



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0445VA-1 for Augusta County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Augusta County Public Schools (ACPS) has articulated a comprehensive and coherent reform vision, focusing on comprehensive early childhood programming, and the desire to dramatically reduce the number of students entering kindergarten with no prior preschool experience. They propose to collaborate with community partners to "build additional comprehensive early childhood programs and remove barriers that prevent our targeted population from attending preschool and entering kindergarten with readiness skills."</p> <p>Their plan satisfactorily describes how it encompasses the first three core educational assurance areas: 1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy (by giving them a strong start to being kindergarten ready); 2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction, through the use of various early childhood assessments; and 3) recruiting, developing and retaining effective teachers and principals, through ongoing professional development. All of this would concentrate in the preschool years, with the applicant seeming to specifically target 4-year olds for the new proposed work.</p> <p>Regarding the fourth area - turning around lowest achieving schools – there are a number of ways in which the proposed project may not fully or directly target this area. First, the applicant discusses "building additional early childhood programs", for which it's not clear the extent to which that's working with community partners on currently existing schools versus creating new ones. Second, the applicant, in a later section, defines lowest achieving schools as "the community preschool programs that do not have evidence-based curricula which generate data to document all students", thereby suggesting that lowest achieving schools are being defined through the presence or absence of certain pedagogical practices, rather than any data or information based on performance of the children attending or emerging from these programs. Third, lowest achieving schools are defined by the applicant as the lowest achieving classrooms (classrooms with the lowest VSQ1 (Virginia Star Quality rating), which may or may not adequately address the RTT-D federal grant's requirement of turning around of schools.</p> <p>The vision does not discuss how their approach will be personalized specifically based on students' (academic) interests.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section describes the impressive, high quality program currently in place through the ACPS (Augusta County Public Schools) comprehensive preschools based in schools. Its proposed approach of working closely with bolstering and strengthening community preschools and staff as a way to reach greater numbers of at-risk young children is a solid and commendable strategy.</p> <p>The applicant describes the current situation as offering seventeen comprehensive preschool classrooms distributed among the 12 elementary schools, with at least one classroom in each elementary school that serve the population. The inclusive at-risk program currently serves 250 children and their families with the highest needs (elsewhere in the proposal they mentioned providing services for 211 at-risk four year olds per year.)</p> <p>The numbers listed in the table indicate that there are 3,340 participating students out of a total of 10,713 students and 188 teachers, and cite that 32% of the students participate in the school. It is not clear how the above mentioned 250 children relate to the 3,340 students, and what populations the applicant is using to derive those higher figures, which enable them to meet the 2,000 students minimum threshold to be eligible to apply for a RTT-D grant. (Numbers in the table are to show annual figures, not cumulative ones.) It does not describe the process by which the applicant used, or will use to select other schools to participate. The applicant does not provide a list of participating schools, although several letters of support from</p>		

local preschools are included in the appendix.

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

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6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a good, detailed logic model that provides a visual overview and desired outcomes of their planned implementation. It specifies a diverse set of 17 different program components and initiatives that are designed to accelerate student achievement, decrease achievement gaps, and expand access to most effective educators and increase effectiveness of educators. It is also commendable that the project appears to have adopted a stance in which it has a fairly inclusive approach to involving many community preschool programs in the district.

In an earlier section the applicant indicates that kindergarten enrollment data suggests there is an average additional 175 children in the community who enter kindergarten with no preschool experience. It remains unclear what exact number of additional children the applicant wishes to reach with the current grant. Also, without providing a list of participating schools, they are not able to make a clear case of how they will scale up and translate into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools.

The proposal would have been stronger if it had included background demographic information that explicitly presented the estimated numbers of children in the community who are three or four year olds, in order to specify the preschool population that the applicant could potentially reach, and reported the numbers of preschool children currently enrolled in the community preschool programs, to indicate the current baseline capacity of these other schools. Also, since part of their planned intervention involves spending a fair amount of money purchasing additional slots (\$176,000) in community preschools, it is a significant omission that they did not indicate their plan for how many slots would be purchased each year of the 4-year project, their annual targets for new enrollments and placements, and the resulting number of preschool children total that the project would be served each year of the project.

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

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8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set forth an interesting set of programmatic initiatives and actions for enhancing students' learning. The applicant has declared 3 distal outcomes for the program: increasing graduation rates; establishing a sustainability of quality, and improving school achievement. The notion is that children entering kindergarten ready to learn will then be more likely to do well in school, and then more likely to graduate from high school or trade school. It does seem somewhat unorthodox that "sustainability of quality" was listed as an outcome, when in fact it is not a desired student outcome but pertains to the quality of the educational system and intervention.

Their provision of summative assessment in their table focuses only on improving student achievement, and features 12 discrete Pre-K learning measures, a more immediate program impact on the young students actually participating in the program during the 4-year grant period, which are drawn from PALS and Numeracy Universal Screening (and its various sub-tests), as well as includes average assessment scores gathered from K-3 students. Their table on decreasing achievement gaps focuses on the above set of 12 Pre-K learning measures, but does not provide target score numbers for either the Pre-K nor community preschools, for the four years of the project. Some promising evidence for the educational value of the comprehensive preschool program is offered, however, in their provision of some annual data on PALS scores gathered the past four years, for the district, pre-K, and no-preK populations.

The applicant appropriately identifies that providing tables that specify annual goals for graduation rates and college enrollment are not applicable to their grant goals during the 4-year period. They do provide some important background statistics on the current graduation rate in ACPS (92%), that 64 students dropped out during the 2010-11 years, and some ACPS truancy rates for K-3 (5.5%) and current SOL pass rates for at-risk 3rd graders (76%).

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	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides some evidence from the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement, and

increasing equity in learning, through data on the average growth recorded by students over four years on the PreK PALS (language) scores. Strong evidence was provided with the diminished differences in scores between English Language Learners and native language peers over the course of the year (decrease in gap in the spring scores.) A similar decrease in scores between ESL and district averages were also found in the math scores.

