



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0372IL-1 for Chicago Public Schools, #299

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal describes that the district has developed technological support and data systems, adopted and partially implemented common core standards, and developed a new evaluation system for teachers. These initial reform structures support the proposed activities. It is appropriate to use experiences in data review systems at turnaround schools to support the new program.</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates a plan to train using personalized instruction models. Innovative school models and schedules will be explored but are not described. The district provides a focus toward creating safe learning environments but details, other than awarding digital badges, are not included. The connection between the digital badges and the learning environment is not clear. Systems of classroom management training and social -emotional services to target individual students are stated but the proposal does not include details of how these systems affect the personalization of an individual student's learning day.</p> <p>The proposal is in a planning stage and continuing to collect data to inform the structure. Therefore the comprehensive nature of the proposed activities is not clearly defined.</p> <p>The district's focused vision is to support middle school students, address literacy and emotional needs, and intervene early in the adolescent stages, however the district is very general in the descriptions of professional development, specifically how implementation of new strategies in the classroom would build teacher/student relationships and impact directly the learning environment.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>School teams will be invited to apply to participate in the project services and are not identified at this time. Estimations are provided of numbers of students and teachers to be served with a focus on middle school. The proposal uses district demographics to predict the percentage of high needs students to be served. The involvement and commitment of teams of parents, principals, and teachers in project participation extends the capability of the project to be implemented to a high degree.</p> <p>The proposal presents the information that 70% of the 8th graders are not grade level proficient in reading. This justifies the district's need for strengthening literacy instruction as well as a need to provide firm support to middle grade students in transition stages. Paced lessons are proposed as an innovative strategy for the students to be served. Coaching and collaboration time will support teachers in exploring models and strategies that will support innovative approaches to instruction as well as improved classroom management skills. The involvement of students in setting their learning goals is a sound strategy.</p> <p>The district will be looking for exemplars of local school reform models. It is not clear what models have been identified as exemplar and how those programs might be replicated to serve the identified, or predicted, student groups.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A lack of current baseline data in a system of changing assessments is a challenge for the proposal in identifying clear targets. There is no description of how the district would scale up the services to students beyond those who are attending schools that are selected to participate.</p> <p>It is a strength that the proposal took the challenge of a changing assessment system to address outcomes and goals and address middle school gaps.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Summative assessment goals are set at 60% growth targets in an ambitious model to surpass the 50% proficiency growth rate nationally. It is not clear how the data targets will be addressed in the classroom learning environment.

The proposal is limited in its ability to provide data for the NWEA and intends to project goals and growth targets. Tools for schools to understand targets and relate them to individual students are described but it is not clear what these tools will look like, how they will assist in personalizing the learning environment for high needs students, and how teachers will use them to communicate with families.

The challenge of the changing assessments in the district is addressed and optional data is included to strengthen the proposal.

The vision of the proposal to address the student needs is clear through the description of proposed activities, however, the district is dealing with the challenge of changing assessment systems and also has not selected the specific schools who will be invited to participate. This limits the extent of the vision by providing a more generalized description of the proposal's intent.

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	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Graduation rates are higher and drop out rates are lower demonstrating the district's previous improvement efforts are, overall, successful. An increased number of students are meeting state standards. These are composite results across the district and not specified by school or grade level band. It indicates the district as a whole has been successful in bringing about improved results.</p> <p>An appropriate data review assisted the district in identifying literacy needs across the district as well as the drop in scores from middle school to high school. This assisted the district in identifying a focused approach in the proposal to serve middle school students and focus on literacy skills.</p> <p>The district describes a data warehouse and is making data available to students and families. Student involvement in goal setting is an innovation for the students to be served. The district proposal to involve more staff, families, and students in the planning process is also a strength.</p> <p>ELL students consistently rank lower in their grade levels in achievement and in achievement gaps. The proposal does not address their needs for additional support in a personalized learning environment.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Public budget hearings and tele-town hall meetings are used to present budget information as evidence of a transparent model supported by local reform efforts. A strength of the proposal is the development of a K-12 financial literacy framework to support the presentation of information. The proposal provides further evidence of the transparency of the process by including all school budget categories on an interactive website. To further extend the evidence of transparency in the district processes, a text messaging system is in place for homes without internet access.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a compliance system to demonstrate there is sufficient autonomy under state regulations by providing a state context for implementation in each of the key areas of the plan. Common Core Standards and the Illinois Shared Learning Environment are examples of two initiatives for reform supported by the state. Each major element of the proposal's Next Generation Learning is addressed by describing the compliance and regulation to ensure its support and flexibility in extending personalized learning environments for students. An example is presented in the re-design of middle schools model that addresses the allocation of 300 minutes of instructional time that is required. Principals and school leaders are allowed the flexibility to determine how those minutes are used within their schools.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Extensive evidence is included that speaks to the involvement of the stakeholders in reviewing the proposal. Meaningful stakeholder engagement is described in the use of local school councils as the foundation for site based management in the district. Community Action Councils are described as in place across the eight regions and participants in developing strategic plans. Non-profits, business groups, and other collaborations are noted in references and as members of the councils. The collaboration with the bargaining unit is described. These examples are strong evidence of stakeholder engagement in developing district services to students. A further opportunity for stakeholder engagement, to include students, is identified as an activity that will be implemented.

The proposal appears to be currently in the planning phase making identification of current opportunities for input to this particular program limited as it is yet to be fully developed by identifying participating schools (schools will apply to participate). However, the council meetings, regional meetings, union participation and support, and multiple collaborative partners supports the project's intention to revise activities as feedback is given. An example is given that attributes the name change of the project to the input of stakeholders.

