



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1319NJ-1 for Atlantic City Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not directly address the four assurance areas although the need for “turning around lowest performing schools” seems serious in the district. Also, the focus of the applicant’s proposed reform is to generate a systemic innovation through professional development (i.e., coaching) in mathematics. The applicant’s main point in the reform vision is to blend “core academics with digital tools, resources and skills to support all learners.” In other words, this vision contends that providing tools and resources along with the skills to use them will personalize students’ learning and “equity” of education. The applicant also envisions that this provision of resources will “establish a path to career and college readiness.” This vision is not supported by evidence-based practices: The application does not provide any vision on true changes in students’ learning as a result of instructional innovations including the use of evidence-based practices. The proposed innovation plan focuses on professional development, but does not explain how the trained professionals will improve students’ learning and what instructional practices they will use to “personalize” the learning environment. The basic assumption that having digital tools and resources as personal possessions will personalize students’ learning and will prepare them toward college- or career-readiness standards needs more empirical support. Thus, the proposed vision does not go beyond the common-sense level (5 points).</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Participating schools, educators, and students are summarized with the numbers and proportions of low-income students. Except for one school (88% low-income students), the percentages of low-income students in participating students are 90% or above, which highlights the need for grant supports for the students. This also partly explains the reason for selecting the schools. The application does not include a clear description of this selection process, which has not been penalized in this evaluation.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant’s vision begins with a quotation from Jean Piaget (i.e., “The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done”). Although the applicant is still repeating what Jean Piaget said a few generations ago, the proposed application includes some “new things”. The proposed professional development model (i.e., coaching), however, does not have clear evidence of success. Although the applicant was awarded the Reading First Grant of new Jersey and used the same model of coaching, the data graphs provided in Appendices B and E do not show clear evidence of significant improvement in students’ learning. The mathematics achievement data also do not show significant improvements (still below the state average) although the data on Grade 8 achievement demonstrate some consistent improvement. Thus, the rationale and logic for using the same model for improving students’ mathematics achievement are weak.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant uses percentages of students passing state assessments in mathematics. Using mathematics assessments is reasonable because the application focuses on students’ achievements in mathematics. The projected 5% annual increase is both ambitious and achievable, depending on the success of the approach. The gradual improvement applies to all subgroups. However, the goals for decreasing achievement gaps among the subgroups are</p>		

not clearly addressed. Goals for graduation rates and college enrollment rates are not presented although (A)(1) and (A)(3) state that the proposed project is related to college attendance. Therefore, the goals mark the higher middle level (7 points).

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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the applicant demonstrates some consistent improvement on 8th-grade mathematics, the same evidence did not occur on other grade levels. Also, the applicant used the same professional development model through a reading grant. However, no clear evidence supports the success of the model in reading. Therefore, the applicant's success in 8th-grade mathematics cannot be attributed to the proposed professional development model. Also, the application does not demonstrate the contributions of the model to decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, and increasing achievements of low-achieving schools. The application does not explain how the applicant made student performance data available to students, educators, and parents.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant reports that the information on school expenditures is made available to the public by district and state reports and the school district web site. Detailed information is not provided regarding the four categories that are specified in the selection criteria. Therefore, the section marks a higher end of the medium level (3 points).</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	2
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The degree of autonomy to implement the proposed reform model is not discussed. Although the application states that the approach has been announced through diverse media, no evidence is reported regarding the support from the public. Thus, the conditions and autonomy for the implementation are highly unclear.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has secured support from community groups (mostly parent groups) through a previous grant project (Reading First). Letters from a principal and two community organizations are included in the appendix. However, The application includes no evidence of stakeholders' engagement in the development of the proposal and no evidence of support from students, families, and teachers.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes a summary of surveys regarding school climates, "educational variables," and students' behavioral characteristics. It does not include any analysis or summary of the results to identify any needs or "gaps" in the implementation of personalized learning environments or the proposed project. Thus, the applicant's "analysis" does not have strong relevance to the information that is required for this section. The appendix includes a large amount of survey results, but they are not analyzed and summarized to explain findings regarding the needs for implementing personalized learning environments.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In this section, the application explains its focus on providing technology resources with the assumption that students can get access to instructional materials and contents and can learn independently with some teacher scaffolding. The mathematics coaching, which is explained in other sections, needs to be connected to the use of technology resources to show how the resources will be used in the context of the coaching or classroom teaching. No detailed course of study is provided based on the sequence of the content or standards. The applicant also assumes that students can get engaged in deep learning by exploring information with technology resources. The content of software programs is likely to influence students' learning more than simply using the technology resources. Also, the applicant contends that educational equity can be accomplished by providing technology resources when students cannot afford to obtain them. The "equity" is not discussed in terms of the benefits that students earn by using the resources. The application states, "the first line of offense is good first instruction," but does not explain what "offense" can be the "instruction". The emphasis of "student autonomy and control over their learning" needs further explanation regarding how the autonomy and control enhance students' learning. Generally, the explanation of, and the empirical support for, the instructional approach to creating a personalized learning environment are not sufficient.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposed model heavily relies on the roles of coaches in mathematics instruction. Therefore, the applicant's statement in this section mostly focuses on the roles of coaches. Training coaches is explained. However, the content of the training is not clearly explained. In other words, the pedagogical approach or "instructional strategies" that the coach will use is not explained. The only comment on this aspect is that the coaches will be using "the constructivist theory." Also, if coaches dominate the instructional delivery, the roles of teachers will become obscure because certified teachers will receive constant coaching. If the coach provides assistance in the instructional setting, the instruction will become awkward rather than creating a personalized learning environment. The role of teacher education will also become unclear as the coach functions as a teacher educator. Logically, this model presumes that the teachers are not fully prepared to implement the personalized learning environment until they fully receive coaching. The applicant plans to use the state assessment at and above the third grade. The assessment at K-2 grade levels is not certain. Also, the application does not describe how the assessment data will be used and who will use the data. Thus, although the coaching model is a reasonable instructional delivery model, the use of instructional practices should be clarified. An earlier section emphasized the use of technology resources, but it is unclear who will use them and how to use them for personalized learning environments.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	5
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Regarding the organization of the LEA office and the governance structure, the applicant's description includes many digressions from the topic. It describes the newly appointed superintendent with her background and philosophy, the math coaches, and math coach trainers. The relationships and the functions of these personnel are not clearly described. School-based leadership teams that were created during the implementation of an earlier grant project will oversee and monitor the implementation of the project with needed changes and modifications. The application states that the project will allow students the opportunity to progress and earn credit "based on mastery in various forms associated with their grade levels," but does not explain HOW students will have the opportunity and what those "various forms" are. The project will provide iPads as learning resources, but instructional practices to be used are not explained. This lack of details along with insufficient credibility places the application at the lower medium level.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Through "equitable access to the tools and equipment," teachers and students will access the instructional materials. The "district digital instructional coach" will provide technical support and training to use the tools. Diverse data systems will be used, but it is not clear what interoperable data systems will be used. Also, ensuring students, parents,</p>		

and educators to export their information is not explained.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a robust plan to use an independent external evaluator to conduct formative evaluation and summative evaluation. The formative evaluation is intended for providing timely feedback and changes/modifications. The summative evaluation will result in documenting the effects of the project on student outcomes (i.e., achievement and college or career acceptance).</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a plan to communicate with parents and stakeholders regarding the evaluation results and progress produced by the independent external evaluator. The applicant's statement, "...these data will be the best marketing tool for telling the story of the success of the District initiatives" is premature based on a hasty prediction and, thus, reduces the credibility of the plan.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes seven measures that will produce qualitative and quantitative data on the performance of student and project personnel, two teacher quality measures, and three student achievement measures in mathematics. The measures appear to be appropriate to measure the progress and outcomes of the project. The plan does not include any achievement measure for Grades 9-12. The goals for teacher quality measures should be more ambitious for more rapid changes.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan includes the evaluation on the effectiveness of the project by an independent external evaluator in four outcome or progress areas. This evaluator will conduct a comprehensive evaluation including the evaluation by using the measures explained in (E)(3).</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application does not explain clearly how the digital tools and resources that will be provided to students are directly related to students' learning and coaching teachers for personalized learning environments. If the provision of such tools and resources clearly enhance students' learning, the government should provide them to all schools and students in the United States. Also, purchasing those materials is not directly related to the coaching project. Thus, the general expenditure does not justify the cost \$5,080,260.00 for the "Digital Tools & Resources Initiative" to secure iPads. Although the applicant proposes teacher coaching as the major approach to enhancing students' learning, more than 50% of the total budget will be used for securing those tools and resources (i.e., iPads), which will be rapidly outdated. It is also highly unreasonable that coaching teachers of special populations will need "Special Populations mathematics Coordinators" (\$377,240.00) although school-based Mathematics Coaches will coach teachers and will be paid (Total amount: \$1,131,720.00). If teachers need coaching for students without special needs, it means that the teachers before the implementation of the project are not sufficiently qualified and cannot teach students without</p>		

special needs.