The applicant's current approach to comprehensive preschool practice does address to some degree a demonstration of achieving ambitious and significant reforms with typically lower achieving students, and making performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services. The proposed plan hopes to replicate that model in community preschools, through the encouragement of more universal screening and data-generating evidence-based curricula. They do not have an established track record of success the past four years in achieving significant reform in persistently lowest achieving schools.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant provides good evidence of a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments, including public disclosure of personnel salaries at the school for all school level instructional and support staff; for instructional staff only; for teachers only; and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. This information is reported to the Augusta County School Board, who makes the information part of the minutes of their meetings, which is then subsequently disseminated through the local newspaper and on the ACPS website.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant provides good evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments. The personalized learning approach of the proposed work focuses on Response to Intervention (RTI) practices, which is "the practice of using data to guide high-quality instruction and behavioral interventions matched to student need." Both the Virginia Standards of Learning and Standards of Quality support the initiative of personalized learning environments. Augusta County has been granted experience in utilizing RTI, as one of the first pilot school divisions beginning in 2007.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant provides good evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement during the proposal process. The applicant describes a proposal writing process that was highly collaborative involving a wide range of professionals and community members involved in early childhood education. A series of meetings were held, of which the first solicited ideas and suggestions from invitees, and where the group evaluated each idea based on sustainability, ambition/impact and need. Input was also solicited at a variety of subsequent meetings, involving elementary principals, instructional staff, and other staff involved in early childhood programs. An interest survey was also issued to 36 potential community partners. Letters of support were provided by 35 different individuals and groups (including parents), demonstrating a strong level of engagement and support in the community.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 The applicant presents a solid, high quality plan for analyzing the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments. They describe the ongoing use of a variety of assessments, including the VSQI which assesses three quality components (staff qualifications/professional development, learning environments and adult/child interactions) and the RTIM Direct, a targeted student growth data system. They have provided a high quality plan that featured a timeline, activities, deliverables, and the parties responsible for conducting the work.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant provides a good approach to students' learning during these critical preschool years. The applicant plans to feature various high quality curricula and assessments on an on-going basis, coupled with the utilization of a RTI (Response to Intervention) approach with "personalized, targeted interventions". It would have been helpful if the applicant could have offered more description of what the preschool experience would actually look and feel like to a young child, and the range of experiences a child might experience on a regular basis as part of a large group, a small group, or as an individual. This would have helped better convey how well students understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals, or enable deep learning experiences in areas of interest. Teachers will be trained on the Pyramid Model for supporting positive social and emotional skills, and various kinds of multi-cultural materials would be purchased for community preschools, so that children might have access to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

One of the important and commendable features of the proposed project is the valuable role and general services of the Family service workers and their work with families. The proposal would have been strengthened with greater specification of what is entailed by "developing skills within families to work in the home on personalized instruction strategies that have been provided by the teacher." It is commendable that the program plans to provide a continuation of services for at-risk families from kindergarten through third grade. It does seem somewhat surprising that the FSW is the main person who provides continuity with the child's K-3 years, and that the project does not appear to strongly encourage the preschool teachers to work or communicate directly with the K-3 teachers in the schools as an additional critical action to bolster students' school success during the primary grade years.

The applicant provides a satisfactory general system of ongoing and regular assessment and feedback. More detail as to what they mean by family goals when "determining family goals during home and/or conferences" would have strengthened the proposal. There is a good description of the ways in which special needs children will be assessed and accommodated in classroom practices.

There is an inclusion of elements needed for a high quality plan, including presentation of key goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. This appendix, however, is a repeat of the plan featured in Section B, Analysis of Needs and Interests. Nonetheless, the table features numerous elements related to the Learning component of the implementation.

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

The applicant proposes a good plan for professional development, direct instruction, and mentoring for preschool educators and directors (i.e., principals). Topics that would be addressed include such areas as differentiation within evidence-based curricula. When referencing the need to "improve upon a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments", it would have been helpful if they had provided a few specific details as to what these instructional approaches and environments entail. There is relatively little discussion of the kind of training the directors (the "principals" of these preschool centers) would need and/or receive, and the ways in which they would utilize the individual assessments of specific teachers on staff, or of the center, more generally.

The applicant provides a reasonable description of the ways in which they intend participating educators to have access to, and know how to use, tools, data and resources to accelerate student progress and learning. They do not, however, provide specific figures on the numbers of educators they plan to provide professional development for, nor indicate how many teachers in the current system may already possess such knowledge and skills. The proposal would also have been stronger if they had provided a clear rationale as to why they need to create and maintain their own online CDA program (as opposed to exploring whether educators might utilize services directly from national organizations, or through local higher education institutions), and why they need to create a new demonstration classroom requiring the purchase a new modular building structure (as opposed to exploring whether they could designate one of the existing classes as a demonstration one, or establish a new demo classroom within one of the existing elementary schools).

To increase the number of young children benefitting from early childhood programs prior to kindergarten, the applicant proposes to use some of the funding (to purchase slots in their community preschool programs. There is insufficient information as to why the public school district has not considered adding some additional preschool classrooms or sessions (it is not clear whether existing programming is a full day or half day session) at any of the existing 12 elementary schools, what the names of the targeted community preschools are and the extent to which they include faith-based centers, or the exact number of slots they are planning to purchase each year and over the four-year project.

There is an inclusion of a table featuring various elements needed for a high quality plan, including presentation of key goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. While this appendix is a repeat of the plan featured in earlier

sections, it does feature a number of elements related to the Teaching portion of the implementation.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) The applicant describes a strong existing structure of the LEA to provide support and services to all participating schools. There are five vertical teams with good cross-representation of schools, administrators and specialists such as curriculum supervisors, psychologist, social worker and special education facilitator. Teams meet regularly throughout the school year, and they have been looking at trends which may impact graduation and school success.</p> <p>b) School leadership teams appear to have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules, school personnel decisions and staffing, and school level budgets.</p> <p>c) The district does not allow students the opportunity to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, rather than time spent on a topic. The state has strict guidelines regarding credit classes that are defined by the directed number of hours a student must be in class to receive graduation credit. The main exceptions are on-line classes, and the option to graduate early.</p> <p>d) The applicant does not provide specific descriptions or examples of the ways in which it allows students to demonstrate mastery in multiple comparable ways. Instead, they refer more generally to Universal Design for Learning and RTI.</p> <p>e) The applicant provides sufficient learning resources and instructional practices for all students, given their RTI approach at their elementary and Middle Schools. RTI is being piloted in one of their high schools, but not in place at the four other high schools.</p> <p>The applicant provides a single table of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties, as required elements needed for a high quality plan. This table is again a repeat of that which is presented in earlier sections, and addresses relatively few of the issues pertaining specifically to LEA policies, rules and practices.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) The applicant's plan proposes a number of good initiatives that addresses how adequate resources will be available to all participating stakeholders, parents, and educators, through the purchase of additional technology for community partners' classrooms, the provision of the family service workers for families, and partnering with the Augusta County Library for the proposed literacy resource bus.</p> <p>b) No details about technical support are offered beyond a single statement that "Technical support will be provided through a range of strategies."</p> <p>c) The applicant does not currently have a data system that is accessible to parents and students.</p> <p>d) The applicant describes the current situation in the August County Schools which use a number of different data systems, that are largely not interoperable data systems.</p> <p>There is an inclusion of table featuring various elements needed for a high quality plan, including presentation of key goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. This appendix, however, is a repeat of the plan featured in Section B, Analysis of Needs and Interests, and of Sections C1, Learning and C2, Teaching and Leading. There appear to be few elements in this table that relate to LEA and school Infrastructure actions.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes three uses of funding, only of which one area – enhancing the skill sets of their community preschool</p>		

program educators and the families of their young children – appears particularly linked to the continuous improvement process by the applicant. (The other two areas pertain to the purchase of materials, facilities (the mobile classroom) and equipment, and the purchase of slots in the community preschools.)