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

The proposal is strong in identifying that principals have identified training needs for themselves in personalized environments. Leadership training is integral to school reform.

The proposal is also clear in demonstrating the need for middle school intervention and literacy support district wide by providing information that literacy scores have not improved in 20 years. Focused professional development will target these growth areas as a strategy to support student learning district wide.

A high quality plan is difficult to present given the district has yet to identify the invited schools to participate in services and their specific needs and gaps. Needs are identified for ELL and disabled students but specific training for teachers to meet these needs is not described. These sub groups require specialization of instruction, materials, and support that is not evidenced.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A sound strategy for developing a high quality plan is presented in describing student involvement in goal setting with teachers. Data analysis will provide a baseline for identification of student needs. Experience and knowledge of the district in implementing project based opportunities and the likelihood of replicating successful models is described through an iPad pilot program.

The project indicates that additional options for exploring deep learning for students will be included but no examples are given for how that might be delivered. The proposal also states that online resources will be available to students. Examples are given but specific programs are not identified. A connected program of study that leads to college ready students is not described. It is unclear how the use of digital badges will increase student skills. There is evidence that teachers will receive the technical training to support students on digital projects, however, it is not clear if the technology team will support teachers and students in understanding and using the resources.

The proposal describes lesson planning support, lesson design support and successful approaches to be available for teachers through coaches and other professional development opportunities. The connection between teacher training and student needs is not clear. The model appears to be students working individually on tasks as the teacher monitors the room.

Principal training opportunities in personalized learning systems are not described. Strategies are not specific or clear to connect professional development with impacting the classroom directly and specifically, the learning environment.

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

Many of the project's activities are directed toward improving teacher skills in delivering personalized instruction. Examples of collaboration and participation at various levels of program services are defined for teachers. Professional development, an enhanced data system for assessment review, and peer coaches will support classroom teachers in identifying student need and supportive strategies. Personalized maps and student involvement in the process is a strength.

In and out of school opportunities for students are not clearly described. Access to technology to expand possibilities beyond the classroom is addressed but specific programmatic project based lessons are not fully described.

Once or twice a semester progress reports to parents, as described, may limit their involvement in reviewing portfolios and student maps toward progress. This limits the quality of the plan to be responsive and operate in a manner to support accelerated learning.

Although the proposal includes a description of teacher competencies required to address the framework components in order to increase the number of students receiving instruction through highly qualified teaching, and describes an expected 24% increase, the data provided indicates that 30% of students are currently taught by highly qualified teachers. This would indicate a need to aggressively address the issue of supporting all students through high quality instruction.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A strength is in the description and presentation that decision making is site based. Principals will be working with the project director. The executive officer will review progress. Project lead teams will review progress quarterly .Principals will hire their building staff and work with them to support alternate schedules and activities to support the program. A system is described for flexible pacing. This is an effective infrastructure to provide supports.

Summer institutes for teachers and summer opportunities for students increase flexibility of services.

It is appropriate for teachers to have access to multiple sources of data through the data warehouse currently in place. Data review to identify student needs and adjust instruction is crucial to personalize learning and specifically to address the needs of all students.

Current services to ELL students and students with disabilities are described as through district wide programs. The individualization of their learning through proposed services is addressed through technology supports that will include translation and text-to-speech programs. This description evidences the district's intent to make learning accessible and equitable for all students.

The proposal does not clarify time required and provided for on-going teacher review of data. The role of the principal in data review and modification of plans for students is not presented. Leadership involvement is crucial to successful implementation of a high quality plan and needs to be evidenced. Information is provided regarding a Universal Design for Learning program that will support the needs of all students equitably but this process is not fully described.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal describes the availability of data to all stakeholders and includes information to support low- income families in obtaining the data over the Internet. The data system currently in place is effectively described and additional efforts to expand the resource are noted. It is not clear how the access to the data will allow for modifications of student plans and input from parents to determine when and where resources are needed. This limits the comprehensive quality of the plan. For example, it is unclear that data reviews are systematically held currently in targeted schools for targeted students.

Human resource data is lacking that would strengthen the comprehensive nature of the reform through providing more details on where the impact of the program directly affects student learning and classroom environments.

It is a strength that the proposal includes a specific avenue to increase parent access through a partnership with Comcast.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A management strength is in the description of a district wide unit in place to oversee programs with cross initiatives. This presents a strong support for the management of the proposal activities and strengthens the plan's ability to modify instruction and services as needed for students. Bi-weekly reviews, problem solving sessions, and regular cabinet sessions are also evidence of effective management strategies. Weekly teacher meetings for collaboration and sharing of strategies is justified and strengthens the opportunities for teachers to revise instruction and directly impact each child's individual plan.

Family focused training events are ambiguous as to increasing the involvement of parents and guardians in the process of continual review and ongoing improvements to the proposal.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Sound strategies for ongoing communication with stakeholders include various meetings from school level collaboration to district level teams and extend to informing parents through the use of public forums and the district's website.

The frequency of the updates is not clear nor is the process used to inform the activities of the grant.

The role of parents/guardians in ongoing change to services as necessary is unclear. Communication beyond the semester report card and online information is not provided. No evidence of home visit plans or current program. The proposal states that family-focused school quality trainings are currently in place but does not detail the role of these trainings in informing the services of the plan.

