachers, and program effectiveness. For example, The Edupoint SIS system will collect formative, observational, and summative type assessment data and generate reports useful in creating SLOs, reporting on the status of individual students, and showing real-time progression through subject matter and standards. Additionally, the District will require that Pre-K programs and kindergartens use the Kindergarten Developmental Progress Report (KDPR) to provide teachers with baseline information about a student's emotional, mental, and physical readiness for school. Key elements of the applicant's efforts are consistent with measuring for success and allow timely monitoring and reporting of activities involved with project.

Weakness: The applicant does not outline a focused plan to evaluate the effectiveness of its investments. An evaluation process that yield both quantitative and qualitative data on the impact and success of the initiative is not presented. Further, the applicant presents a timeline designated as the timeline for evaluation system adoption. No information is presented explaining this timeline in the context of an overall evaluation of the initiative.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

F.1

The applicant has requested the \$43,214,960.00 in accordance with Federal guidelines. Sources of funding and positions are appropriate and reasonable to support the successful implementation of the initiative and increasing higher standards for student performance and closing the achievement gap. Instruction related costs appear reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed personalized learning initiative over the cycle of the grant and for three years beyond. Detailed descriptions explain the associated costs listed in the budget. Costs are presented for all major line items. The applicant demonstrates that funds will be budgeted to provide the required services to eligible schools. The applicant provides an adequate non-federal match for the project. Further, information is presented in a manner to justify the inkind/non-federal sources and related expenses to include descriptions and cost calculations.

Weakness: The \$5.5 million request to renovate the Montgomery Complex structure to add 3 Pre-K rooms with observation

training capability, to house small and large group PD and parent trainings, ABC Community School offices, and to provide office space to is questionable. This line item is designated as a core element of the initiated and is described as being critical to improved student learning and achievement. Renovation of structures is usually funded by districts with sources of revenue or referendums not slated to instruction of students in improving academic achievement.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

F.2

The applicant outlines thorough measures to sustain the project. The applicant states the recurring activities are carefully considered so that they are either self-sustaining, have a sustainability plan or are of significant District priority so as to present a high-potential to be absorbed into future operations expenses given evidence of success and effectiveness at grant end. The District is prepared to fund recurring costs associated with increased bandwidth to support technology related activities that have already been implemented and those that will be implemented for the reform initiative. The co-director position is slated to transition into the director's position and the salary cost will be absorbed into the existing operations budget at the end of the grant period. Additionally, to sustain extended day offerings at all elementary schools sites will cost the District \$1M annually. Additionally, the initiative's PreK early education efforts include adding Pre-K teachers, Educational Assistants and Family Liaisons will require additional funds. For these positions to be sustained, the District acknowledges that it will need to proactively seek \$1M in future funding from the State's early education childhood programs.

**Weakness:** While the applicant presents a variety of strategies to help sustain activities, it does not present a comprehensive plan of sustainability. Further, it is not clear whether some initiatives can be sustained if funding is not secured.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	6

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority

The District addresses the Competitive Priority. The applicant maintains multiple partnerships for planning and implementing activities and strategies to improve both educational and health outcomes of students as evidenced in the Appendices.. Staff members meet regularly with partners to explore options, make joint decisions, and implement programs. The meetings will be formalized into weekly forums during which educators and partners can discuss progress, setbacks, and potential future programs. For example, academic achievement program partners help to ensure students are successful, graduate, and are college and career ready. Entities include: UNM and CNM, Oasis Volunteer Tutoring Program, Native American Professional Parent Resources, City of Albuquerque Foster Grandparent Program, and ABC Community Schools Partnership. The District recognizes that preparing students for postsecondary education and careers is a critical component of high school. To this end, school officials signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2008 promising to work together to improve high school and college graduation rates. This MOU represented a pact to combine forces to help students graduate from high school and either seek training through a professional certificate program, or enter an associates or bachelors' degree program. The ABC Community Schools program, which will have offices at the proposed reform Center, aims to provide basic services and a safe place for children to go in schools with large populations of low-income families and high-risk children. Community Schools (within the Albuquerque Public School District) is an educational reform strategy which includes a philosophy, a set of partnerships and a variety systems and activities which align and coordinate resources with and for schools in order to maximize student achievement and development. The ABC Community Schools program is a partnership between the District, the City of Albuquerque, and Bernalillo County to increase services at selected schools to include health and mental health care, dental care, childcare, after school activities and tutoring, as well as family and community engagement within schools. The District respectfully requests to use performance measures noted for the overall initiative. A community schools strategy recognizes the tremendous strength business, community partners and parents as taxpayers, civic leaders and advocates.