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

10

5

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The plan for sustaining the coaching seems easy as the coaching model is an extension from the applicant's existing model in literacy (reading). The plan for sustainability for the digital tools and resources has problems. The tools (e.g., iPads), which the applicant projects will cost more than five million dollars, will become rapidly outdated and the replacement will also cost a similar amount of money. If they are obtained by contract at the beginning of the project, they will be considerably outdated at the end of the project. Spending a similar amount of money to replace them in 3-4 years or earlier will be a substantial burden to the applicant. Thus, although the sustainability of the coaching practice is evident, the sustainability of the digital tools is highly questionable.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not provided a separate section to describe a plan to integrate public or private resources to meet this standard. However, the application includes sporadic descriptions of partnerships with Richard Stockton College and Collaborative© reform model. Partnerships with parents or parent groups and community organizations are not explained. Also, the application does not include any clear outcome indicators and assessment methods regarding those partnerships.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The most unclear and weakest aspect of the application is the applicant's use of instructional practices as the "blended learning model" is not fully explained in terms of how it would help students to learn better. The proposed project includes two major components: (a) providing technology tools and resources and (b) using mathematics coaches. Neither of these emphases includes any plan to assess students' academic interests and other characteristics prior to the instruction. Also, the application does not explain how instructional strategies or practices will be adapted to meet students' academic and behavioral needs and to create personalized learning environments. Using mathematics coaches does not address such instructional practices. Rather, it is an instructional delivery method. Thus, coaching and students' learning are weakly connected although increasing achievement for high-need students is one of the major purposes of the Race to the Top-District program. This indicates that the application is extremely weak in addressing one of the core educational assurance areas: Turning around lowest-achieving schools. Also, the applicant is attempting to use a practice that has not been demonstrated to be effective: coaching. The applicant implemented the use of reading coaches in a previous grant-supported project. However, the effectiveness is not clearly demonstrated in the data that the applicant provides. The second component of the proposed project includes providing technology tools and resources (i.e., iPads) with some training. This is also not a research-validated practice to enhance students' learning. Spending more than five million dollars for the tools that will become rapidly outdated is unreasonable as the effect or benefit is uncertain.

The second weakness of the project is that it focuses on a single subject area rather than all subject areas. If the model or approach has strong possibility of success based on previous implementation, it should be used for many subject areas. Considering the cost for the project, applying an approach for one subject area is inefficient. Another weakness of the project is that it does not significantly address building data systems with ongoing modifications.

Because of these weaknesses, the proposed project does not meet the standard for Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	106
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1319NJ-2 for Atlantic City Board of Education

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, Atlantic City School District's (ACSD) has a vision to create a culture where all stakeholders understands how to personalize the learning environment. ACSD identifies the necessity of blending core academics with digital tools, resources and skills to support all learners. The applicant intends to initialize this personalization to go beyond the academic environment and includes components that increases equity by providing resources to families that will enable their children, at an early age, to establish a path to career and college readiness.

The applicant proposes to implement a mathematics professional development model known as the Mathematics Collaborative in partnership with Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (RSCNJ) and Southern Regional Institute/Educational Technology Training Center (SRI/ETTC). This partnership collaboration will be one of the original certificated programs in mathematics coaching in the United States. The project contents will parallel with literacy, include a technology initiative, and a robust professional development model to address the individual and collective needs of students, educators and families in a blended learning environment. This new initiative expects to address all student needs and personalize their learning environment by increasing the effective teaching and student learning. ACSD specifies the necessity approach of blending core academics with digital tools, resources and skills to support all learners and prepare them for college and careers.

The plan identifies multiple factors contributing to the lack of performance such as, inconsistent leadership, a climate of low expectations, poor curriculum design, ineffective teaching, ineffective use of data and time, and lack of community engagement. The applicant recognized the need for the development of a long-range plan for change in literacy and sought a school-reform model to fit this need. The proposal articulates areas that could be improved through their comprehensive literacy initiative reform: the importance of the leadership communicating a common vision for all district and school level leaders; the emphasis on raising expectations for teachers and students; the need to rewrite the curriculum to align with the state standards; embedding quality on-going and sustained professional development connected to scientifically-based reading research; using data to inform instruction and decision-making; allotting sufficient time for literacy instruction; and partnering with our Parent Resource Centers to extend the literacy movement beyond the schools.

This proposal will outline steps to be taken for approaching the project goals and key objectives of accelerating student achievement, using a data system to measure student growth and success through personalized support, and for developing and retaining effective educators, along with steps involving governance, training, communication, tools, and evaluations.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This proposal addresses supporting high level LEA-level and school level implementation by approaching ACSDs history of reflective practices, and by the use of findings from internal longitudinal research. The applicant states that the research

indicates that elevated performances in grade eight correlates with elevated performance at the high school level as measured by on-track indicators, such as state mandated standardized tests in NJ, and High School Proficiency Test. The proposal lacks details of the reflected the needs in the plan and strategies used for increasing the lower grade performance, which is even greater.

The narrative includes a list of schools who are grant participants and indicates that the project meets eligibility requirements by the fact that at least 40% of participating students being served across all of the eight schools are from low-income families, based on eligibility of free or reduced-price lunches, or other poverty measures. The plan uses additional approaches to implementing the reform proposal by defining the high need students through: Summative assessments being used (end-of-course test; grades 3-8, future states standardize assessments); the Methodology for determining status (e.g., percent proficient and above); Methodology for determining growth (e.g., value-added, mean growth percentile, change in achievement levels); and the percentage of students meeting the Proficient or Advanced Proficient status.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

ACSD identified the necessity of blending core academics with digital tools, resources and skills to support all learners and prepare them for college and careers, but details of weak on how their plan will be implemented with the use of state assessment recorded data and state monitoring. The plan indicates that there were pockets of quality teaching and innovation, yet student achievement was generally lagging. The applicant, along with a committed group of educators came up with a long-range high-quality plan that expects to scale up and translate into meaningful reform supporting a district-wide change. The plan will address the multiple factors contributing to this lack of performance such as, inconsistent leadership, a climate of low expectations, poor curriculum design, ineffective teaching, ineffective use of data and time, and lack of community engagement, implementation procedures could be further detailed.

The applicant has implemented structural innovations in literacy that has profoundly impacted the culture of this urban district and addresses the factors contributing to poor student achievement. This new reform proposal is a partnership with The Literacy Collaborative and an accelerated Math initiative. This partnership and its subsequent implementation, demonstrated they could change an ingrained culture and empower educators to tackle challenges and to examine other areas that could be improved. The district formerly had revolving doors of sporadic initiatives, with little continuity, but was now being replaced with a sustained district-wide innovation of reflective practices that led their teachers to believe that the schools could change.

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

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This new proposal initiative will address all students needs and personalize their learning environment and increase equity by increasing the effective teaching and student learning through a robust professional development model, increased access to technology at school and at home for their diverse urban and economically disadvantaged population, this use of technology, with all the accommodations available, is expected to be supportive to the English Language Learners (ELL) and special education population.

Through the use of summative assessments, the applicant collected some baseline data goals, which seems ambitious yet attainable, that indicates grades five through eight presented the greatest gaps in mathematics achievement and the gaps between the district and state performance passing levels were 30-40% in these grades. The plan describes details of rewriting of the curriculum to align with state standards and organize the material into four manageable content clusters; developing a pre and post benchmark system to determine whether there was fidelity to the curriculum and student progress in each content cluster, and how the limited resources were deployed to help the schools, grades, teachers, and students in greatest need. The proposal shows evidence that mathematics achievement in grades five through eight grew steadily for a period of six years.