A survey, My Voice, My School, increases the likelihood that parent access to information and student input will increase.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Appropriate use of data from ongoing surveys and assessments to track student progress in academics is cited. Achievable goals are set for students in academic areas. The district provides evidence of parent forums and a website to provide public information.

The project describes inquiry as a logic model. The proposal to collect data, analyze, and plan prior to full implementation is a strength in working toward high quality services.

Expectations for teacher and principal improvement are not ambitious given the data presented on the current percent of teachers and principals who are highly qualified.

Support for principals and other leadership personnel is not described. Specific outcomes for improving principal and leadership knowledge of school transformation and implementation of the program are not included.

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

The quality of the plan to address the activities of the proposal provides opportunity and methods to adapt as the district collects data and researches answers to their four main questions in the inquiry logic model. The proposal is of an action research nature, which is strength in designing and implementing the initiative, based on targeted school/student information.

Timelines to describe the evaluation process are not included. The frequency of monitoring success and adapting to student needs is not clear. The evaluation model describes recruitment of parents at the end of year one and year three of services to obtain their input and collect data. This limits the proposal's effectiveness in demonstrating a comprehensive review of services model.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal includes an adequate narrative and rationale in its explanations for expenditures as appropriate to support the activities however many details are not clear. There is information lacking in financial incentives and supports for teachers involved in the project. A weakness is in a lack of description of the materials to be purchased for teachers. It is not clear if training materials are online or in print nor the type of materials needed to support the services well described.

Funding for parent intervention training and support for families is inadequate for the numbers to be served. One full time technology staff is described which is limited for the amount of technology proposed for implementation and support of program description.

Limited description and budget is included for teachers and principals to attend national institutes for increasing their knowledge and skills of exemplary programs and practices.

Professional development is described however the opportunities for teacher training do not include days that may require substitutes or the amount of instructional days out of the classroom. It is also not clear where and when stipends will be paid as incentives to teachers to participate.

A creative strategy is included to provide funding for teachers who videotape model lessons to share.

Digital badges are described that will increase student engagement and parent involvement but their development is unclear.

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

The proposal describes absorbing the project director into the district funding as a director of middle school efforts as one strategy to sustain the model. The sustainability of the project goals is not provided for with reasonable detail in other areas to support successful integration of the activities as a systematic approach to continue the goals of the project after grant funding ends. This is evidenced through the proposal's indication of a variety of federal, state, and a local foundation funds that may be used following grant funding but the proposal does not specify how each will be involved in absorbing responsibilities.

Details are provided that indicates the role of the teacher's union in sustaining modules and teacher training resources.

Flexible funding for principals to access is described but it is not clear if these funds will be available following the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Intentions to collect and analyze data from a variety of stakeholders is described, however the process is not detailed with frequency of opportunities or specifics of the process. The family engagement strategies are vague and insufficient to represent the sub groups of the population. The proposal indicates the parent portal will be translated into Chinese. This is limited evidence that strategies to engage the parents of immigrant and ESL students in non-traditional approaches will be in place.

Partnerships are included with local non profits, foundations, and universities but the proposal is vague in the collaborative review of this group as data is collected and analyzed at the district level and targeted schools have yet to be identified.

Achievement goals to increase teacher and principal knowledge and develop highly qualified teachers and administrators are not ambitious given the currently unavailable data. Baseline data on their current levels of skills is not available.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal meets the minimum requirements for the absolute priority by speaking to each of the core assurance areas. Lack of details

regarding interventions and specific student services prevents a comprehensive vision of reform. The link between teacher training and classroom implementation is not identifiable. Much of the proposal is based upon settings yet to be determined therefore the specifics of meeting the needs of identified students in the core assurance areas are not available.

Total	210	146
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The proposal presents an optional budget that is directed toward technology based systems to identify and address special needs student through data analysis and personalized lesson development. The amount of teacher training to support an increase in teacher selection of appropriate materials and appropriate instructional programs online is not sufficient to support the likelihood that the services will be implemented appropriately to affect the learning environment for children. Two three hour sessions are described. There is information regarding justified needs of disabled students, however, the needs of students of diverse backgrounds and first language groups are not addressed as areas to be targeted for assistance.

The strategy to use the technology, as proposed, to allow students to individualize course completion of online assignments, is flexible for students and a reasonable use of additional technology support but there is not enough evidence to support the claim that 7% fewer of the students will be identified for special education services.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #03721L-2 for Chicago Public Schools, #299

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) proposes to use RTT-D funds to explore and develop personalized learning strategies and environments, with particular focus on grades 6-8 in the area of “disciplinary literacy and language skills.” It has named this effort “Next Generation Learning.”

The multifaceted CPS proposal includes investments in teacher training, social-emotional supports, and other elements, but the heart of the vision as it will be experienced by students and teachers, if successful, is to replace course-level marks (grades) with loosely-defined skill-based virtual “badges” and to drive experimentation in the way that students experience learning in and out of classrooms. The district's proposal makes frequent reference to experimentation with technology-supported learning.

The district has not worked out this vision clearly enough to fully articulate how it would work, but it spells out a rough two-prong plan for getting there. First, the district focuses significant energy and investment on a tiny handful of schools that will receive strong district support to pursue very disruptive and unconventional approaches to student learning. These few schools will be the vanguard, watched closely by the district and beyond. Second, the district proposes to spread most of its investment in support of 150 schools that will self-select to serve as “learning labs.” These schools will be supported with time for faculty dialogue and reflection, equipped with improved data systems and

given a lean technology budget that allows for increased use of computing, networking and data by teachers and students. The district argues that this will create the conditions for personalized learning environments to arise in a fairly grassroots fashion at the level of participating schools.