**Weakness:** The applicant does not describe how partnerships and LEAs would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports. Further, the applicant does not describe how it will track the selected indicators that measure results at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA, and at the student level for the

participating students; use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students, with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty, including highly mobile students; family instability, or other child welfare issues. No information is presented on the development of a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students (as defined in this notice) and communities in the LEA or consortium over time; and improve results over time.

### Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

**Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:**

Based upon informatin presented on learning and leading the applicant meets the Absolute Priority. The applicant has presented a reform initiative that will build on the core educational assurance areas as a personalized learning environment is implemented. The initiative uses collaborative, data-based strategies and 21<sup>st</sup> century tools such as online learning platforms, computers, and learning strategies to deliver instruction and supports tailored to the needs and goals of students, with the aim of enabling all students to graduate college- and career-ready by addressing areas of achievement that impact readiness early in the child's education. Educators are also supported in their efforts to be effective.

Weaknesses of the initiative are in the ares of infrastructure and policy,and specificaiton of sufficient goals on which to base and guide the project. Continuous improvement and evaluation efforts are not adequately specified or evidenced.

Total	210	159
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## Race to the Top - District

### Technical Review Form

Application #0410NM-4 for Albuquerque Public Schools

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

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

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

The applicant presents strong evidence of a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that offers a clear and credible approach to:

- Accelerating student achievement through the development of data-informed recommendations regarding personalized learning plans for students. The district offers numerous assessments of its students, college- and career-focused high schools, special technology and other enrichment schools and makes this and other data available to teachers for planning.
- Early education to focus students on achievement from an early age.
- Deepening student learning through many blended learning options; offering "schools of choice" organized by themes; developing teachers and leaders through expanded and targeted professional development, mentoring opportunities, personal learning communities, reimbursement for advanced coursework and expanded recruiting.
- Increasing equity by offering dual language high schools; encouraging teachers to pursue TESOL certification; offering

teachers extended day and collaborative PD time.

A detailed logic model provides an overview of the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals of the proposal, which are well-developed and rigorous. The vision is anchored by a clear belief in the power of personalized learning to give all students and educators powerful 21st century learning skills.

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

10

6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides moderate evidence of a well-conceived plan for implementation of the proposed plan in terms of the selection of its schools.

- The district includes all of its schools in the proposed implementation and will phase in the process through elements of Professional Development, Upgraded Technology, Early Education Efforts, Secondary Education Efforts, and Accelerating Progress for Students Center.
- The Early and Secondary Education Efforts, which have already proven successful in a district pilot, will be phased in for at-risk groups.
- Approximately 9,540 APS educators at 140 schools, along with 89,498 students (66,750 of whom are high needs, and 63.9% come from low-income families) will be served by this initiative.
- The application does not list all of the schools to be served, perhaps because there are 140. However, some sort of breakdown of the total, high-need, and low-income populations by elementary, middle, and secondary school statistics would be helpful in understanding the suggested approach further.

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

10

6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents moderate evidence of a high-quality plan for scaling up the proposal for the rest of New Mexico's schools.

The APS Center will invite other districts to observe its model site, which will serve as a hub for the EPICC program, and house the Pre-K program, professional development classes, community school offices, and a Parent University.

The proposal is lacking in detail regarding how the program will be scaled-up to other jurisdictions.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates moderate evidence that the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity among student subgroups.

- The increase of 3% on average per year on state math and reading proficiency tests for all subgroups from grades 3-8 and 11 seems ambitious and achievable. However, projecting a constant rate each year implies that the treatment will not make much difference from the first year of implementation to the last; a more likely pattern of change might begin slowly and accelerate as the changes are implemented.
- The H2 Reading proficiency for American Indians, topping out at 37%, seems low, as does the 35% and 36% rates for African Americans and Hispanics H2 Math, respectively, but they are reasonable given the low baseline rate.
- The projected rate by which achievement gaps will be closed, at 5% within 3 years, seems ambitious and achievable. However, persistent gaps will exist, such as ELL/Anglo gaps for Elementary, Middle, and High School reading.
- The goals for high school graduation, at 78% overall and 61% for English learners, seem reasonable, as does the proposed measure for the number of C or better schools.
- College enrollment goals are ambitious yet achievable, with a gain of about 5% per subgroup by the 2016-17 post-grant period.