The plan lacks details for increased ensured graduation rates and for increased college enrollment. There could be indications included that shows how the proposal's strengthening support for instruction at these critical early grades will be focusing on graduation and preparations for postsecondary education. Additional discussion relating to their teacher professional developing training for personalized instruction for all learners, to needed skills that guarantees graduation, college and career readiness, could further strengthen this section.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant explains in the proposal, educational reforms through new approaches to math and building on a strong foundation of lessons learned for development of new approaches to learning math skills. The plan states that significant growth trends in the LEA math achievements over the past six year period from 2005 to 2011, has contributed to recent reforms which relates to the overarching goal of preparing every student for college and careers.</p> <p>The plan includes raw student data evidence that demonstrates learning outcomes, closing achievement gap percentages, improve academic performances and growth pattern changes. The provided data shows that during the 5 year time period, the average percentage of fifth through eighth grade students passing the NJASK raised from a district -wide average of 38.8% to 61.1% for a difference of 22.3 percentage points or a 57% increase over the initial achievement levels. These numbers indicates consistent growth patterns of the effectiveness of the mathematics curriculum, the work of the District mathematics supervisor, teachers, administrators, and a small group of dedicated District math coaches.</p> <p>The applicant notes that traditionally urban school districts have a record of low achievement performance; however, ACS D is breaking that mold and is making strides academically with a highly diverse student population. Even with the district facing significant language, economic, and social hurdles, there is proof, though limited, provided of improved student learning outcomes, a strong record of implementing innovative ideas to strengthen mathematics achievement in their schools, and several schools have become models for change among urban schools in the state.</p> <p>The applicant mentions no evidence recorded relative to improved student learning outcomes other than in math. Additional information could show that the new funding will enable this notable successful program to grow and fully exploit gains instudent achievement and teacher effectiveness, across the academic spectrums. The plan mentions an accurate and reliable data system for tracking progress; producing timely feedback of data; assisting data-driven decision making in the classroom by school leaders, and district personnel, but the proposal does not solidify if or how student data is used and made available in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services, including parents.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information that is made available to the public relative to processes, practices, and investments. The proposal states that this information is accessible to the community though the district website which includes: environment; demographic; student performance; staff information; and district financial data. It is not clearly presented if the financial data made available includes actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level and support staff. The narrative provided a list of data made accessible to the community, but salaries were not an item on the list. The applicant states that the LEA is an advocate of keeping the community informed and attempts to provide a high-level of transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal is stated to be an indication that ACS D is committed to adopting a blended learning environment and to transform it into a student personalized learning one. However, sharing ideas, innovations, successes, and creating communities committed to change, does indicate actual advancement of education reform without state level support. The plan lacks inclusion of demonstrated successful conditions and autonomy under state legal, statutory and regulatory requirement to implement the personalized learning environments, for example, educational initiatives designed to create "highly qualified" teachers, or initiatives to improve teacher quality through formal evaluation models. It is not clearly evident that the district has support for implementing innovative changes from the state level, which is often required.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that ACSD has a history of engaging the support of meaningful stakeholders in previous endeavors and have embedded a culture of engagement in the District from students, families, teachers and principals who have come to expect participation in proposals. The proposal states that through district and school leadership teams, parent resource centers and community outreach programs, and attendance at School Board Meetings, key stakeholders are members of the decision making process. The plan further explains the involvement of A Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which exists in each school building and exercises its voice at the district level at meetings and addresses school needs as well as educate parents in areas of literacy, math, and technology. However, the plan does not clearly state how parents are engaged in the actual development of the proposal or if their involvement created revisions based on their input.

The applicant states that individual building principals and vice-principals have been a key element of the success of the Literacy Collaborative initiative and their work and support will continue with this proposal in the area of mathematics. They have participated in Leadership Team Training, teacher training, and administrator training, and shared input into the revision of evaluation tools as well as supporting the Mathematics Collaborative proposal.

The proposal contains Letters of support from key stakeholders and is an indication of their dedication to this proposal and their interest in raising student achievement for all students. The plan states that the president of the teacher's union shares the support of the proposal from the membership, which contains approximately one thousand members, and her signature on the application indicates her support of the grant. The applicants states that there is teacher representation on the grant committee, which was both essential and valuable and reflective of the depth of knowledge in the district, lacks description of their involvement and contributions to the proposal structure.

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

The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for analyzing their status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal. The plan includes validation of extensive analyses of needs, based on reviews of student achievement data, data from surveys, and reports generated from Needs Assessments of schools designated as Focus schools (low performing). The high-quality plan uses documentation derived from climate inventory reports; self-assessments of each school; the required school improvement plan, including goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties for ensuring expected outcomes; and surveys supplying specific results (i.e., educational variables, behavioral characteristics of students, staff perceptions about school climate). The details supplied in the Needs Assessment, Longitudinal achievement results, and Schoolwide Improvement Plans strengthens this section and shows evidence for the analysis of needs and intentions to initiate improvements in the targeted schools.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment with the development of a sustainable and systematic structure threaded with digital tools and resources to reach grades and groups that have persisted in modest mathematics achievement and those needing support in their individual trajectory towards college or career. The applicants will support, through the project, the approximately ninety-five percent of the elementary student population, and the high school students, who are from low-income families, thus limiting their access to advanced digital tools and resources, and this jeopardizes the students opportunities to become critical thinkers and to develop skills that will lead them to become career and college ready. The proposal plan consist of a three-fold focus for these improvements which includes: increasing equity through personalized student support, accelerating student achievement, and deepening student learning.

The plan details the approaches to engage and empower all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. For example:

- a blended learning environment for good first instruction, delivered in whole group, small group or individually by the teacher
- managed independent learning is about 45 minutes out of a 90-minute schedule
- conferences from a strength-based stance about skills, concepts, and ideas the student wants or needs to explore
- supported by formative and summative data
- selecting the resources that best fit their needs and interest
- utilizing online simulations to practice mathematical concepts, or working on a real-world application project

The plan includes providing intensive and extensive professional development to teach teachers to be more fluid in both their thinking and construction of groups. The plan could further explain details for ensuring that students, particularly in the ELL and special education populations, approach their learning with a high level of energy and motivation, especially in a personalized learning environment.

The proposal stresses the importance of participating in the creation of digital portfolios and completion of self-assessment rubrics, formative and summative assessments, where students will demonstrate growth over time, would review their goals and data collected to analyze if progress was made, and will become agents of their own success. Detailing implementation of these strategies to ensure the intended outcomes, could be further explained in the proposal. The plan intends to blend the learning environment with student access to technology, which provides the opportunities to deepen student learning through differentiation of instruction both inside and outside of school; customizes different student learning needs than the traditional classroom teacher; provides an environment for a transition to academic opportunities; and moves the child to a path for career and college readiness.

The applicant demonstrates precise illustrations mastering goals, critical academic contents, developing skills, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, in age-appropriate classroom situations. The applicant will focus on the advance technology capabilities to ensure: availability to students, parents and staff for meeting the needs for students to be career and college ready; working with a digital literacy coordinator to manage and coordinate these digital tools; and implementation of a sustainable and systematic structure to increase equity through personalized student support, accelerated student achievement, and deepening student learning is a vigorous professional development model, for example:

- engaging in virtual experiments at home to deepen their understanding on topics in various classes
- access and understanding text whether it be textbooks, primary resources or trade books
- access to student achievement and growth data which might contain both formative and summative data including but not limited to: attendance, report cards, standardized test results, samples of work, and project rubrics
- available feedback from content-adaptive programs and online learning modules, which will empower students to develop a personalized sequence of instruction, content and skill development in order to achieve his or her individual learning goals.

The plan includes innovative high-quality instructional approaches designed to enable to student to achieve individual learning goals, ensuring the track toward meeting college and career ready standards or career ready graduation requirements.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District has demonstrated through a high-quality plan approaches that can improve mathematical achievement in particular grade levels and schools through a strong professional development model, implementation of collaborative initiated partnerships, and implementation of parallel structural approaches in mathematics. Through these instructional improvements and implemented strategies, targeted students are prepared to pursue rigorous course studies aligned to college and career ready standards and college and career ready graduation requirements. The plan includes examples of the blended approaches to a personalized learning environment strengthening mathematics achievement, which includes:

- the mathematics curriculum Grades PreK-8 should be streamlined and should emphasize a well-defined set of the most critical topics in the early grades
- there are distinct advantages for children in having a strong start
- there are mutually reinforcing benefits of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and automatic recall of facts
- indications are that effort, not just inherent talent, counts in mathematical achievement
- mathematically knowledgeable classroom teachers have a central role in mathematics education and a rigorously evaluated system is necessary for recruiting, evaluating, and retaining such teachers

The plan includes the implemented instructions through The Mathematics Collaborative that is recognized to engage professional development training, promote effective implementation of personalized learning environments, practices

strategies that meet each student's academic needs, and ensures that all students can graduate on time and college and career ready. The plan eludes to the fact that these staffing requirements of the Mathematics Collaborative are necessary for expected outcomes:

- two Math Collaborative District Trainers (MCDT) to coordinate math coaching for the District
- School embedded Math Coach (SMC) for each elementary school (Appendix H)
- District Special Education Math Coach to strengthen math strategies among special populations
- District English Language Learner/Bi-Lingual Math Coach to strengthen math strategies among ELL populations
- Digital Instructional Coach – managing the technological resources for the grant; work with mathematics coaches to support curricular initiatives and individual student needs
- Data Instructional Coach and data consultants for managing the data system and utilizing data effectively

The role of the staff also includes developing teachers instructional practices; helping them focus on appropriate strategies to reach all students; accelerating learning through the use of preventions and interventions designed for diverse young learners; effectively implementing and using the data from formative, summative, and content-adaptive programs, to evaluate the progress toward academic and personalized learning goals.