The applicant describes how a VSQI Star Rating would be given to each community preschool partners, to establish a baseline, and how a quality improvement plan would be created and shared with the ACPS/RTTT committee. There was no discussion, however, about the process by which subsequent VSQI Star Rating assessments would be conducted, or ways in which investments concerning other training and CDA work would be tracked and monitored.

The applicant does describe a process by which this VSQI information would be shared, but not with the public per se. The baseline VSQI ratings would be made public only after permission by VSQI and the school's director. Details of the report would be shared with the center's mentor, and a created QIP (quality improvement plan) would be shared with the project's ACPS/RTT committee.

One could also argue that the area of funding of purchasing slots in community preschools, is also deserving of annual targets, and disclosure per year of how many slots have been purchased, and how many and which community preschool centers are recipients of these purchased slots (while still preserving the confidentiality of the names of the students and families.) In this way, there could be tracking if there is sufficient outreach, utilization, and distribution of these purchased slots, which could lead to continuous improvement.

Similarly, a strategy for continuous improvement could also be set up for the large investments of facilities, such as money for the mobile literacy classroom, and for the demonstration classroom, but was not directly addressed by the applicant in this section.

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

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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a range of satisfactory actions regarding ongoing communication and engagement, primarily targeting the audiences of fellow educators (e.g., Smart Beginnings, Superintendent, School Board, RTT District committee meetings.) Communication strategies discussed did not include specifically targeting audiences of parents, other community members, or the general public.

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

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3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The first section on performance measures solely featured a table of 16 measures with no accompanying narrative. While each performance measure viewed on its own makes reasonable sense, the lack of organizing framework or categorization of measures is somewhat problematic. There is a mixture of performance measures and “units of analysis” which include targets of amount of services provided, quality of services, and settings, numbers of children reached, and changes within the students (i.e., specific student outcomes), with the sequence of performance measures seeming somewhat random.

A number of the measures would have been much stronger if actual, specific numbers had been provided as baseline numbers, as well as numerical targeted benchmarks had been indicated, by year, rather than simply indicating that the program wishes something such as the number of educators with CDA credentials "to increase." The majority of percentage benchmark targets offered by the applicant dealt with volume or output of services (such as the number of children screened), rather than quality or impact of services.

The later table on performance measures in this section features a different set of measures, and only features three areas of student performance measures – Pre-K PALS universal screening, Pre-K numeracy universal screening, and Teaching Strategies Gold Fall to Spring Growth. Furthermore, while baseline performance data are provided in the 2011-12 year, no performance targets are indicated for the four years of the project, or what types of trends over time might signal positive or negative program impact indicators. The tables featuring number of children being served by highly effective teachers, and effective teachers, feature identical numbers, suggesting that the applicant has not distinguished between highly effective and effective.

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

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

To its credit, the applicant plans to utilize some direct output data as a clear "check" on the value of the investments, such as decreasing the number of children who do not have preschool experiences by 25% each year of the grant. They also would

be striving to largely replicate in the community preschools the high quality model of curriculum and assessment of the Augusta County Public School preschools, which has already demonstrated some highly positive learning gains amongst the children who have been attending these comprehensive preschools.

The applicant does not directly respond to the request to describe how they will evaluate the effectiveness of activities, such as professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time, staff, money or other resources to improve results through such strategies as improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform, and modification of school schedules and structures. The narrative and table for evaluating effectiveness mainly reiterates or lists the various professional services, technology, personnel, and other project items that will be offered, and either offers further details or rationale for that role, action or service. The table does feature a few line items for technology equipment, but provides fairly limited detail of how they will be used.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>It does not appear that the applicant responded with a narrative to section F1, since the section starts with F2. There is, however, a subsequent budget section in the appendix, as Budget Subpart I, that does provide a good breakdown of items and costs. Staffing costs and individual salaries look quite reasonable, by position. The applicant does appropriately and clearly convey the items for which there are one-time investments (e.g., equipment for the mobile literacy classroom; modular building for the demo classroom)</p> <p>The project has requested \$5,851,242 for 3,340 students. As noted earlier, it is not clear how the preschool population served annually relates to this figure of 3,340 students. Over half of the budget is for personnel (just over \$3 million) followed by contractual services (\$1,227,600) and equipment (\$978,120). Organized by project, the applicant lists 5 different programs (in order of budget amount): Comprehensive Early Childhood Programs (\$3,557,146); Demonstration Class (\$970,096); Mobile literacy classroom (\$635,992), CDA (\$308,815) and Coordinator (\$293,954). In general, budget costs for the project look quite reasonable. The proposal would be stronger if there had been a provision of a clear rationale and background information regarding the mobile literacy classroom and the creation of a demonstration classroom (and purchasing a modular building costing \$120,000), or why they needed to create their own CDA program.</p> <p>While the proposal features a good number of budget breakdowns and line items, by project, there was a level of specificity lacking in a few areas, such as the number of purchased preschool slots (each year, and total), cost per slot for children to be in community preschools, the number of teachers they hope will take part in CDA training (they list 45 teachers in the budget table, but this may be per year) or what percentage of the total local preschool teacher population this would be.</p> <p>Regarding the community comprehensive early childhood programs, the applicant does not appear to offer any specific numbers of how many actual new classrooms they wish to build or support, so it is difficult to critically review the budget for staffing positions and equipment costs (e.g., family service workers, lead teachers, new furniture purchased) since these are often based on needs for "each classroom."</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has set forth a reasonable plan for sustainability, through the utilization of community partners (e.g., the Augusta County School, the Augsuta County Library, Smart Beginnings, Valley Vocational Technical school), and such actions as transitioning into a "train the trainer" model in the county, leveraging of one-time purchases, such as the mobile bus, and demonstration classroom, and shifting roles and responsibilities onto other partner groups.</p> <p>The main area of assumptions which seems not highly sound concerns the \$176,4000 worth of purchased preschool slots to the community daycare centers, which they claim will "sustain themselves as a result of the initial funding, equipment purchases, and training provided to centers." If the main purpose of the purchased slots is to make the preschools affordable to certain low-income families, it is not clear why and how this sustainable high quality of the settings would address this</p>		

family economic need.