The district's reform vision scores high in the midrange.

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

10

7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) CPS proposes to select 150 willing participants from among its 467 schools with grades 6-8, utilizing an application process that will require support from teachers and the school community. Of these 150 schools, a very small number will be selected and supported as laboratories to try school models that are aggressively different. This appears to represent an unstated strategy choice by the district: it is spreading most of its funding widely on the chance that deep personalization can arise with the support of relatively small school-level investments. The application does not articulate clearly how these schools for deeper investment will be selected. The CPS proposal does not appear to mention a process to ensure that the schools selected will meet the eligibility requirements, but this should pose no obstacle in Chicago. This response is of medium quality.

(b) CPS cannot yet provide a list of participating schools, but this is not required at this time.

(c) The CPS approximation of participating students meets the application requirements.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The CPS Next Generation Learning proposal focuses its investment on a subset of schools, a subset of grades, and a subset of subjects. By concentrating on middle school and on reading, it hopes to identify ways to drive change in a way that will affect long-term metrics of student success. This is a logical hypothesis.

Simultaneously, the district's proposal includes a long list of work items that it argues will support all 6-8 grade students, including those not in schools selected for the focused investments on Next Generation Learning. Most of those investments, like digital language and literacy content for the CPS website and materials to help parents understand student data, seem like workaday progress. A few of the elements, however, have potential for larger effect, notably the technology for enhanced student portfolios, which seems flexible enough to produce significant innovation.

The biggest payoff, however, seems likely to come from learning from schools that elect to really try something different. The application is vague about its expectations for brave change in participating schools. Because the district is leaving so much of the action planning to future thinking by school teams rather than driving a handful of clear trials that it can describe, there is significant reason for concern that schools may spin their wheels for a long time before finding traction.

The plan scores in the high end of the mid range

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

10

8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

CPS provides a careful, technical, and somewhat guarded response to the question of measureable student academic outcomes. The district is clearly deep in the throes of thinking through the implications of major changes to its standards and assessments, and it is difficult to specify targets in such a position. Rather than turn over pages full of "targets TBD," CPS took the time to show its intent as though the "old" system would continue. There is little doubt that Chicago will find a way to set new targets that would, if achieved, represent learning progress and narrowing of gaps. The responses to (c) and (d) set clear expectations for growth in graduation and matriculation rates.

The overall frame of this question, however, is whether the CPS vision is likely to broadly produce improved student learning, narrow gaps, and lead to more academic success -- and if so by how much.

CPS scores in the high range for this criterion. The CPS emphasis on personalization of learning in the middle grades seems a good bet to produce disruptive change for the better.

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	15
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) CPS has raised grade 3-8 ISAT scores steadily for four years, with weaker gains in high school achievement. Graduation and dropout statistics have moved in the hoped-for directions, particularly for Hispanic students, and minority participation in the AP exam has climbed by 25%. This constitutes a clear record of modest, steady success.</p> <p>(b) Chicago has an abundantly clear record of ambition in its reforms of persistently low performing schools, particularly with the “turnaround” model.</p> <p>(c) Chicago Public Schools provides students, parents, educators and its community with better report cards than most districts, including attendance reports and three years of summary information about student performance data. The district has taken a step to make its student data actionable in the form of a system that can send text message alerts to parents about absences and grades. Teachers appear to have access to somewhat more complete data, with student test score data extending back eight years. This is a record of leadership that Chicago can both feel proud of and also build on.</p> <p>Full Points awarded for this consistent track record.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CPS appears to provide transparent access to all of the required data. The unusual nature of this openness is underscored by the district’s recognition by the Government Finance Officers Association.</p> <p>Full Points awarded</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CPS provides documentation of many dimensions in which the district may innovate without regulatory hindrance, including flexibility in redesigning the school day. This is important and tends to lead toward a high score on this criterion.</p> <p>The proposal does not, however, provide evidence of the degree to which its schools will be free to make very significant changes in factors such as class sizes, student-teacher ratios, facilities, and the use of parent volunteers. Because the proposal calls for participating schools to serve as the laboratories for change, the lack of evidence for clear school-level autonomy moderates the score slightly.</p> <p>High points awarded.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The proposal documents strong evidence of engagement from multiple perspectives in its development. The teacher union’s support for this plan is particularly meaningful in the strife-filled context of a strike, and the inclusion of full-release teachers as leaders in its implementation seems to reflect good communication -- it is likely to be of real value. The plan calls for requiring strong formal evidence of site-level teacher support prior to selection of each school for rollout.</p> <p>(b) The many letters of support for the proposal are clearly authentic, in the sense that they are more than copy/paste reproductions of a sample letter. Each letter seems to emphasize support for something different that the author found to like in the plan. A great many emphasized their support for personalized learning through use of digital badges.</p> <p>Full points awarded</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Any district as large as Chicago will have centers of innovation hidden within it. In its response to D1c, for example, the application mentions Benito Juarez Community Academy, which appears already to have made time flexible in the pursuit of a learning goal. The district’s process of selecting participating schools may quickly uncover additional examples of personalization, but it does not appear to have a specific plan in place to seek them out.</p>		

In preparation of its proposal, CPS has already conducted a strong district-wide analysis of needs and gaps in the educational process. This analysis did not uncover the current status of personalized learning environments, but it led to the district's decision to focus its energies on adolescent literacy, an area that it concluded was a core lever for interrupting persistent underachievement. It also uncovered other needs and gaps such as the importance of providing for social-emotional services.