The plan has described details on how teachers will be trained to: leverage digital resources to support all learning initiatives; foster collaboration and team processes in their pursuit of college and career skills; focus on rigorous content standards and effective assessment, as well as, the connections among student identity, ownership of the learning process, and motivation in the young learner; continue to strengthen their understanding of their role in leading change for the program to continue to succeed through ongoing professional development. Additional examples of the training includes:

- establishing equity and developing a common vision for effective teaching and learning
- completing a self-assessment to develop action plans
- establishing group norms and learning methods for working effectively as a team
- building a common understanding of the goals of professional learning communities
- examining the role of the coaches in developing in-school capacity

As part of this plan, ACSD ensures that the evaluation systems meets the minimum requirements set forth by the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and Administrators. The applicants states that these evaluation systems will monitor the progress toward the three goals of increasing equity through personalized student support; implementing strategies for accelerating student achievement; and supporting efforts to deepen student learning. Including specific evaluation systems would further validate meeting the minimum requirements for teacher and administrator teaching standards. The ACSDs proposal could further explain and validate how the evaluations systems will effectively combine the use of digital tools and resources with powerful teaching and rich mathematics content to engage all students in experiences that allow them to move through high school with the skills necessary to prepare for college and/or a career.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Districts proposed high-quality plan is two-fold and supports the implementation of the Mathematics Collaborative, Literacy Collaborative and Digital Resources to Promote College and Career Readiness Skills through personalizing the students learning environment. The plan indicates that there are commitments to provide support and services to all participating schools and ensures equity for all students across the district. The proposal states that their education system produces cultural changes in the way they teach, and uses reflective approaches to teaching, which has a positive impact on student learning.

The plan reflects involvement of key stakeholders who have been instrumental in lobbying the LEA central office and was instrumental in lobbying for and getting content key supervisory staff to support principals, teachers, and students in the schools to support the implementation of both the Mathematics and Digital Resources initiatives. The plan for the implementation of the Mathematics Collaborative is to replicate the robust professional development model in place to improve the instruction of mathematics and provide training sessions related to literacy instructional best practices for the teachers in the building; coordinate math coaching. The plan will also include two district math coach trainers to coordinate math coaching for the district, a district ELL Math coordinator to strengthen mathematics strategies for English Language Learners and a

district Special Education Math coordinator to strengthen math strategies among special education populations.

ASCD expresses an understanding that improving instruction by teachers and learning for students requires access to and use of digital resources, therefore, the technology initiative will include providing iPads for all students in grades 5-8, establishing a digital instructional coach who will manage the use of all the iPads, provide professional development to administrators, teachers and parents, and provide instruction to students. Additional discussion would further validate: strategy implementation; if professional development includes teaching best practices; use of a structural curriculum; provided instructional lessons for the effective usage of the digital resources in the classroom.

The plan includes the hiring of a district level data coach who will be responsible for providing professional development to support administrators, teachers, and coaches in using data in instructional decision making by using both achievement and non-achievement data. The plan states that coaches would work with students at appropriate ages to understand what their achievement data on various measures reflects about them as a learner and to help them in becoming advocates for their own learning. The plan offers students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in comparable ways to progress and earn credit based on mastery in various forms associated with their grade levels. For example: at the seventh and eighth grade level, pre-Algebra and Algebra will be offered in all schools servicing those grade levels to elevate student understanding that will effect their access to higher level mathematics courses; all students in grades five through eight will be able to access digital resources inherent in the plan for enrichment and advancement based on interest and ability to allow for access to pathways that lead to deeper learning.

The applicant describes in the narrative, with limited details, the work of the school-based leadership team and the many factors of their focus, including: planning and maintaining implementation; monitoring and insuring the quality of implementation; making decisions about instruction, staffing, use of resources and budget, scheduling of training classes, continued professional development; and communicating to the various stakeholders.

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

The implementation of the Mathematics Collaborative and the digital resources to support college and career readiness is expected to ensure equity across the district for the coaches to provide professional development and coaching, improved instructional practices and more effective instruction for all, but also the equitable access to the tools and equipment both for teachers and students needed to be successful. The applicants specifies, but will limited details of methods, that the district digital instructional coach, along with building media specialists and technology coordinators, will support students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders at the individual, classroom, school and district level through various means such as: afterschool programs, in class instruction, school based and parent resource center workshops and activity nights.

It is the intent of ACDS to make maximum use of the state data system, N.J. Standards Measurement and Resources for Teaching system, a comprehensive data warehouse, student level data reporting, and the unique statewide student identification (SID) system. These data systems along with current stand-alone systems (Star-Base (SIS Express Database for attendance, scheduling and other district specific data – to be replaced by PowerSchool in the 2013-14 school year); Data Improvement Generator (DIG) for generating re-rostered and other customized state test data reports and graphs); Survey Database (for housing district surveys reports); District Benchmark Testing Database (for housing district language arts literacy and mathematics formative assessment results); and Electronic Student Portfolios (for housing student work) The applicant is expected to use these consolidated information technology systems to provide teachers, students and parents a clear picture of student learning, growth, and additional learning supports. The plan lacks details on how the proposal will ensure accurate usage of these systems with training instructions to students, parents, and teachers.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal will use two kinds of continuous improvement process (CIP) strategies, which are planned to assess the investments of the program. The states that formative evaluations will be conducted throughout the duration of the program to ensure that it maintains its focus and implements its design in an efficient and effective manner and a summative evaluation

will also be conducted to assess the extent to which the program has achieved its stated objectives. The plans states that the responsibility for conducting the CIP will be in the hands of an independent external evaluator, working with district staff.

Examples of the CIP:

- Formative Evaluation will involve periodic program visitations to observe the processes, collect empirical data, and survey and interview program stakeholders (e.g., staff, students, and others) about programmatic services and activities; assessing documents, artifacts, records, and other archival products that will serve as empirical evidence of the extent to which the program's processes and procedures are timely, efficiency; and effectiveness in helping the program to achieve its performance (outcomes) objectives and fulfill its mission. It is anticipated that the formative evaluation will focus on documentation for: highly certified staffing; professional development; use of data; and use of technology.
- Summative evaluation will involve the review of: all programmatic data associated with each stated program goals and objectives; reports describing the extent to which the goals and objectives were achieved will be provided to the program director; recommended strategies for assessing the continuing residual effects and impact of the program beyond the funding period; and focus on documentation for: increased student achievement and increased student college and career acceptance.

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

ACSD states in the narrative that it is their intent to make it a priority to have family partners involved in continuous quality improvement from the outset and have their input and participation, giving the District strategies for how best to report data so that they are meaningful to families and keeps the language and the process realistic. The project does not currently have a plan for promoting transparency to the community for publicly sharing of information and data, however, the project will investigate and pilot ideas to create a sustainable system for ongoing communication and engagement.

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

The plan includes baselines for the selected performance measures that are ambitious yet achievable. The rationale for selection is aligned with the State of New Jersey's approach and the measures apply to all schools identified in the proposal; are outlined in the plan with objectives, strategies and activities, timelines, deliverable product, and responsible parties; and benchmark data will be reviewed and analyzed quarterly to measure progress towards school goals. The applicant states that their proposed measures, overall and by subgroups, will be monitored with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. The applicant's performance measures are based on the applicant's applicable population but their number of measures do not meet the requirement of the criterion.

The proposal will have built into the plan a series of pre-post formative assessments that meet these quality indicators:

- they are aligned to the new Common Core State Standards CCSS
- they measure what has been taught during the pre-post interval
- the data will be turned around quickly
- something will be done based on the results
- a high degree of student and teacher efficacy will be built

These assessments are expected to produce rigorous, timely, and result in the applicant's implementation success or show areas of concern that needs addressing for improvements.