The applicant provides a table of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties, as required elements needed for a high quality plan. While this table is a repeat of that which is presented earlier in the proposal, the description of Year 4 activities does address several elements pertaining to sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set forth a reasonable plan for a competitive preference priority effort, which strives to integrate public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to address social, emotional or behavioral needs of participating students.

1) The applicant describes a number of solid partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders (e.g., Department of Social Services, Smart Beginnings, local community preschools, local library).

2 and 3)The applicant has provided satisfactory set of 9 population-level desired results for students. Outcomes appropriately encompass both educational and family and community outcomes. They are aligned well with the main proposal, in that there is, in essence, very strong overlap between the competitive preference priority and the main proposed project. The applicant's main proposed project highly integrates, and counts upon, close partnerships with a number of different organizations and stakeholders (e.g., Department of Social Services, Smart Beginnings, local community preschools.) If anything, there is a minimal emphasis in the main proposal on work within the school district and with other public education institutions.

There is a somewhat problematic way in which the population level desired results are presented. The initial 9 population-level desired results are presented reasonably well, and indicate the ways in which they would track the selected indicators, use the data, scale up, and strive to improve results over time. However, a second set of population level desired results presented later in this section, list 10 different results, which do not necessarily map onto the set of 9 listed earlier.

4) The applicant presents a strong case for how they would work with multiple stakeholders to provide a well-integrated set of educational and other services for children and families.

5) The applicant has set forth a good case for how they would build the capacity of staff in participating schools to assess the needs and assets of participating students; inventory the needs and assets of the schools, create a decision-making process that supports individual students, engages parents and families, and routinely assesses the applicant's progress in implementing its plan.

6) The applicant has proposed an important set of annual goals: of decreasing the number of children who do not have preschool experiences by 25% each year; increase the number of programs with VSQI rating, and reduction in interventions needed, reduction in truancy, and increase in SOL scores. However, no precise numerical targets are offered for the last four sets of goals. As noted above, these later set of 10 population level desired results do not map directly onto the 9 population level results indicated for sub-section 2.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it will create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators; accelerate student achievement; increase the effectiveness of educators expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The applicant has set forth a thoughtful, comprehensive plan focusing on

the critical years of the preschool ages that are such important determinants of children's future educational interests, potential, and life trajectories. The proposed plan builds upon the applicant's past demonstrated successes, and targets the support and expansion of comprehensive preschool education by working closely with community preschools, and the provision of high quality curricula, regular students assessments coupled with Response to Intervention approaches, and professional development of early childhood educators.

Total	210	163
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0445VA-2 for Augusta County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools clearly articulates a comprehensive reform model that encompasses the four core academic areas. The district proposes a Comprehensive Early Childhood Program for all students. This vision is articulated in the district's desire to accelerate student learning by increasing the number of entering kindergartners with preschool experience. For example, ACPS has already established such a program with a record of success. This experienced program serves as the foundation for this proposal and the focus of the four educational core areas. By participating in the early learning approach, students receive instruction based on kindergarten standards and driven by data reviews, thus incorporating a personalized learning experience. Additionally, struggling students and those who are most at risk can benefit from teachers who are highly trained, mentored, and resourceful if they participate in this program.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools' approach to implementation includes 12 Title I elementary schools in the district as evidenced by the involvement of all elementary schools in the district as well as community preschool programs. However, the process for selection of schools is not described in detail. A list of all participating schools is included in the proposal but not in this section. This list however, does not clearly identify specific student groups by high needs and low-income populations.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper middle range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools' reform proposal targets personalized learning for all students in the district with the goal of having a significant impact on improving the number of entering kindergartners with preschool experiences. Through the Comprehensive Early Childhood Program model, all schools will offer early learning opportunities, teacher training and mentoring, mastery and competency-based assessments, continuum of learning programs, family/home connections, use of technology, health screenings for students as part of a unique blend of strategies and activities designed to promote a personalized learning environment. Through the early learning model, each student benefits from a complete cycle of teacher, student and parent participation, and interaction in activities designed to develop kindergarten readiness skills. Thus,</p>		

ACPS demonstrates this level of support to all schools through the participation in the district's program and students in the surrounding area. For example, the district proposes to use this grant as an expansion mechanism to its already successful program in order to serve community preschools. Therefore, it is highly likely that this plan will result in meaningful reform throughout the district and community.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools notes goals that are ambitious by targeting improved student learning through evidenced based curricula and universal screenings. For example, ACPS intends to increase the current 92% graduation rate for exiting high school students. By incorporating kindergarten curricula and screening tools, students should obtain skills necessary for entry into kindergarten. Also, improvements in lowest achieving students can result in increasing college enrollment. Likewise, the district's hope to sustain the quality of its program beyond the grant period leads to a better quality of education for all at-risk students, thus decreasing achievement gaps over time. Finally, improving student achievement outcomes focus on building data systems to measure successful growth. However, the district goals for years beyond the baseline data year are not clear for the next four years nor post grant year as defined in the chart provided in this section for summative assessments and achievement gaps. In fact, columns for those years are unanswered.

Since ACPS has a track record of increasing achievement and with the full implementation of the Early Learning model, these goals should be achievable.

Overall, this places ACPS in the low high range.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools notes a clear record of success and growth in the past four years as a result of its Comprehensive Early Childhood Program. For example, ACPS reports that 80% of its students met developmental ranges on the spring assessment and EL students significantly closed achievement gaps from the fall semester to the spring semester. Thus, this increase shows a significant improvement in student achievement levels. Although, ACPS addresses how performance data will be made available to teachers in ways to inform and help improve instruction, it does not clearly state in this section, how data will be made available to parents and students.

Overall, this places ACPS in the lower high range.