The proposal scores in the medium range for this criterion.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i) The CPS proposal relies on teachers to provide students with an understanding of the connection between what they are learning and their goals. This makes sense, but does not appear to be materially different from the status quo. After year 3, the personalized learning maps in ISLE may help with the district's pursuit of this objective.

(a)(ii) The proposal describes a desirable outcome: students setting personal learning goals with the support of their teachers, discussing and reflecting on these goals with parents who come to events such as report card pick up day. This seems a good vision, but the plan does not make plain how the district will cause it to happen. The plan for "digital badges" is exciting and provocative, though vague. For example, the proposal describes that badges will allow students to earn "credit" for demonstrated skills, but it does not explain how the students will experience this credit, or even whether badges earned will be visible to others.

(a)(iii) The district's plan for creation of deep learning experiences has three elements: increased use of project-based learning in the classroom; increased use of digital resources; and increased depth of partnerships to enable experiences beyond the classroom. The plan calls for investments and achievable partnerships in support of these elements, which makes progress credible.

(a)(iv) The district appears to provide students with significant opportunities for exposure to diversity, including experiments in digital solutions to connect students with peers in other continents.

(a)(v) The CPS proposal relies heavily on the development of a successful system of digital "badges" as a way to extend beyond the academic content standards and incorporate deeper skills and traits. This is really exciting stuff, and it is clear that this idea has captured the imagination of many partners who wrote letters of support. In order to make it real, however, the district has a great deal of work to do, starting with a credible description of how it will work and who will administer it. This is more of a compelling vision than a high-quality plan, as required for this element.

(b)(i) The plan calls for choosing participating schools selectively, emphasizing those schools that are eager to personalize instruction. The plan includes opportunities for dialogue and professional development to support the pursuit of personalization. This is probably all that can be hoped for at this stage for a district the size of Chicago.

(b)(ii) The district proposes intensive focus on and investment in 25 schools where it will encourage pushing the limits of school redesign, starting quickly. The budget does not appear to include funds to support facilities changes in order to support models that require spaces larger or smaller than ordinary classrooms. Nevertheless, these 25 schools will be the places to watch for real variety to emerge in the creation of innovative approaches.

(b)(iii) The proposal includes a plan for expanding access to high quality content, especially digital content.

(b)(iv) (a) The district's ISLE project appears to directly address the requirements. It will provide frequently updated individual student data. (b) The district's plan for personalizing learning recommendations appears less developed. The plan calls for access to a large body of digital resources, but there is not a clear plan in place to guide individual choices among those resources.

(b)(v) The CPS plan for Next Generation Learning seems generally to harmonize with the idea of individual accommodations for high-need students. For example, it includes investment in a new tool for monitoring of behavioral and academic indicators.

(c) Because the plan for personalization is left to the schools, CPS does not have a strong response to how students will be trained or supported. The plan envisions that teachers will use their summer work time to prepare for a Student Exploration Day in year one. This is a strong strategy to force clarity in a timely way.

The proposal on the whole does not define what a personal learning environment will look like, but it creates credible conditions for innovation. Points awarded at the top of the medium range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- (a)(i) The plan includes strong investment in training (especially through summer institutes) and coaching (through the Quest Center, TAP and the use of team leaders.)
 - (a)(ii) The plan for supporting teachers puts enormous focus on the Summer Institutes. However, it seems that the first ten-day summer institute, a major investment, will occur prior to the creation of the tools and systems that CPS is planning to rely on for personalization of learning environments. This rush will create urgency, but it may negatively affect the district’s capacity to roll out a system that faculties will view as credible and attractive. Also, the plan calls for summer institutes not to be sustained beyond the term of the grant.
 - (a)(iii) The CPS plan for development and use of data to measure academic progress is strong and creative. For example, the requirement that curriculum and instruction vendors provide student data in a compatible format is of particular note.
 - (a)(iv) CPS has been a leader in adoption of a teacher and principal evaluation process that provides for frequent observation and feedback. However, the plan to quickly begin putting teachers through 80+ hours of online training modules seems isolating and dull.
 - (b)(i) The CPS investment in a personalized dashboard pilot for 800 teachers seems a constructive response to this requirement.
 - (b)(ii) The CPS proposal lists many possible learning resources, but does not appear to describe how teachers will constructively decide which among those resources will best help them serve their students. The summer institutes will provide some help in this area, but this is a response of only medium quality.
 - (b)(iii) The plan in its early stages seems likely to be a “let a thousand flowers bloom” strategy. Teachers will try many tools and systems, and some will work better than others. By providing a mechanism for discussion of what works and what doesn’t, the PPLCs would seem to provide a rough filter, acceptable for this stage of the project. This is a response of medium quality.
 - (c)(i) The plan will provide a strong flow of information to help school leadership teams improve their understanding of their schools. The new learning management platform seems likely to improve the flow of information and feedback.
 - (c)(ii) The proposal asserts that CPS will use the flow of information from Next Generation Learning to tune and improve student outcomes. The weakness in this plan is that the district does not yet know what sort of data will come in, at what level of quality, and with what biases. CPS will learn as it goes. This is a response of medium quality.
 - (d) The district’s plan for professional development of its existing staff is strong in the area of personalization, and its use of the Danielson Framework has been shown to be effective. However, the plan is weak in the area of building a pipeline of qualified teachers candidates. For example, the district does not appear to have metrics for the quality of preparation that teacher candidates receive in the pre-service programs that the district depends on. The district does not present evidence that its investments in teacher retention have been effective.
- Overall, the district's response scores in the medium range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- (a) The proposal creates funded leadership positions within the leadership of the CPS central office, a strong assurance that the project will not wallow in obscurity. The strong and visible participation of union leadership also supports the project’s chances of success.
- (b) The CPS response indicates that school leadership teams will have substantial autonomy in the ways required. For example, the CPS principals have the authority to hire middle grades teachers they deem best suited to available positions so long as they meet quality criteria.