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

The proposal expects to assess the effectiveness of the ACSD program through comprehensive program evaluation

strategies, based on the programs goals and objectives, including the performance measures. The applicant will use: LoTi Walkthrough Observation tool (a teacher observation and assessment tool) or other classroom observation and quality assessment instruments; surveys, group interviews, and self-reports of staff and parents to assess program effectiveness and satisfaction; student demographic and achievement data from NJ SMART, and district databases; and student college and career status from NJ SMART and district databases.

The applicant states that the responsibility for conducting the program evaluation will be in the hands of an independent external evaluator, working with district staff and using CIPs to serve as a framework for the program evaluations. The plan will focus on the evaluator utilizing data housed in the districts data systems, and providing input into the on-going communication and engagement activities offered in the project. A summary of the evaluation plan for the formative components of the evaluation are shown in a table that includes program objectives, strategies and activities, timelines, deliverable product, and responsible parties.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's budget is detailed and identifies all funds that will support the project including: an overall budget summary for projects to be implemented and the amount of requested funds needed to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue from these resources; provided break-downs are identified by the applicable budget categories and requested funds needed; cost assumption, including whether the cost is one-time investment or ongoing operational cost that will be incurred during and after the grant period; and project level itemized costs that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal and in the budget narratives on the charts, clearly provides a thoughtful rationale for investments for this project.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The district has a plan intended to sustain the program initiatives beyond the grant period which includes: the partnership with Richard Stockton College of NJ through the Mathematics Collaborative reform model with its commitment to digital learning and a personalized learning environment; funding the salaries of project staff through federal, state, and local funds so they will be able to continue delivery of program services; less funds will be needed to pay stipends for teacher training and the costs for Professional development and coach's tuition will be absorbed by District funds; continuing to provide a personalized learning environment through a blended learning model optimizing technology; the digital resources purchased through the grant money can be planned for replacements in its annual technology budget.</p> <p>The applicant states that the work of the District leadership team cannot be understated and is expected to support the sustainability of project by: continually meeting to analyze data to inform progress in instructional programs, student achievement, and school culture; continuing to play a key role in sustainability and ensuring that the District continues to meet its goal of providing a personalized learning environment for every student; lobbying for the adoption of the curricular model in mathematics by the Board of Education so it becomes policy; being a strong advocate and continuing outreach work to keep the community informed and supportive. The applicant expresses confidence that they will have the capacity to sustain this important initiative at the end of the grant period. Additional details and supporting evidence that the plan will receive financial support from the State and local government leaders after the grant period would substantiate a high-quality plan for the applicant.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Applicant did not address the competitive preference priority in its responses to the selection criteria.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Applicant did not address this priority in its response to the selection criteria.

Total	210	148
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1319NJ-3 for Atlantic City Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant's describes how its history of reform has built on each of the 4 core assurance areas and how its reform vision will continue to build on them. These aspects are strengths because they address the 4 core assurance areas and are responsive to Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant's reform vision, and its plans for making it a reality, are built on: (1) integrating the Common Core Mathematics Standards for instruction and assessment; (2) implementing a Mathematics Collaborative professional development model in partnership with a local institution of higher education and a regional educational technology training center (SRI/ETTC); and (3) implementing the Coordinated Occupational Information Network's career readiness program. These aspects are strengths because they address each of the 4 core assurance areas and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes how its reform vision and its plans for improving Mathematics throughout grades K-8 are based on and reflect its 9-year track record and history of achieving LEA-wide results in reforming Literacy throughout grades K-8. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not adequately describe how its vision and approach for reforming Mathematics will support the deepening of student learning among students demonstrating varied levels of mastery and the increase of equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on students' academic interests. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete responses to these selection criteria.

Applicant articulates a clear reform vision for extending its successes in reforming one core subject (Literacy) in grades K-8 to reforming a second core subject (Mathematics) in grades K-8. However, in describing its reform vision, goals, general approach, and key strategies,

applicant insufficiently discusses the creation of personalized learning environments that align resources with improving college- and career-readiness and ensuring personalized learning and that facilitate incorporation of students' interests and input in determining what is taught and how it is taught; in these respects the reform vision is inadequately comprehensive. Overall, these considerations place the applicant at the higher end of the mid-range for the selection criterion.

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

Strengths:

- Applicant plans to serve 4,953 students (including 4,699 high-need students) and 482 educators at 8 sites in grades K-8 in Mathematics. These aspects are strengths because they substantiate the applicant's commitment to accomplishing systemic reform in schools having a preponderance of high-need students in a core academic subject critical for college- and career-readiness. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant describes its rationale for selecting its 8 participating schools as one based on its needs: (1) to extend and translate the impacts of its long-sustained reform efforts in Literacy in grades K-8 into similar impacts in Mathematics in grades K-8; (2) to close its State-district student achievement gaps in Mathematics in grades K-8; and (3) to implement strategies that contribute to improving students' academic achievement in high school Mathematics and to their being on-track for college and career-readiness and for participation in postsecondary degree-granting programs. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant provides a list of all of its 8 participating schools and it presents all required data characterizing them. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to the selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- None noted.

Applicant provides all required data for its 8 participating schools and describes its rationale for selecting them. Overall, these considerations place the applicant at the higher end of the high range for this criterion.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that it intends to scale up the advancements made by its students in grades K-8 in Literacy by undertaking similar and complementary reforms for the same grades in Mathematics in its 8 participating schools. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to the selection criterion.
- Applicant discusses how it expects that its successful strategies for reforming Literacy in its 8 participating schools will be translatable into reforming Mathematics in the same schools. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to the selection criterion.
- Applicant discusses why it plans to conduct its activities for reforming Mathematics at full-scale from the outset at its 8 participating schools. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to the selection criterion.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant inadequately describes its plans to create a pervasively student-centered model of personalized learning for all participating students. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete responses to the selection criterion.
- In its narrative and attachments, applicant does not present several of the 6 defining elements of a high-quality plan (goal, activities, timeline, deliverables, responsible parties, overall credibility) nor does it present, as required, a plan specifically focused on LEA-Wide Reform and Change. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to the selection criterion.

Viewed as a whole, applicant's plan for LEA-Wide Reform and Change is of moderate quality. It does not present an overview of its overall plan framed in terms of the elements required of a high-quality plan. It describes the activities necessary for its plans for LEA-Wide Reform and Change and it identifies its responsible parties; however, neither its narrative nor its attachments present a goal, a timeline, or deliverables specifically for a plan for LEA-Wide Reform and Change. Consequently, the applicant presents some, but not all, of the elements required for a higher quality plan. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant toward the middle of the mid-range for this criterion.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant’s selected annual increments of improvement in its annual goals appear both ambitious and achievable in the areas for which it plans to measure performance. As evidence — they appear achievable in that they forecast 5% per year gains for all students and for its lower-performing subgroups on State summative assessments for Mathematics in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, while they also forecast lesser gains of 1.8% and 2% per year for higher-performing subgroups. Annual goals appear ambitious in that for every grade in the grades 3-8 spectrum, all lower-performing subgroups, as well as the aggregate of all students, are expected to make the annual 5% gains in Mathematics. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant differentiates its desired increments of change in annual goals between those for its lower-performing subgroups and those for its higher-performing subgroups for the State summative assessment of Mathematics in each of grades 3-8. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to 2 of the 4 core assurance areas and to Absolute Priority 1, and they reflect the applicant’s plan to reduce achievement gaps in Mathematics by expecting lower-performing groups to make greater yearly gains than higher-performing groups.
- In its attachments, applicant presents evidence that it generates sufficient data to align its district-level, grade-level, and subgroup-level annual goals with those the State has set for the district overall and for its various student subgroups. This aspect is a strength because it is responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not present a table of subgroup-differentiated baselines and annual goals either for improvements in graduation rates or for improvements in college enrollment rates. These aspects are significant weaknesses because they represent incomplete responses to 2 of the 4 core assurance areas and to selection criteria.