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

Augusta County Public Schools provides evidence that it currently practices transparency in processes, practices and investments. For example, personnel salaries are made available to the public through district, state, and governmental websites. Additionally, this information is available through an annual federal data collection process.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools clearly demonstrates some evidence of autonomy under state guidelines to implement its approved grant proposal and offer a Comprehensive Early Childhood Program. The district notes that it was a pioneer in implementing the RTI process in the state. This demonstrates a record of implementing a successful reform to improve the instructional needs of students. However, there is a lack of evidence in this section to suggest that state code gives districts the autonomy to create its own instructional intervention models. Likewise, there are no documents included notifying the district that this reform model is in compliance. However, there is an assumption that based on past experiences with RTI and

the preschool program, the district obviously has the autonomy to operate such programs.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper middle range.

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

Augusta County Public Schools reports evidence of stakeholder involvement in the proposed plan. For example, the district developed the reform model during a multi-step strategic meeting process. Stakeholders such as community representatives, families, teachers and principals from all of the participating schools actively participated in the process.

Letters of support were included from many external stakeholders such as governmental officials, business owners, postsecondary organizations, and politicians.

Likewise, Letters of support are included from community preschool programs. It is clear that all community centers and teachers support the proposal. However, there are no letters from district level schools demonstrating support of the project. Therefore, it is not clear if stakeholders from schools with existing preschool programs are supporting the reform model.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper middle range.

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

Augusta County Public Schools acknowledges and identifies needs and gaps that exist in the district through the VSQI rating system.

The district includes a chart with an established timeline of activities, deliverables, and responsible parties as part of a high quality plan for implementing the Comprehensive Preschool Program. As a result, the VSQI rating system determines specific needs and gaps. Information provided through this system helps the district to develop professional development and mentoring plans for teachers as well as provide applicable resources to ensure student success.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools proposes a high quality plan designed to promote personalized learning through its comprehensive early childhood program. According to the application, students will participate in a comprehensive advisement program with parent and educator support. This system is structured with evidence based curriculum and universal screenings.

Also, Family Support Workers, (FSW) will engage parents in learning opportunities such as goal setting and communication regarding personalized learning strategies. Additionally, the FSW assist families in developing individual family plans as appropriate and as necessary to promote individual student success.

Likewise, the use of teaching strategies GOLD (TSG) and RTIM in community schools, professional development and mentoring, and family engagement approaches will all add to a high quality instructional environment for students attending ACPS.

Similarly, the district proposes to purchase computers for community preschool classrooms and online course work for Teaching Assistants. The use of this approach ensures that students will have an opportunity to experience digital learning content.

The district notes the availability of student data through universal screenings and progress monitoring tools. By utilizing this process, if students fail to make progress, a personalized intervention plan is developed by the teacher. This ongoing cycle of data monitoring ensures that students will remain on track for college and career graduation requirements.

ACPS ensures that by participating in an early learning experience such as the Comprehensive Preschool Program, students will have access to a curriculum that builds skills along a continuum of growth. Additionally, based on the district's track record, these students have an increased chance of graduating on time and being college and career ready if they enter school with

kindergarten readiness skills.

Although, the district addressed many areas in this section of the proposal, little evidence of training and support for students could be identified. However, under the guidance of the FSW, families receive training on how to support students for school success.

By adding community preschool classes, the district hopes to broaden the cultural experiences and perspectives for all children as a measure to deepen their learning experiences.

Overall, the district scores in the upper high range for this area.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools identifies a clear plan for improving teaching and learning through a personalized learning approach. For example, the district reports that community preschool educators will receive adequate and ongoing professional development to implement the Personalized Framework. The training opportunities should build on current education knowledge and provide a foundation to support an effective personalized learning environment. Additionally, students will have multiple opportunities for a variety of learning approaches. For example, students will experience digital learning resources such as mobile devices. Staff members will learn multi modal approaches. Likewise, staff will offer students opportunities to learn in large group, small group, and individual settings.

Although ACPS provides sufficient evidence in most cases, it is not clear how the district will use educator training to provide frequent feedback to students.

The district will use the VSQI STAR rating system to address educator effectiveness. However, it is unclear if this is the district's evaluation system used with other teachers and administrators in the district or will it only be used with the preschool staff.

Finally, the district proposes to increase the number of competent Teaching Assistants by providing access to complete a CDA program in collaboration with a community college. Incentives including a model observation classroom and no fee courses will be offered to all TAs that will ensure highly competent preschool staff are employed to instruction district students.

The district proposes that all educators would receive training on how to provide optimal learning approaches with an emphasis on mutli-modal learning.

ACPS has a process in place that will provide preschool educators with tools and processes to match student needs with resources and provide feedback. For example, teachers will receive training on the TSG to understand ongoing assessment data and how it can be used in the RTIM Direct.

Therefore, this places ACPS in the lower high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools' infrastructure and policy are aligned to support implementation of this project. The district office vertical team makeup provides the necessary structure to adequately support its schools. For instance, staff members represent all areas from curriculum, student services and special educational services.

Additionally, school leadership teams have the autonomy to plan for improved student achievement. Schools are given the flexibility to develop calendars, hire personnel, prepare budgets, and organize instruction.

Likewise, students benefit from similarly flexible options such as mastery-based learning. This allows current students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways thus working towards college and career preparedness.

Finally, implementation of the RTI process in ACPS ensures that standards-based instruction is accessible to all students.

The district includes a chart detailing a timeline with activities, responsible parties and deliverables to propose its high quality

plan.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Augusta County Public Schools demonstrates its record of support for a personalized learning environment throughout the district. For example, all students, regardless of income, have access to a mobile resource bus. Likewise, community preschool center will have additional technology in the classrooms.

ACPS states that technical support will be provided through a range of strategies. However, it is not clear specifically how the district will provide technical support.

Additionally, the district does not currently have an electronic parent portal nor does it address how the grant funds will allow development of such data portal if approved.

Finally, ACPS has several software based data warehouse systems that integrates multiple data sources for district use. However, the district does not include evidence of integrating additional components of the system in the future.