Principals do not appear to have unusual power to remove teachers in CPS. The applicant mentions no limitations on flexibility in class size or use of non-credentialed staff in supporting roles, and indicates that principals will have increasing flexibility in hiring as increasing portions of school-level budgets are transferred to principal control. This is a strong response, particularly in a large urban district.

(c) The CPS response does not include a clearly developed plan to give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on mastery rather than time on topic. The example of Benito Juarez Community Academy, which has provided extra time for students to avoid failing a class, is a provocative exception to the rule. This is an important gap in the district's proposal; the district appears to have very little experience to work from.

(d) The CPS response gestures at multiple approaches that might enable it to give students multiple avenues to prove mastery, including teacher-generated tasks, digital badges and adaptive software aligned with standards. None of these elements appear to be in place at present.

(e) CPS appears to provide necessary assistance to students with disabilities and English Learners. The plan does not appear to break important new ground in providing such assistance.

The overall score for this area is in the medium range. The district has very few formal obstacles to work around, but very limited support in place for personalization of learning and teaching.

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

(a) The CPS plan relies extensively on the use of digital resources. The plan calls for providing students with very inexpensive computers or tablets, equipped with very inexpensive software and services. It calls for ensuring networking capacity throughout the participating middle grades classrooms and the students' places of residence through a partnership with Comcast. This plan's budget is heroically lean, and the scope of implementation depends on getting extraordinarily good pricing. But this is good planning, and merits high marks.

(b) The first-year plan for technical support is very sketchy, as the district cannot describe the tools or platforms that will be in place. But the plan at least is clear about which resource will be responsible for figuring it out for years two and beyond. This is a response of medium quality.

(c) The district brief response might seem to suggest that it has not to have given significant thought, yet, to the question of data interoperability, but its response in C2aiii is encouraging: participating vendors will be required to use open formats.

(d) The district's work to prove out data interoperability in partnership with Chicago's charter schools is a powerful and important commitment.

The applicant scores in the high range for its responses for this group of criteria.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

CPS is about to undertake a large number of complex changes. The proposal to create a cabinet-level Office Of Strategy Management is a suitable way to help respond to the complexities of implementation while enabling leadership to keep the big picture (that is, "it's about personalization, remember?") clearly in mind. This investment is of particular importance in the context of changing standards and assessments. The plan invests appropriately in the capacity for providing data and analysis to support work in this complex area, with \$2 million allocated for expert support from CCSR.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

CPS describes a set of activities that will help support effective communication with internal and external stakeholders, already a relative area of strength for the district. In this context the applicant neglects to mention its plan for digital badges, which stand to prove quite engaging for students, parents and partners.

High points awarded

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CPS provides a strong list of performance indicators that satisfies the requirements, if implemented. Two of the indicators stand out as being important but skeletal:</p> <p>The district calls for digital badges to play an important role as an indication of student and family engagement, but significant work remains to be defined and executed to turn this vision into reality.</p> <p>The district’s plan for an “on-track” indicator for college and career appears to depend on a status-quo system of courses and grades. If personalized learning is implemented in a way that changes the notion of course grades and permits flexibility in learning time, this metric would need redefinition.</p> <p>Despite these gaps, the district’s response is of high quality.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district presents a thoughtful plan to evaluate the effectiveness of its investments related to RTT-D, including both quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The district’s inclusion of draft research questions demonstrates its inclination to attend proactively to metrics of effectiveness. The district’s relationship with CCSR makes this plan particularly credible.</p> <p>Full points awarded.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The applicant’s budget claims that the activities it envisions will be almost exclusively powered by grant funding through RTT-D. Only \$1.2 million of the proposed \$41.2 million budget will come from any other source, and those funds are expected in the first two years. On the plus side, this means that there are no significant external dependencies for the project with regard to funding. It also makes accounting easier. However, the more likely case is that there is going to be some interplay with other funds that have not been represented in this plan.</p> <p>(b) As mentioned in comments for D2a, the budget seems heroically lean but plausible in its provision for critical hardware and software. By contrast, the budget seems excessively lean (to the point of straining credibility) in the plan for digital badges, which is marked for less than a million dollars of investment despite the requirements for partner engagement, training and software development. It seems very unlikely that the district can deliver on the high hopes and promises for this aspect of the plan without additional funding. However, this area seems ripe for partnership and fundraising.</p> <p>(c) The plan clearly and ruthlessly identifies one-time expenses, and presents a bare-bones “sustainability budget” for a select subset of activities to be sustained beyond the grant period. The district-level “sustainability budget” is reckoned at \$1.4 million per year, including \$1 million for a continuing license for a diagnostic assessment system for struggling students; to continue a subset of school-level investments (including hardware and software) would cost another \$1.4 million. The district’s response admits to uncertainty about the costs associated with sustaining digital badges. This analysis is a high-quality response.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's sustainability plan devolves to the schools the decision about whether to maintain critical portions of the plan, including choices about hardware and software purchases. This seems to expose the plan to some risk of undercutting the district's capacity to secure hardware and software at the fantastically low prices presented in its budget. The sustainability plan also appears to dramatically underestimate the cost of the student exploration day, a major area of expense. The sustainability plan makes no assumptions about philanthropic participation in Chicago Schools, which seems unnecessarily pessimistic; surely the community's donors would find some of this careful plan worthy of sustaining.</p>		

The sustainability plan is incomplete, but still of value. It is scored in the midrange.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The district offers a weak response to this Competitive Preference Priority.