Applicant’s annual goals are ambitious yet achievable — given that its forecasted subgroup-specific and grade-specific annual change increments are 5% per year across the board for all lower-performing subgroups in each of grades 3-8, and given that it forecasts as goals larger annual gains for its lower-performing subgroups than for its higher-performing subgroups. However, applicant does not address improvements in graduation rates or in college enrollment rates. The moderate degree to which the applicant’s overall plan is of high quality was noted at (A)(3). Overall, the foregoing considerations specific to LEA-Wide Goals for Improved Student Outcomes place the applicant toward the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that its Mathematics achievement in grades 5-8 has improved steadily for a period of 6 years, and its attachments present evidence both of sustained gains and of closing of State-district gaps in each of grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Mathematics. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that during a 6-year period, its LEA-wide average percentage of students in grades 5-8 who passed the State summative assessment in Mathematics rose from 38.8% to 61.1%. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that the district’s collaborative professional development model and strategies for improving Literacy has generated 8 years of successful outcomes during its implementation in its 8 participating schools in grades K-8. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that several of its schools have become models for change among urban schools in the State, that the LEA has a strong record of implementing innovative ideas to strengthen Mathematics achievement in its schools, and that the LEA partners with a regional institution of higher education as a provider of professional development to its Mathematics educators in strengthening its Mathematics program and in supporting implementation of such specific strategies as benchmarking and coaching. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes its strategies for turning around its lowest-performing schools based on the expansion and intensification of its implementation of its Mathematics Collaborative model now in the early stages of development. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria, address one of the 4 core assurance areas, and support applicant's plans for

Absolute Priority 1.

- In its attachments, applicant indicates that over the past 6 years the LEA has closed the State-district achievement gap in Mathematics by 19% in grade 5, 22% in grade 6, 11% in grade 7, and 20% in grade 8, and has sustained 6-year achievement gains on the State summative assessment in Mathematics for each of grades 3-8. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not describe how it makes student performance data available to students, educators, and parents or how it uses such data in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not state explicitly whether the schools where most evidence of an extensive track record of success in improving Literacy and Mathematics was accomplished were persistently lowest-achieving schools or low-performing schools. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.

Applicant substantiates its track record of success with pertinent data for Mathematics, but none for Literacy (which forms the precedent for success on which it plans to build), and it describes its precedents for partnerships to support systemic reforms. However, it inadequately demonstrates an overall ability to differentiate services to reflect needs of students performing at varied levels, or to share performance data with parents (among others) and to engage them as partners in its reform efforts. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant toward the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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

Strengths:

- Applicant briefly addresses in its narrative the requirement that the LEA make public, by school, its school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and to one of the 4 core assurance areas.
- In its narrative and attachments, applicant provides some evidence (e.g., references to websites) of exercising a level of transparency in its processes, practices, and investments. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant insufficiently describes in its narrative — and incompletely documents with attachments of evidence — how the LEA makes public: (1) actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on the F-33 survey; (2) actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only; (3) actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and (4) actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level (if available). These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.

Applicant provides minimal evidence to substantiate its commitment to exercising a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments. It provides no attachments either to substantiate its commitment or to provide evidence of a high level of transparency in reporting its expenditures. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant presents 5 general ways in which the State provides it with sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory to implement its plans for personalized learning environments. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and provide evidence of a State context that supports its plans for Absolute Priority 1.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not cite any specific State statutes and policies that provide school districts with the degree of financial flexibility, discretion, or autonomy they need to allocate and commit their financial resources in ways that will support its plans for reform. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to the selection criterion and do not provide evidence of a State context that supports the financial aspects of its plans for Absolute Priority 1.

In its narrative, applicant furnishes some evidence that its State context of legal, statutory, and regulatory frameworks for implementation provides it with sufficient flexibility, discretion, or autonomy to implement its reform strategies and plans to address Absolute Priority 1; however, it provides no evidence concerning the State context as it relates to budgeting. Overall, these considerations place the applicant toward the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that via district-level and school-level leadership teams, school-based parent resource centers, school-level parent advisory council meetings, community outreach programs, and school board meetings, its external stakeholders participate in the district's decision-making processes. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- An attached letter from a principal alludes to participation in planning the proposal and to a positive perception of its contents. This aspect is a strength because it is responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not describe how it has involved students, parents, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools, or its central office administrators, in developing its proposal. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not describe how it has incorporated input from students, parents, families, teachers, and principals in planning its proposal or in reframing or revising its final proposal. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not attach a letter or proposal critique from the State's chief education administrator or a letter from the local mayor or city council. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete evidence of meaningful State-level and City-level stakeholder support for the applicant's proposal.
- In its narrative and attachments — as an LEA with collective bargaining representation — applicant provides insufficient evidence of direct engagement and support for its proposal from teachers in its participating schools. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to the selection criteria.
- Applicant does not indicate — by numbers, ratios, or attached letters or forms — the levels of support it obtained from teachers and principals in each of its 8 participating schools.
- Applicant does not attach or otherwise describe letters of support from its board of education or from its superintendent of schools. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete documentation of high-level administrative stakeholder support for the project.
- None of the 3 attached letters of support commits any future financial resources to the long-term sustainability of the project, and none specifies what roles the organizations providing the letters will have in implementing the project. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete documentation of meaningful stakeholder support for the project.

Applicant presents insufficient evidence that its internal and external stakeholders were directly engaged in developing and/or critiquing the present proposal. Significantly, it also provides insufficient documentation of the existence and level of support of its teachers and of 7 of the 8 principals in its 8 participating schools. Overall, these considerations place the applicant toward the lower end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- In its Appendix E, applicant presents tables and charts of data that depict 4 years of achievement results for all students in grades 3-8 on the State summative assessment for Mathematics, 4 years of longitudinal trends comparing State-District-Demographic Factor Group results on the State summative assessment for in Mathematics in grades 3-8, and 4-years of achievement results for student subgroups in grades 3-8 on the State summative assessment for Mathematics, and other data as well — none of it accompanied by any narrative description or analysis. These aspects — except for the absence of descriptive analysis — are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and assist in determining the nature and extent of needs and gaps.

Weaknesses:

- Neither the applicant's narrative nor its Appendix E presents an analysis of its existing needs and gaps related to academic achievement or the presence and persistence of inter-group achievement gaps in Mathematics or any of the other subjects reported in the Appendix. This is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.

- Applicant does not describe how its schools analyze and review student data — summative assessments, formative classroom assessments, socio-emotional and behavioral data, subgroup-specific data — or how they engage parents and educators in developing plans to improve results for lower-performing schools. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria and impede determining the nature and extent of existing needs and gaps.
- Applicant does not present a plan for an analysis of the logic behind its reform proposal. This is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to the selection criterion.

Applicant’s specific plan for the Analysis of Needs and Gaps is of low to moderate quality. Its narrative and attachments indicate activities, but they do not specify the responsible parties; in addition, they do not state a goal or present a specific timeline or deliverables as they relate specifically to Analysis of Needs and Gaps in their current status. However, at (A)(4) and in Appendix E, applicant has provided comprehensive performance data for its baselines and its annual goals. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the lower end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant discusses its 3 focuses for reforming Mathematics in grades K-8: (1) increasing equity through personalized student support, (2) accelerating student achievement, and (3) deepening student learning. These aspects are strengths because each is responsive to selection criteria and each supports applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant discusses its plans to support personalized learning by giving students opportunities to select resources that best fit their needs and interests, such as content-adaptive learning programs, using online simulations to practice mathematical concepts, and working on real-world application projects; and by differentiating classroom activities — using a station rotation model and a flex model as appropriate to grade level — so that some students work independently while classroom staff assist others individually or in small groups. These aspects are strengths because each is responsive to selection criteria and each supports applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that it plans to provide students access to their performance data, to train them in how to use the data to improve their learning, and to facilitate students’ creation of digital portfolios, completion of self-assessment rubrics, and use of formative and summative assessment data to self-monitor their learning progress. These aspects are strengths because each is responsive to selection criteria and each supports applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant discusses its plans to use technology (e.g., iPads) to provide student access to digital portfolios and other assessment formative and summative data resources; to create and support personalized learning environments that foster self-directed learning and deepen students’ levels of involvement in learning experiences in areas of academic interest; and to improve educational equity by providing such technology to all students in grades 5-8. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and each supports applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant discusses its plans to supplement its iPads with various assistive technology applications (e.g., audio-assisted technology) to meet the needs of English language learners and/or special education students. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and each supports applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant inadequately describes how it will provide students with exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant inadequately describes: (1) its plans for using computer-based adaptive assessments for guiding, structuring, and individualizing instruction, (2) its processes for using project-based learning, integrating iPads, and other strategies for deepening and personalizing student engagement with content, (3) its processes for improving students’ demonstrated mastery of grade-specific content, and (4) its processes for promoting students’ goal setting, problem solving, and creative and critical thinking skills. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete responses to selection criteria.
- Applicant inadequately describes its plans and provisions for ensuring that all participating students have equitable access to high-quality content — including high-quality digital learning content — aligned with college- and career-ready graduation requirements. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent incomplete responses to selection criteria.