Overall, this places ACPS in the upper middle range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Augusta County Public Schools utilizes a rigorous continuous improvement process. For example, VSQI STAR rating system is an assessment process that provides timely and regular feedback. The examination and analysis of the results allows the district to develop quality improvement plans that will be used to plan professional development activities and mentoring for staff and additional support systems. ACPS indicates that it will report the results to the public on the VSQI website.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Augusta County Public Schools offer a comprehensive approach to providing meaningful communication. For example, the district has multiple committee meetings including partnership meetings that serve as opportunities to communicate with stakeholders. ACPS provides ongoing communication by sharing information through school board presentations on a rolling basis. Communication also includes discussions on data, timeline, and upcoming deliverables as part of the high quality plan proposed. All of these methods of communication suggest that ACPS participates in engaging internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>Augusta County Public Schools shows a commitment to implementing a personalized learning environment by ensuring that all students have access to a comprehensive preschool program. Likewise, it presents performance measures that appear to be achievable, particularly since the district has implemented this program for the past four years. However, there is no evidence to address the rationale for selecting the measure, how the measure addresses information pertaining to the plan, or how it will review and improve the measure. In fact, there is only a chart with performance measures included in the proposal.</p> <p>Therefore, all performance measures ensure success towards continuous improvement.</p> <p>Overall, ACPS scores in the upper middle range.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools plans to decrease the number of children who do not have preschool experiences by 25% each year. Although the district included a large chart labeled professional services and evaluating effectiveness with all investments of the grant, the method for determining the effectiveness is unclear. Rather, the district describes the role or purpose for the service. Thus, there is some evidence of a plan but specific aspects of the plan for evaluating the effectiveness is unclear.</p> <p>Overall, ACPS scores in the low middle range.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools provides an overall budget that clearly identifies all funds available, sufficient, and reasonable to implement the grant.</p> <p>ACPS articulates in a chart format, all funds available to support the grant project. Likewise, the approximate per pupil expenditure based on the number of students the district plans to server per year appears reasonable. Additionally, funds or in-kind contributions that are available for additional support each year are clearly identified.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools shares a commitment for sustainability beyond the grant period.</p> <p>The district currently provides financial support for the project and will continue the support beyond the grant period. Likewise, entities such as the school board, collaborative partners, and local business will provide financial resources in the future. Items listed as professional services are one-time expenditures or will be sustained through community organizations. Likewise, technology equipment and services will be maintained and provided by the ACPS technology department. Similarly, daycare centers will support increased enrollment through residual growth. The mobile literacy classroom and staff will be sustained through the public library. Finally, screening equipment, classroom furniture, and supplies will be maintained by the various day care centers. Therefore, the district has made many provisions for sustainability beyond the grant period.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools is committed to providing a Comprehensive Preschool Program for its students. This is evident in the numerous partnerships that it has maintained with several organizations to provide social services and screenings for its students. For example, the DDS partnership provides social services, Family Service Workers, problem solving for families of early childhood students. Additionally, community preschool programs work collaboratively with the district to implement a Comprehensive Preschool Program. Secondly, Smart Beginnings Shenandoah Valley provide diagnostic and long term strategies for school readiness improvements. Valley Vocational Technical Center will provide the CDA program for preschool teaching assistants. The Augusta County Public Library encourages families to visit the library, thus increasing the exposure to reading and books. All of these partners assist the district with addressing the personalized</p>		

learning option for students.

ACPS' focus on social/emotional and educational outcomes for its students results in students entering kindergarten with readiness skills, high quality core instruction for preschool students, professional development for staff, building family support, increasing credentialed educators, increasing families using mobile literacy, community partnership support and a personalized learning experience.

ACPS wants to improve social/emotional behaviors and academic skills. For example, the district plans to track measured outcomes by using a multi-tiered approach to evaluation. Its measure of results will include PALS scores, reading and math SOL scores, attendance, VSQI ratings, database entries, frequent contacts for mobile classrooms, RTIM Direct, and self-reporting.

ACPOS proposes the use of multiple sources of data in an effort to improve results. For instance, application scores, PreK PALS scores, Field Advisor support, RTIMS Direct tracking, geographic data, mentoring, professional development data, and progress monitoring should allow sufficient information to assist the district in making informed decisions regarding the implementation of this personalized learning environment.

Likewise, the district plans several strategies such as providing a comprehensive preschool program to all school age students, promoting family/school connection, increasing student use of CDA program with vocational school, providing literacy activities through public library and focusing on data driven instruction to scale the comprehensive preschool program model to all high-need students and communities in the area.

These comprehensive strategies if implemented consistently, should result in improve results over time thus making students better prepared and college and career ready by the end of their high school years. All of these strategies support a personalized learning environment.

ACPS' integration model supported by collaborative agencies serves as the catalyst to foster a sense of community with its partners. Using this approach, professional development is scheduled at a central location allowing access to all participates and encouraging sharing of success, strategies, and mentoring as a follow up. The public library targets literacy practices at home while the FSW provides support to families through grade 3. Therefore, the integration of such services creates the collaboration needed to ensure personalized learning for all students.

ACPS proposes to build capacity through the implementation of a high quality comprehensive preschool program for all students. For example, all students who have no prior school experiences regardless of financial resources will have an opportunity to participate in the ACPS preschool program.

The district identifies needs based on the results of an electronic survey submitted to community schools. First, if students enter kindergarten with school experience and instructional resources, family support and services and literacy experiences, they have a greater likelihood of successfully becoming college and career ready by the end of the high school years.

ACPS has a decision making process in place that addresses student needs. For example, the district describes a successful practice of evidence based data driven measures that results in improvement for students.

ACPS actively engages parents and families in the decision making process. For instance, FSWs provide a mechanism for parents, students, and families to have input into the decision making process. Additionally, the FSW support is critical for ensuring ongoing parent involvement, a successful personalized learning plan, and progress toward desired goals for students.

ACPS acknowledges that it routinely assesses progress toward implementation with a detailed plan described in section E2. This section discusses communication and engagement. Therefore, it is unclear in how the district routinely assess the plan to maximize impact.

ACPS identifies performance measures and desired student results that appear promising and have proven successful in the district. These measures are focused around Kindergarten readiness, reading readiness, family literacy, and Family Social Workers. Although the measures may be ambitious, they all represent outcomes expected based on the district's commitment to success when utilizing the Comprehensive Preschool Program model for school reform.