1) The CPS proposal includes important investments in student and family supports. It provides a list of groups (CASEL, Safe and Civil Schools, SGA) that will partner with the district in this work, and the letters of support from those organizations make it clear that these partnerships are of long standing. The application does not, however, provide information to evaluate the significance of these partnerships. This is a weak response.

2) Though the actions these partners describe appear to be focused on social and emotional supports, the desired results proposed for this priority are almost entirely educational in nature, rather than representing broad and measurable advancement in community and family supports. This response is of medium quality.

3) The proposal for use of data is appropriate, inexpensive and likely to be effective. The plan describes how CARE teams of CPS-employed social workers, psychologists and other specialists will collaborate to target resources for maximum effect. The proposal implies that these teams will include members of partner organizations. Again, the applicant's response does not provide information to evaluate the significance of these partnerships, which reduces the response to medium quality.

4) The proposal describes a three-tiered RTI process for incidents, but does not provide persuasive detail of how it will work with the city and other partners to integrate educational and social-emotional services.

5) The proposal appears to call for schools to fill out forms (a "needs and resources assessment") and then build their own capacity to do something constructive, but it is not clear what sort of action is envisioned and how the school will be helped. The picture may be somewhat better for 45 high-need schools that implement the CARE team model, which may help with identifying local assets to support them.

6) The district sets clear performance measures with weak targets, and does not provide a logical explanation for the selection of benchmarks. For example, there is no clear connection between the plan and the district's forecast to reduce its 21,000 incidents of misconduct, 13,000 suspensions and 411 expulsions by 2% per year, or why it will achieve a 5% reduction in just one of those measures in just one of the years of the project.

Overall, the CPS response speaks strongly to its intention to attend to students' social and emotional needs, but weakly to its use of partnerships to address those needs. It is a response of medium quality.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Chicago approach to this competition is two-pronged.

On one hand, it places a small, concentrated investment in a very small number of schools that will undoubtedly move forward with personalization of learning. In these schools, students will advance their learning according to their individual readiness and teachers will direct their energies toward the learning needs of individual students. Computing will play a very strong role in at least some of these few schools.

On the other hand, the Chicago approach makes a very diffuse bet, spreading most of its RTT-D dollars to create bare-bones conditions for teachers and school leaders to invent their own approaches to personalization. This enormous investment is spread thinly and with little clear direction of what is expected other than boldness. The likely case for most of these schools is that they will basically continue to work more or less the way they have done, teaching in batches and grading as usual.

The wild card, and the factor that ultimately makes this proposal sufficient to meet Absolute Priority 1, is its embryonic vision for "digital badges." The district's proposed investment is ridiculously tiny, but the potential implications are far-reaching.

Total	210	163
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	3

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The CPS proposes investing \$2 million to provide personalized digital education options for special needs students. The bulk of funds would be invested in purchase of licenses for "curated" educational software options. The district explains that there are over 100,000 educational software options on the market for tablets, and teachers need help to find the effective ones. For this budget supplement, the district argues without persuasive evidence that for this group of students competency is best demonstrated in the form of student videos. The proposal includes three training sessions of three hours length for 250 teachers.

The district's proposal for this budget supplement appears in most ways to be indistinguishable from its general proposal: enable personalized digital learning, including the use of online learning tools, and provide investment in professional development to give teachers the chance to make it work. In fact, the proposal is so similar that it begs the question of why it is necessary at all. For example, it budgets \$60 per student for just 5,000 students to receive the benefit of personalized learning plans and a parent-facing dashboard. But personalized learning plans and dashboards appear to be a primary element of the district's core proposal, and the narrative for this supplement does not explain clearly why that core proposal will not work for students with special needs. If it does not, it would, in fact, call into doubt the premise that the district's application that it is personalizing learning and teaching.

The need for good advice to navigate the digital learning options for students with special needs is real, but also not at all unique to CPS. The narrative does not explain why this investment should be internal to CPS.

There may be reasons to spend extra for personalized digital learning options focused on students with special needs, but this proposal is not of high quality.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #03721L-3 for Chicago Public Schools, #299

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 information presented from the plan will support the applicant's comprehensive and coherent reform vision.
- (1) Standards and Assessment - the district will launch Common Core State Standards and will emphasize literacy which will be the focus for the Next Generation Learning. It will also implement MAP assessments 3 times per year in elem schools, ACT's EPAS series of exams in high schools to capture student growth and inform instructional practice, the state will implement the PARCC exam (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career), which is being developed to align with CCCS that will be implemented in multiple states.
- (2) Data Systems - the district will implement an enterprise data analytics dashboard powered by the info stored in the

data warehouse. This dashboard access will be extended to teachers and will incorporate profiles, diagnostic assessment, adaptive software programs and non cognitive skills. The district was awarded a state grant to integrate student data and share educational resources and tools.

- (3) Effective Teachers and Leaders - the district will implement a new, comprehensive evaluation system. This system evaluates teachers on multiple metrics including student growth, and intends to provide teachers and school leaders actionable info to improve teacher practice.
- (4) Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools - the district has transformed some of the most struggling schools through implementation of the turnaround, restart and transformation models. The district will leverage these reforms with Next Generation Learning's investments in PD, learning technology, and data infrastructure to accelerate student growth in literacy and language skills, helping s's get and remain on track for college and career.