Within the response to this selection criteria, the applicant lists additional goals around engaging families and enhancing community partnerships. The goals around parent and family engagement, through data access, Parent University, and translation and interpreter services are impressive, as parental engagement is a key determinant of academic achievement and strengthens the likelihood of success.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has shown moderate evidence of a clear record of success in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 2008, the district has seen graduation rate increases in 12 of 17 schools; Math scores have improved more than 11%, averaged across all grades; AP enrollment increases by nearly 40% in 3 years; FAFSA submissions increased from 32.9% in 2010 to over 50% in 2012. The application would benefit from a detailed breakdown of score changes by student subgroup.</li> <li>• Gaps have been closed within AP enrollment, in which Hispanics surpassed Anglo students in 2010-11 (4,300 to 3,400).</li> <li>• Three low-performing schools have achieved strong results from significant redesigns over the last 3 years, with one school improving its state grade from a D to a B.</li> <li>• The district has achieved ambitious and significant reforms through the redesign of several low-performing schools; extended school days and calendars; an expansion of online courses to 3,700 students enrolled in 5,370 classes in 2011-12; the establishment of magnet schools and IB programs; and the success of AVID programs.</li> <li>• The applicant does not discuss making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.</li> </ul>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides strong evidence of the transparency of school budgetary information.</p> <p>The superintendent has received an award for transparency in government, as has the district.</p> <p>The district provides actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and support staff and teachers. Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level are not available, but the district's budget, with a breakdown of costs, is available online.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant shows moderate evidence of the necessary State statutory, legal, and regulatory support to implement personalized learning environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has codified college-focused learning, including implementing the Common Core and implementing graduation requirements of passing an Honors, AP, Dual Enrollment, or online course, and of passing a state Standards Based Assessment.</li> <li>• The state is also interested in collecting student achievement data to develop a performance-based compensation system for teachers.</li> <li>• While the state is clearly interested in increasing student achievement, the applicant does not provide information regarding the level of autonomy districts will be granted to implement personal learning environments.</li> </ul>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal shows strong evidence of including significant stakeholder engagement in the development and support of the proposal, through numerous opportunities for stakeholder in-put and buy-in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many district employees, teachers, and other educators have met to discuss the development of the proposal through a series of meetings, and the plan has been presented at the APS Board of Education meetings and at District Council meetings.</li> <li>• Old and new media have been utilized to share the proposal and request feedback from parents groups, teachers, principals, and community partners, including university and social service network partners;</li> </ul>		

- The District and local teacher's federation signed a contract in which each school's instructional council will lead and manage implementation of the Common Cores standards at each school.
- The applicant provided concrete examples of situations in which the grant writing team gained insights from various stakeholders (eg., prioritizing early childhood literacy, breaking down silos between departments), which illustrates a dynamic and community-driven process.
- The applicant offers numerous letters from a diverse group of supporters and partners, including government representatives, university partners, union officials, and science organizations.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated strong evidence of a high-quality plan to analyze the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments.

The applicant shows a comprehensive understanding of the various needs and gaps in its implementation of the proposed project, including financial, student, teacher, and infrastructure needs such as:

- Budget issues;
- Issues facing demographic groups most affected by achievement gaps, particularly English learners;
- Early childhood reading gaps;
- The need for an overarching, comprehensive system of professional development in instructional methods;
- Strengthening the technological infrastructure to support the new student assessment tool

The applicant also provides several potential solutions that leverage existing resources and/or align with ongoing state initiatives.

The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan per se to investigate further gaps, but appears to have done much of this work prior to the submission of their proposal.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has shown moderate evidence of an approach to engage and empower all learners. Students, parents, and educators will:

- Understand why what they are learning is so critical to their goals, through a Parent Engagement Policy that scales up the Parents as Teachers program; establishes Parent University, provides volunteer opportunities, and offers school-based health services, to strengthen the environment for student achievement
- Understand and pursue college-ready goals, through implementation of the Common Core Standards and expansion of the AVID program;
- Be involved in deep learning experiences, through theme "schools of choice," magnet, bilingual, and IB programs
- Appreciate diverse cultures and perspectives, through opportunities to share in projects with their diverse classmates, and in including cultural lessons from Native American pueblos, Latin American countries, and other immigrant groups.
- Master critical content and develop 21st century learning skills through Core work. The proposal does not address skills such as teamwork, collaboration.