Overall, this places ACPS in the middle high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not	Met

	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Augusta County Public Schools clearly articulates a comprehensive reform model designed to encompass the four core academic areas. The district proposes a Comprehensive Early Childhood Program for all students that will accelerate student learning by decreasing the number of entering kindergartners with no preschool experience. For example, ACPS has already established such a program with a record of success. This experienced program serves as the foundation for this proposal and the focus on the four educational core areas. By participating in the early learning approach, students receive instruction based on kindergarten standards and driven by data reviews. Additionally, struggling students and those who are most at risk can benefit from teachers who are highly trained, mentored, and resourceful if they participate in this program.</p> <p>The Comprehensive Preschool Program demonstrates the district's commitment to providing a personalized learning environment that promotes the support of family and education. Additionally, through the variety of parent and community engagement opportunities that are offered, the district demonstrates further commitment to improve teaching and learning. Thus, students and parents benefit from an environment that accelerates learning opportunities for students.</p> <p>Likewise, ACPS' students benefit from a high quality instructional program through the use of the proposed teaching strategies GOLD (TSG) and RTIM in community schools, professional development, mentoring, and family engagement outreach approaches used in the district.</p> <p>Similarly, the district proposes high quality learning content for all students. This is evidenced by the use of both mobile devices and online professional learning opportunities for students.</p> <p>Finally, the district utilizes multiple approaches such as the VSQI STAR rating system to ensure that there are highly effective educators in each classroom. For instance, the VSQI STAR rating system, designed to increase educator effectiveness, will be used throughout the district. Similarly, incentives and scholarships as well as peer observations are offered to increase certification in rigorous core subject areas. This approach alone shows that educator effectiveness is a priority for ACPS.</p> <p>Overall, this places ACPS in the upper high range.</p>	
Total	210



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0445VA-3 for Augusta County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Augusta County Public School district in the Shenandoah Valley in rural Virginia is applying for RTT award funding to improve the Early Childhood Programs in the district. This is a low social economic area and all schools receive Title I funding. Participating in the initial four year study there will be 188 educators, 3340 students, 1008 of which are high need students and 1568 are low income students. The proposal is asking for funding to provide early learning programs for all pre school students, promote professional development and training, hire Family Social Workers to improve home/school relationships and communication and purchase technology to monitor student data, drive instruction and report growth. The vision they are describing will use all stakeholders to improve graduation rates, raise student achievement in all core subject areas, keep professionals well trained and build strong lines of understanding and communication between home and school for each student to succeed and go on to be successful, contributing members of their community.

The strengths they have in place are-

- Quality learning and instruction
- Support for families
- Quality special education services
- Comprehensive health services

The ACPS standards are driven by the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Literacy and their assessment are Teaching Strategies GOLD. To prepare students to succeed in kindergarten content standards which align with the career and college readiness as defined in this notice. They also use the standards of the Virginia Star Quality Initiative. Screening and assessments are done to provide the necessary data to develop the personalized learning environments for each student. Students that are not making adequate progress are monitored with Tier I interventions according to RTI guidelines. Families are notified and kept informed by an assigned Family Service Worker. Families are considered and invested party in the school success to reach struggling students. The district reaching out to community and faith based agencies is a positive outreach. The book Schools Can Not Do It Alone by Jamie Vollmer illustrates we need the extended community to support us and it is commendable how ACPS is extending their hand for support. In the big picture this gives the entire community buy in to support their future by supporting their children and the public schools in building sustainable, comprehensive early childhood programs.

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

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Augusta County Public Schools used a comprehensive early childhood program to turn around the lowest achieving schools. In the last four years of implemented the RTI process the student failure rate on screenings has gone from 17.5% down to 10%. All the elementary schools in the district are Title I schools 17 preschool classrooms in 12 different elementary school all participated. The ACPS comprehensive early childhood program is an inclusive at risk program that currently serves 250 children and their families with the highest needs. The children's needs for early literacy, health, mental health, dental health, nutrition and family support will all be inclusive. Individualized data folders will be kept on each child. Teachers and para professionals will be given the professional development necessary to improve student achievement.

The ACPS district shares a strong partnership with the local library, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the Smart Beginnings program. Local community resources are being used to help meet the crucial early learning needs for as many children as possible. The award monies would be shared with the community to buy slots for children that there is not room for in the public school programs. This practice builds capacity to reach more children's Pre-K needs.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Augusta County District plans on using Teaching Strategies Gold TSG data to drive program needs and instruction. They want to build a comprehensive Activity Library that parents could log in to from home if they had the technology or at the local library and from Two Mobile Literacy Units that would travel around the district. The district wants to establish goals for each student to have their own personalized learning environments where performance would be reported through the RTIM data gathering system. The RTIM results would drive curriculum and instruction using quarterly assessments to fill gaps, guide graduation rates and report college enrollment data. The district would couple the RTIM data with information gathered by teachers on universal screenings to determine appropriate learning needs and gaps and use this data to drive instruction. Again by reaching out to private and parochial schools for Pre-K slots for the students that there is not room for in their community schools ACPS builds capacity and partnerships with outside resources which improves sustainability of early learning interventions for their children.

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The goal of the ACPS is proposing measures that would strengthen early learning, family support, meeting special needs, early intervention as well as physical health, mental health and nutrition systems for children and families with no preschool experience prior to starting kindergarten. The three distal outcomes the district wants to focus on are-increasing graduation rates, improving school achievement and establishing a sustainability of quality programs for all students.

a. The district provided evidence of how the data it collected showed a direct relationship between high quality early childhood programs and success in kindergarten and beyond.

b. The district emphasized teaching to standards and benchmarks that would improve student achievement, increase

graduation rates and prepare students for college. award monies would be invested in standards based supplies, screening materials and curriculum that align with college and career ready standards.

c. The district realizes a major component to student success is from recruiting, developing, retaining and mentoring good teachers. Ongoing professional development will be offered and schools that are not currently not using evidence based curriculum are beginning to show adequate readiness skills by implementing the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Foundational Learning and the Virginia Star Quality Initiative to evaluate and assess best practices and student growth.

The district supports investing in the two most important variables for student success which are high quality teachers, using best practices to drive and deliver curriculum and instruction. The Family Service Workers (FSW) will be an essential component in sustaining the quality of early learning programs over time. The funding invested in FSW personnel will definitely increase sustainability of positive achievement outcomes for the students throughout their school experience and enable them to be college and career ready.