Applicant’s specific plan for Learning is of moderate quality. Its narrative and attachments discuss core activities and identify responsible parties — but they do not present a goal, a timeline, or deliverables as they relate specifically to Learning either during or after the 4-year

project period. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant toward the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant describes how its theory of action for professional development of its teachers of Mathematics is based on 10 principles derived from research-based best practices in teaching Mathematics and in instructional coaching and 4 key findings of a National Mathematics Advisory Panel. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes its plans to use graduate-level training available through its higher education partners, a leadership institute for administrators, and school-based instructional coaches and specialists to differentiate, align, and deliver professional development that supports its Mathematics Collaborative model and reflects its teachers' identified needs and its strategies for Learning. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes its core strategies for implementing school-level collaborative learning communities among Mathematics teachers to support personalized learning environments and college- and career-readiness for students. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- In its narrative and attachments, applicant describes its plans to staff its project with 2 district-level Collaborative Trainers, 8 school-based Mathematics coaches, a district-level Mathematics coach for special education students, a district-level Mathematics coach for English language learners, a Digital Instructional Coach, and a Data Instructional Coach. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that it plans to enable its educators to effectively implement and use the data from formative, summative, and content-adaptive programs to evaluate students' progress toward academic and personalized learning goals. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that a focus of its professional development for teachers will be integrating Mathematics instruction and leveraging digital resources within the classroom to meet the needs of all students and to accelerate each student's learning. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes 5 focus areas for its professional development activities for principals designed to enable them to support personalized learning goals related to Mathematics for all students. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not discuss how its present and planned instruments for measuring its educators' effectiveness will furnish actionable information that helps them to identify and implement optimal learning approaches geared to individual student academic needs and interests. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant inadequately describes its processes and tools to match student needs with specific instructional resources and approaches. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant inadequately describes how it plans to deploy and use high-quality learning resources and does not explain by what criteria it will determine that they are 'high-quality'. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not delineate its approach to evaluating effectiveness of the superintendent and does not discuss how it will develop and implement such an evaluation. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant inadequately discusses its plans for increasing the number of students who have effective and highly effective teachers and principals in its hard-to-staff schools or hard-to-staff subjects or hard-to-staff specialty areas. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.

Applicant's specific plan for Teaching and Leading is of moderate quality. Its narrative discusses activities and identifies responsible parties (both as project staff and as external partners) — but it does not present a goal, a timeline, or deliverables as they relate specifically to Teaching and Leading either for during or after the 4-year project period. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the high end of the mid-range for this criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that a focus for grades 5-8 will be using new technologies (e.g., iPads) and other resources to address the needs of the schools' special student populations, such as those with disabilities and those who are English language learners. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support its plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that as a result of its earlier implementation of its Literacy Collaborative model, it has in place district-level and school-level policies for professional development and coaching that are supportive of its plans to implement a Mathematics Collaborative model. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support its plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant indicates that as a result of its earlier implementation of its Literacy Collaborative model, it has in place at its central office a district-level leadership team able to analyze many types of data to support effective implementation of its reform strategies for Mathematics in grades K-8. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support its plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes the roles of its school-level leadership teams and how its central office gives them flexibility and autonomy over school personnel decisions and staffing models, scheduling of professional development, scheduling for uninterrupted blocks of time for teaching, and setting deadlines for collecting and submitting data. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support its plans for Absolute Priority 1.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not identify specific policies and rules in its Board Policy Manual that facilitate personalized learning in the areas of flexibility and support, frameworks for curricula and instruction, stakeholder engagement and involvement, and resource structures (including funding allocations). These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not describe the extent to which its central office gives its school-level leadership teams flexibility and autonomy over the school-level budget. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant inadequately describes how the LEA central office presently supports the participating schools — in coordinating and facilitating the functions of instruction, curricula, and professional development — so that students can progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery and can demonstrate the mastery of State standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.

Considered as a whole, applicant's plan for LEA Policies, Practices, and Rules is of moderate quality. Although applicant identifies a number of supportive practices and policies, it does not describe an approach — related specifically to LEA Policies, Practices, and Rules — in a way that adequately addresses each of the defining elements of a high-quality plan. The narrative presents both ongoing and anticipated activities and it identifies responsible parties (e.g., by position title). However, applicant does not state a goal, present a timeline, or identify deliverables required for a plan specific to LEA Policies, Practices, and Rules to be of high quality. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant toward the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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

10

5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that in the 2013-14 school year it will begin using PowerSchool as its platform for enabling parents to access and track their student's homework assignments, grades, behavior, and evaluations. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.
- Applicant describes its personnel resources – such as a district digital instructional coach, school library media specialists, and school technology coordinators – for delivering technical support to students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders in both school and community settings. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not describe the specific steps it plans to take for ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other relevant stakeholders will have access to necessary content, tools, and other relevant resources both during school hours and non-school hours, or how these will be available to participants regardless of income. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.

- Applicant does not adequately describe the extent of its ensuring adoption of open data formats, or how and when it will accomplish the exportability of data in such formats, or the extent of ensuring the usability of data in other technology-based learning systems. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not adequately discuss the extent of interoperability of the State's or its local data systems in terms of their inclusion of human resources data or budget data. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to the selection criteria.

Considered as a whole, applicant's plan for LEA and School Infrastructure is of moderate quality. Applicant discusses activities and resources that provide organizational and technical support to its schools, students, and families, and it identifies the parties responsible for it. However it does not state a goal specific to a plan for LEA and School Infrastructure, does not present a timeline, does not discuss its related deliverables as such (e.g., when it will deploy new technologies), and does not adequately describe technical support for the data systems or other technology-based resources it plans to use in its project. Overall, these considerations place the applicant at the middle of the mid-range for this criterion.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant describes a plan for formative evaluation that will solicit input monthly from participating educators to track the progress of implementation, to identify areas in need of corrective action, and to recommend steps for corrective action. These aspects are strengths because they represent an intention to solicit at least monthly feedback from identified stakeholders and to make midcourse adjustments to support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1. • Applicant indicates that it will retain an external evaluator to assist with its activities in support of continuous improvement. This aspect is a strength because it is responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1. • Applicant indicates that the results of the external evaluator's formative evaluations in support of continuous improvement will be communicated to internal stakeholders via monthly meetings and to external stakeholders via program newsletters and press releases. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1. • Applicant describes how it will use survey-generated data, observations, interviews, and other sources of data about the project's performance in its 6 focus areas to provide frequent and formative feedback during implementation in ways that support tracking and monitoring progress, identifying and removing obstacles to successful implementation, making midcourse corrections and adjustments, and re-allocating resources based on review and analysis of performance feedback. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1. • Applicant presents a plan to track, review, analyze, and report performance data in determining the need for midcourse corrections and in deciding what corrections or other adjustments it will make. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria and support applicant's plans for Absolute Priority 1. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant does not describe any mechanisms for ensuring rigor in its continuous improvement processes or in selecting and adopting subsequent corrections and adjustments during its project. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria. • Applicant does not identify what mechanisms it will use to ensure rigor in its continuous improvement processes after completing implementation of its 4-year project. This aspect is a weakness because it impedes determining the degree of rigor of the applicant's continuous improvement process and ascertaining its potential usefulness in making post-grant corrections and improvements. <p>Applicant presents a plan for formative evaluation (or continuous improvement) that also includes provisions for summative evaluation. It presents mechanisms for engaging both internal and external stakeholders as participants in its evaluation plan. It does not describe mechanisms for ensuring the rigor of its monitoring and the appropriateness of its midcourse corrections either for during or after the 4-year project period. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that it plans to engage parents and families as partners and stakeholders in reforming Mathematics in their schools by facilitating their access to school-level, classroom-level, and student-level performance indicators and related data, and by keeping them informed of their schools' progress in implementing reform. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to that part of the selection criterion that concerns engagement of external stakeholders and communication with them.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not describe any mechanisms to be used for reaching hard-to-reach parents, hard-to-reach families, and hard-to-reach linguistic/cultural communities. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to the selection criterion.