Students will benefit from:

- A personalized sequence of content and instruction designed by teachers with help from data analysts and based on feedback from assessments like PLAN, ACCUPLACER, COMPASS. The proposal lacks specifics about how often the student will be assessed, and how often his or her personalized learning plans will be adjusted.
- High quality content, including Promethean interactive display boards; Discovery Education resources; and techbooks;
- Ongoing and regular feedback from performance data from Edupoint, AIMS, PLAN, ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, and AVID coaches.
- Personalized learning recommendations from data gained from Edupoint, AIMS, and other resources. Teachers, students, and parents will design personalized learning plans.

For high need students, the applicant will provide extended day school services in those schools offering extended day; AVID coaching and tutoring; and personalized learning plans.

Students will understand how to use data tools and resources through training to utilize technological devices.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has shown moderate evidence of helping educators to improve instruction and improve their practice in developing personalized, college-ready instruction for learners.

- Specifically, teachers will be given training to support their capacity to implement the proposal through a Generation Schools Model that includes training in Common Core Standards, AVID coursework, develop student learning objectives, and Discovery Education tools. They will also have school-based collaborative planning and reflection time.
- Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments through utilization of multimedia interactive elements in lesson plans, and Discovery Education;
- Adapt content and instruction to individual learning needs through discussions within professional learning communities regarding best practices in regards to small group, whole class, and personalized instruction.
- Frequently measure student progress and use the results to accelerate progress and improve individual and collective practices
- Improving teacher and principal practices through evaluation feedback from the state's assessment tool, now in its pilot stages, that incorporates in-class observations, student surveys, student performance, individual teacher created Student Learning objectives, and SLOs created by groups of teachers. Peer feedback, mentor support for new teachers, The proposal lacks specifics on how this feedback will be incorporated into professional development that strengthens teachers' ability to develop personalized learning environments.

All participating teachers will have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to further student achievement toward college and career-ready goals through

- Actionable information to optimize educational approaches through assessments and data from Edupoint, AIMS, and performance on Discovery Education materials.
- High quality learning resources from Discovery Education.
- Processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches

All participating leaders will have the tools, training, policies, and data to structure effective personalized learning environments through training in online tools, lessons, streaming content, mentoring for new teachers, and data analysts to offer help in reading data and developing plans.

The applicant has a reasonable plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly-effective teachers and principals

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has shown strong evidence of supportive LEA practices, policies, and rules to facilitate personalized learning by:

- Organizing the LEA central office to provide support by assigning technical support staff to this project, as well as hiring two EPICC data management staff to support and train educators. The EPICC Project Coordinator, under the direction of the APS Grant Manager, referenced in the response to criteria E2, will oversee the program's implementation and progress toward goals. They will report to the Chief Academic Officer, the Superintendent, and the APS Board of Education.
- Providing school leadership teams with sufficient flexibility in hiring and budgeting, and with school-level task forces setting district-wide high school schedules and looking to do so for middle schoolers, and non-traditional evening hours at some high schools for additional learning.
- Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery, with opportunities to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways through district policies that allow many options for earning

credits, including theme "Schools of Choice" that best meet their learning preferences; and the EAcademy's blended courses.

- Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are fully adaptable to all students, such as the Dual-Language and bilingual high schools for ELL students.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented moderate evidence of its plan to support personalized learning through school and LEA infrastructure by:

- Ensuring that all participating students, parents, and stakeholders have access to content, tools, and other resources with every classroom having laptops and devices, and students being able to access content from home computers or from the library's computers or eReaders;
- Providing students with technical training from teachers, who will be provided professional development technical training. parents can receive support at Parent University or through their child's teacher. More information on how this will be formally implemented would be helpful to the application.
- While it appears that the Discovery Education model will be compatible with other electronic devices, it's not clear whether this system's data can be exported in open-data format.
- The LEA is moving toward a more comprehensive data system that will include access to student information data. It's not clear whether instructional improvement, budget, or human resources data will also be accessible.

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

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has shown weak evidence of a strategy for continuous improvement that includes timely feedback through the assessment of student progress, professional development, and technological effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic analyses from the Harvard Strategic Data Project regarding student college attendance and retention and human capital indicators will help to develop teacher assessments and compensation strategies.</li> <li>• The applicant mentions utilizing data gathered by EPICC each semester, including input from parents, community members, union representatives, teachers and principals, and APS administrators for use in retooling strategies during the summer months. However, the proposal lacks specifics on what data would be gathered, in what form, and how it would be evaluated and what process would be used to retool strategies.</li> </ul>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has shown strong evidence of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The district will continue to utilize its website and Facebook site to share program information regarding meetings, budgets, progress updates, and reports.</li> <li>• The LEA holds in-person public meetings and provides meeting minutes online.</li> <li>• The EPICC Project coordinator will hold quarterly meetings with key staff, and with unions bi-monthly to assess program progress.</li> <li>• The proposal doesn't address any specific parental communications or how their feedback is gathered.</li> <li>• APS maintains partnerships with academic partners, Before and After School partners, health and safety partners, and school supplies providers for low-income students.</li> </ul>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant shows strong evidence of ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the district's schools.