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	12
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The ACPS shows evidence of improved track record of growth over the last four years since they implemented the RTI process, which has improved student scores, raised graduation rates and promoted college preparation. Low achieving school implemented the RTI process with rigor and fidelity to track and increase student achievement. High quality continuous professional development was given to teachers and educational assistants to improve curriculum and instruction. Training was also given to train staff how to access and use data to improve student achievement and to drive high quality curriculum and instruction. However, it is unfortunate that more interventions were not put into place much sooner in this district.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: Transparency is an area the ACPS stated that it knew it must be vigilant about. They post student achievement scores on their school and district websites. The salaries are posted on the local office of civil right websites. Parent, student and other handbooks were also available at the local library and at the Mobile Library websites and offices. However, since so many families in the area might not have access to technology the district needs to find other ways to get their information out such as local newspapers, newsletters, town hall meetings and scheduled school open house events.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: Using the state guided assessment tools ACPS has shown compliance with Virginia State requirements. The Virginia Standards of Learning and the Early Intervention Reading Initiative were both used as guidelines for the ACPC to have the autonomy to plan to promote personalized learning environments. These state mandates encourage LEA's to create programs to meet the individual needs of every student. They also have looked beyond their public school settings to find good placements for pre school children that were not being served by their neighborhood schools. To do this the district reached out to private and faith based businesses and agencies to find appropriate placement. They intend to use grant funding to buy slots in these schools outside the district to meet the needs of the young children not being served by the public school.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: At least 70% of all teachers support the proposal initiatives. Letters of support were filed with their administrators. Many letters of support were written in support of the ACPS reform plan from a variety of local and state stakeholders. The district brought together a variety of stakeholders that had interest and experience with early childhood education. The District Director of Pupil		

Services, the Preschool Supervisor, a lead and mentor teacher, district school based administrators and community agencies that serve young children and their families were all brought together. The meeting was held in a central location at a time of day when the majority of constituents could participate. However, it was not made clear in the proposal how this engagement would be organized on an on going basis to keep all stakeholders advised and informed.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district has developed a high quality plan of improving student achievement. They are looking at prior as well as current data investigating where the strengths and weaknesses are and then planning the interventions necessary to fill in the gaps. There is also a priority to expand programming to more locations in order to serve more children. The district is using state approved research based rating scales to implement and evaluate three quality components: staff qualifications/professional development, learning environments and adult/child interactions. ACPS included tables illustrating their goals, timelines deliverables and responsible parties for each component of the proposal. The tables also show how resources and services will be integrating with community agencies.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has set up high quality programs in school settings across the district. When there was not space available room was found in private and faith based programs. Individual student data was collected and analyzed 5 times a year minimum. Career and college readiness are continually talked about to make sure the students have a plan, goals and support in preparing for college and careers. The districts articulates the need for good early intervention programs for students, yet they did not describe in enough detail what those classrooms would look like. They discussed that assessments would be done for every child and this data would follow the child to kindergarten and beyond. They did not give enough specifics of what best practices, resources and materials would be used to create the personalized learning experiences each day for students.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district is committed to making sure all stakeholders have the training and support necessary for career and college readiness. An evaluation system will be in place to make sure teachers were given the time and resources needed to create these personalized learning environments for each student. Investments will be made in quality curriculum, screening and assessment programs. Professional development and training for teachers, educational assistants and directors is an essential component of this section of the grant. Educators would receive professional development through direct instruction and web based learning.. Training the directors at each site will help sustain the integrity of the personalized learning programs over time. A demonstration classroom will be established to train and model best practices. Mentors will mentor the teachers in developing their own personalized learning plans so they will be prepared to do the same for the students. Staff will be trained too in the philosophy of personalized learning environments and why these plans are so successful in supporting students in their everyday learning and to prepare them with the skills necessary for career and college readiness.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: ACPS worked collaboratively to establish the needs and methods they were going to put in place to meet those needs to raise early childhood reading and math proficiency scores. Four years prior when they began to implement the RTI process and started keeping the data across the district that showed the need for high quality early childhood education on school career and college success. With that data they want to move forward in making sure all pre school age children are supported by highly qualified programs. The existing district programs are so full that with the RTT funding they want to reach out to other preschool programs in the county that are non profit our faith bases schools to provide training and programs to meet the significant early leaning needs and fill in the gaps or their students to be career and college ready.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: Augusta County is aware of the significant needs in their area for high quality early learning programs. They have a high		

number of students that come from low income families and all of their schools are Title I schools. The district is providing information to parents and community stakeholders through the Family Service Workers the district provides, handbooks and computer access available in the public library, school web sites, district newsletters and local newspapers. The district realizes the need to improve technology access to their county, but this will take time and funding.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: (E) 1. ACPS district is proposing a rigorous continuous improvement process of their early childhood programming that is reflective of their needs as well as those of their community partners. The proposal is based on funding for three main categories being; supplies and materials, professional development and the purchasing of slots for preschool students in participating community preschool programs outside of the public schools.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: (E) 2. Ongoing communication and support- The district will hold monthly meetings, send out a monthly newsletter and attend school board meetings to keep all stakeholders informed and up to date on RTT. These meetings will be facilitated by the district RTT Coordinator.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: (E) 3. Performance measures- the district has designated 16 performance measures to track the goals of the proposal. They have created charts and graphs to easily record, study and share these performance measures.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: (E) 4. Evaluating Effectiveness of investments-The district will know how effective the investments they have made are; by decreasing the number of children in the community that are not be served by high quality preschool programs by 25% each year, by continuously monitoring the growth of children being served in the district programs and community program settings, by using FSW to improve home school relationships and hence lower truancy rates and to help families get the social and health services they require. The district will need to keep the rigor of services provided and have data to support on going effectiveness.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: F. Budget and Sustainability (20 Points) The budget was simple and easy to follow. The amounts allotted were reasonable and practical. The purchases and training necessary will be paid for by the RTT award funds. The school district, public library and community day care centers have committed to sustain the grant through their operational budgets and by ongoing community fundraisers and contributions. The district has charted all grant activities, responsible party, and deliverables over the four year timeline of implementation. Also,		

they included an additional five page budget breakdown itemizing the costs of specific projects with the proposal which was helpful.

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

10

7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district will use grant funds to purchase the initial curriculum and technology needs for the proposal. The plan will be sustained by the community partnerships the district shares with the community library, local preschools and other community agencies. The school district will sustain the salaries of the positions established in the proposal out of the operational budget. However, the district needs to be mindful to keep applying for grants and build community support to raise the funds necessary for future sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority (10 Points)

Augusta County Public Schools has made a generous effort to reach out to other community agencies such as the public library, the migrant education project and faith based as well as private preschools to join in partnerships so that any RTT funding would be shared to provide their children and families a quality preschool experience and other social and health service needs. The goal of these partnerships is to help all children enter school healthy and prepared to succeed. They will be tracking 9 indicators over four years to judge the effectiveness of the performance indicators. They also include a comprehensive timeline to monitor programs initiatives.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Absolute Priority 1. These measures were addressed comprehensively throughout the ACPS proposal. The district demonstrates the importance of early intervention and for developing personalized learning environments for every student throughout the proposal. Emphasis on providing high quality preschool programming to all children in the community is the foundation of their plan. The district has reached out to community partners, private and faith based schools to help provide placement for every preschooler to receive the rich early learning necessary for success in school, career and college.

Total	210	171
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