Applicant identifies several specific strategies for communicating with and engaging its internal and external stakeholders in ways conducive to addressing the 4 core assurance areas and Absolute Priority 1. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that research has determined that higher performance levels on State summative assessments in grade 8 correlate with higher performance levels in high school, as measured by on-track indicators, such as State-mandated assessments. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant presents its rationale for selecting course completion in Algebra I as one of its applicant-proposed performance measures; it is the only measure for which it presents a rationale. The rationale for Algebra I course completion is a strength because it is responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant presents baselines and annual targets for the numbers and ratios of participating students with effective or highly effective teachers and principals. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant's performance measures for the State summative assessment in Mathematics in grade 3 and for attendance in grades PreK-3 appear to be ambitious yet achievable — as evidence, the subgroup-specific annual targets for the assessment are 3% or more per year for all subgroups, and the subgroup-specific targets for attendance are from 0.1% to 0.3% per year. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant's performance measures for its on-track indicator for college/career-readiness in grades 4-8 3 appear to be achievable — as evidence, the subgroup-specific annual targets for all subgroups are from 1% to 2% per year. These aspects are strengths because are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant's performance measure for the State summative assessment in Mathematics in grades 4-8 appears to be ambitious yet achievable — as evidence, the subgroup-specific annual targets for the assessment are 3.3% to 4.7% per year, differentiated by year and subgroup. These aspects are strengths because are responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not describe how its applicant-proposed performance measures will yield rigorous, timely, and formative leading information that will allow it to adjust and redirect its interventions as needed to advance its plan and theory of action. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant's performance measures for its on-track indicator for college/career-readiness in grades 4-8 appear not to be ambitious — as evidence, the subgroup-specific annual targets for the first year post-grant are only 15% for all subgroups. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not discuss how it will review and improve its performance measures over time if any of them proves to be insufficient to gauge the progress of implementation. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to selection criteria.

Applicant presents sufficient information to determine the extent to which the annual performance targets of its performance measures are ambitious yet achievable; generally, they appear to be both. However, significantly, applicant proposes only 7 performance measures without providing rationales for all of its applicant-proposed performance measures. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the lower end of the mid-range for this criterion.

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

Strengths:

- Objectives presented in the applicant's evaluation plan address the effectiveness of investments in its use of technology and professional development. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant identifies an external evaluator as the party to be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of investments. This aspect is a strength because it is responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Objectives presented in the applicant's evaluation plan do not address the effectiveness of investments in its working with community partners or in its decision-making structures. These aspects are weaknesses because they represent an incomplete response to selection criteria.
- Applicant does not present a plan specifically for Evaluating Effectiveness that includes all of the elements required for a high-quality plan.

Applicant's plan for Evaluating Effectiveness of Investments is of moderate quality. The plan specifies activities (2 of 6 objectives relate to effectiveness of investments), identifies responsible parties (external evaluator), and mentions deliverables (e.g., its insufficiently characterized 'reports') — however, applicant's timeline is indefinite (it only indicates 'ongoing'); it omits some significant deliverables (e.g., annual project performance reports), and does not state a goal specifically for its plan for Evaluating Effectiveness of Investments. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant at the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant's budget appears sufficient to support its proposal. Among reasons for this determination are: requested total funding for its 13 project-level budgets is \$9,974,794.35. Of the \$9,974,794.35 total grant requested, \$5,242,760 (or 52.56%) is designated for sub-contracts and \$300,000 (or 3.0%) is for grant administration.
- Applicant provides extensively detailed rationales for investing in each of its 13 project-level budgets. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to the selection criterion and facilitate determining whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allowable.
- In its Project Level Itemized Costs tables, applicant consistently differentiates between its one-time investments and its ongoing operational costs. This aspect is a strength because it is responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant's salary and wage schedules and fringe benefit rates reflect local policy. These aspects are strengths because they contribute to determining the reasonableness and sufficiency of the proposed budget.
- Applicant states its specific fringe benefits rates for personnel, and it presents very high levels of detail throughout its project-level budgets. These aspects are strengths because they contribute to determining the reasonableness and sufficiency of the proposed budget.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant provides no attachments of letters or proposed budgets from sub-contractors to document or detail the cost assumptions of its proposed sub-contracts, which represent 52.56% of its total budget request. This aspect is a significant weakness because it greatly impedes determining the reasonableness and sufficiency of the proposed budget.

Overall, these considerations place the applicant at the lower end of the high range for this criterion.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

- Applicant indicates that through a combination of federal, state, and local funds it has funded Literacy coaches formerly funded

under a State-administered and federally funded Reading First grant; and it indicates that it expects similarly to absorb the costs of its Mathematics coaches and Digital Learning Coordinator after its proposed project ends. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.

- Applicant indicates that its salary projections from its human resources office forecast that, after attrition and retirement, general revenue funds will be available to support the positions it anticipates retaining; it also indicates that Title I funds and its annual technology budget may sustain its project-related post-grant technology and professional development activities, and it indicates it has a history of leveraging all of its ESEA and IDEA funds in sustaining its programs. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.
- Applicant indicates that it expects to seek Board adoption of its model for reforming Mathematics as local Board policy. These aspects are strengths because they are responsive to selection criteria.

Weaknesses:

- Applicant does not indicate any funds from other sources used to support the 4-year project in any of its 13 project-level budgets. These aspects are weaknesses because they impede determining the reasonableness and sufficiency of resources for, and district commitment to, sustaining the project in the post-grant period.
- Applicant’s 13 project-level budgets propose 10 new positions (not counting many sub-contracted positions). This aspect is a weakness because applicant does not provide any evidence — in letters or other attachments — of its access to sufficient resources to sustain these positions after its 4-year project ends.
- Although applicant indicates that its general revenue budget, state, and federal funds will sustain its proposed programs and infrastructure after the 4-year project ends, it does not provide any evidence — in letters or other attachments — of its commitment of resources for sustaining its project post-grant. These aspects are weaknesses because they impede determining the reasonableness and sufficiency of resources for, and district commitment to, sustaining the project in the post-grant period.
- Applicant does not describe the roles of State and local government leaders in providing financial support or other resources during the post-grant period; none of its 3 attached letters of support commits to any future financial support. This aspect is a weakness because it represents an incomplete response to the selection criterion.
- Applicant does not identify which specific practices, policies, or processes it expects to continue after the 4-year project period or how it plans to select which ones to sustain financially post-grant. These aspects are weaknesses because they impede determining the reasonableness and sufficiency of resources for, and district commitment to, sustaining the project in the post-grant period.

Considered as a whole, applicant’s plan for Sustainability is of moderate quality. Applicant’s discussion of Sustainability describes activities and identifies responsible parties, but does not state a goal, timeline, or deliverables specific to Sustainability — and thus presents some, but not all, of the required elements of a high-quality plan. In addition, applicant provides no evidence of any explicit commitments to post-grant funding from any public or private source. Overall, the foregoing considerations place the applicant toward the higher end of the mid-range for this criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: Applicant does not address the Competitive Priority.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Strengths:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant’s overall plan is comprehensive in terms of its scope – as evidenced by its proposing 13 project-level budgets, as well as by its targeting Mathematics in each of grades K-8 in 8 schools in the LEA. 		

Applicant's overall plan is also comprehensive – as evidenced by its proposing strategies that address all of the 4 core assurance areas (standards and assessments, data systems, effective teachers and principals, turning around lowest-achieving schools).

- Considered as a whole, applicant's plan is for Absolute Priority 1 is coherent and responsive to its selection criteria – as evidenced by its focusing its goals and strategies as well as its requested funding on — creating personalized learning environments; personalizing strategies for both teaching and learning; significantly improving learning outcomes overall and for identified subgroups; aligning instruction, curricula, assessment, and professional development with college- and career-ready standards; promoting accelerated learning and achievement for all students; providing extensive supports and interventions for high-need students who are not demonstrating mastery of content and skills; increasing the effectiveness of educators through extensive and intensive professional development as well as data-driven assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of its school-, classroom-, and student-level impacts; and improving students' college- and career-readiness.

Weaknesses:

- The coherence of the applicant's plan is incomplete in at least 4 significant respects: (1) it does not address increasing graduation rates or college enrollment rates; (2) it does not provide adequate evidence to document that teachers from each participating school support its proposal; (3) it does not present a rationale for proposing only 7 performance measures; and (4) in describing its plans and strategies, it does not adequately describe its State's enabling legal, statutory, and regulatory context as a Race to the Top state.
- Beyond these limitations, the applicant's component-specific plans generally are of moderate quality.

Overall, in light of the foregoing considerations, the applicant has met Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	128
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