- The rationales for the applicant's proposed measures of habitual truancy is strong, highlighting attendance as a strong indicator of student achievement.
- The district is in the process of developing a teacher evaluation system and therefore does not have baseline data regarding effective or highly-effective teachers or principals, which makes it difficult to judge any plan to develop educators.
- The goals for Kindergarten Math proficiency in 2016-17 seem ambitious yet achievable.
- The District Benchmark targets are, by definition, lower, but the goals seem ambitious and achievable. The goals for Native American Grade 4 reading, and Grade 8 Math, however, seem a bit modest, given the high number of nearing proficient students in those categories.
- The ontrack performance baseline measures for middle and high school students are very encouraging and high for all subgroups.
- The goals for percentages completing the FAFSA form may be a bit challenging, but they are ambitious.

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

The applicant shows moderate evidence of a plan to evaluate the program's District funded activities through improved use of technology and working with community partners.

- The applicant will work with a partner to monitor student achievement risk factors, and implement programs to reduce truancy. They will also collaborate to study the effects of AVID on college preparation and student achievement.
- Educators will study a variety of student reporting at the student, school, and district level to determine which steps and resources will assist students moving forward with their learning. SAT scores, SBA and PARCC assessment tools will provide additional data regarding student progress.
- Teacher, principals, and LEA staff will be assessed via tools being developed statewide;

Schools receive report cards and ratings based on their students' state scores and growth.

The proposal does not discuss the manner in which implementation success will be adjusted using the various sources of data.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has shown moderate evidence of a sound budget that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies all funds that will support the project, including \$4million in outside funding, including district investments in Discovery Education and the Edupoint vendors.</li> <li>• Is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal, with 43.7% of funds going to professional development and 22.8% of extending elementary efforts.</li> <li>• Clearly provides a rationale for investment of the funds and an approach that focuses on nonrecurring funds.</li> <li>• Clearly provides a rationale for one time costs, like in renovating the APS Center, which will house the EPICC hub, and the upgrading of technology infrastructure, and increasing bandwidth, which together comprise 61% of the requested funding. However, there's some concern that over 1/5th of the budget is going to building space, rather than renovating or repurposing one of the district's 140 school buildings.</li> <li>• Provides a rationale for ongoing costs like the phasing in of the AVID program, including teacher professional development.</li> <li>• Approximately 6.7% of the proposed funding is for recurring costs, like AVID, Extended Day, and PreK programs.</li> </ul>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented moderate evidence of a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.

- About 61% of the requested funding is for one-time costs, reducing significantly the amount of funding needed to sustain the project.
- The district is also currently investing \$20.5 m in funding in upgrading its systems infrastructure and student information system, along with contracting with Discovery Education.
- The District will cover recurring costs associated with increased bandwidth, and will seek \$1m in state funding annually to sustain the extended day opportunities. Several technological and training duties will be absorbed by the District at the end of the grant period.
- The applicant included letters of support from various governmental officials, including a state representative who states that the community is committed to carrying out these reforms even with RttD funding, suggesting that the funding to sustain the initiative may become available.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has shown strong evidence of coherent and sustainable partnerships that will further the goals of the program.

The applicant works with a university partner's educational research center to research factors leading to increased high school graduation and college enrollment rates and other measures of student progress and success. They also provide for credit transfers for APS students to enroll in dual credit courses. The research is utilized by community partners to support student success along with cradle to career spectrum.

Under the Community School model, partnerships with university partners and community schools provide a wide array of school-based services to students and families to strengthen academic achievement. The applicant offers a coherent plan for how the services will be coordinated at the school level, with information regarding accountability, expectations, roles, and data-driven decisionmaking.

The performance measures referenced in E3 are ambitious yet achievable.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has presented a coherent and comprehensive strategy for how it will build personalized learning environments through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students aligned with Common Core standards. The proposed interventions will focus on early childhood education, and utilize digital content such as Discovery Education to provide students with 21st century learning experiences. Students will understand college and career ready goals through the expansion of AVID.

Teachers will receive professional development in utilizing technology and data from various student assessment tools to develop personalized learning plans. Achievement gaps will be decreased across groups, with a focus on earlier grades, and high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates will increase.

Total	210	145
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