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

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant's approach to implement its reform proposal will support a quality LEA level and school level implementation.
- The district will invite middle grades teachers and principals to apply to participate in Next Generation Learning, but does not speak to elementary school teachers.
- The district will select 150 middle grades school teams composed of literacy, math, science, and social science teachers.
- The district will consider equitable selection across the city and diversity in the school communities.
- The district expects that selected schools will be representative of city demographics.

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

10

7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- The information presented will somewhat support the applicant's plan for reform and change.
- S's entering high school on track to graduate will have a strong foundation in the academic and non academic skills skills required to succeed.
- The plan will service s's in grades 6-8 before the critical transition to high school, which will ultimately result in a long term decrease in drop out rates and improvements in student graduation, college enrollment, and degree attainment for participating s's.
- The plan describes enhancing student portfolios, training materials for parents, teachers, and students on accessing and interpreting student data and includes a system wide digital badge to recognize non academic skills.
- A diagnostic assessment tool will be available for struggling students, digital language and literacy content will be available on the districts website and professional development resources will be provided for middle grades teachers.
- Overall, the plan appears to somewhat describe how reform will be scaled up and translated to support change. The plan makes no mention of bridging the gap from elementary to middle school years.

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

10

10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- The applicant's vision will result in improved student learning and performance. The plan will do this by:
- establishing proficiency targets that would be amended to match the annual proficiency targets established in that plan
- ISAT performance for grades 3-8, PSAE for grade 11, IAA for s's requiring an alternative assessment in grades 3-8 and 11, NWEA and MAP assessments in grades 3-8 and EPAS assessment series in grades 9-11
- reducing the difference between the percentage of s's meeting or exceeding state standards in the subgroup and the comparison group by half in six years
- reducing the difference between the percentage of s's graduating and 90% by half in six years
- reducing the difference between the percentage of graduates enrolling in college and 90% by half in six years
- as part of the ISLE, the ISBE will partner with a consortium of higher ed institutions to intergrate their data into the Illinois Longitudinal Data System to track college enrollment.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	15
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has a clear record of success demonstrating the ability to improve student learning outcomes by: • the percentage of s's meeting or exceeding state standards which increased by 14.2 percentage points in reading, 16.5 in math and 9.6 in science • student outcomes in high school that have improved city wide and across ethnic groups, graduation rates have increased since 2008, while dropout rates have decreased, while college enrollment rates have risen progressively • implementing four school improvement models to reform schools • investing significant funding and staff over time to track, house, and analyze data both internally and with the public • robust data and analytics platform that is one of the first in the nation to link teachers with their s's growth 		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated the ability for increasing transparency in processes, practices, and investments. • The district will host 3 public posting budget hearings, having a city wide Tele-Town Hall meeting and propose budget online for public comment. • The district will provide budget tools on its website to allow users to more easily review all spending, individual school budgets, dept budgets, salaries and positions. 		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. • The district faces no legal, statutory, or regulatory obstacles to implementing the Next Generation Learning Elements (professional development, teacher evaluations, technology, redesign of middle school models, system of digital badges, social emotional supports, and data system) • The district and school leaders have the autonomy needed to implement personalized learning approaches, such as introductory technology into their classrooms, designing their school day, and creating learning pathways based on student interest and goals. 		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated evidence of successful stakeholder engagement. • The first belt is the Local School Council and the second is Community Action Council. • An online tool was posted on the district website to solicit feedback from site visitors. • The applicant presented letters of support from foundations, advisory boards, the mayor, public library, city council, the senate, congress, the teachers union and a plethora of many more. 		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated some evidence from the plan for an analysis of needs and gaps. • Adolescent Literacy which will promote a focus on literacy development for all teachers K-12 to jumpstart student growth in reading and writing. • Professional Development which will improve collaboration among teachers across subject areas by cultivating professional learning communities in person and online. • New Roles for Teachers which will blaze a new trail for teacher career paths in the district. • Social Emotional Learning Supports which will provide schools with a package of strategies and referrals. • Data and Training to make design decisions and incorporate new data into existing systems. • Participating schools will receive an infusion of technology resources and training • Digital Badge System will address the development need of all early adolescents. • The plan does not mention what the principal will be doing. 		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated evidence to support that approach to learning. • S's set and pursue goals aligned to their interests, priorities, and grade level standards. • Deep learning experiences will be developed through project based learning. S's will use web conferencing, receive intense Chinese language, take a trip to China, and Skype to maintain language skills. • S's create badges to develop higher order thinking and soft skills while making connections between school and outside world to stress relevance of thinking. • In Next Generation Learning Classrooms, teachers will be given tools and training and management training to differentiate instruction; a cohort of schools will be identified to work with external consultants to explore new school models and redesign classrooms to implement an innovative model in year 2. • Schools will be provided with infrastructure improvements necessary to support increase in technology use. • The learning initiative will provide s's with an enhanced digital profile for goal setting and monitoring progress toward goals. • Personalized learning recommendations will be provided to s's through ongoing teacher assignments and technology tools that use algorithms to make personalized learning recommendations; tools and resources will be aimed explicitly at supporting high need s's at participating schools. • Multifaceted professional development includes experts in the field, coaching, professional learning community structures, and teacher created resources. • Overall, the applicant articulated a plan that is sufficient to demonstrate learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. 		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has presented an approach to support teaching and leading that will help educators improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress. • Teachers will participate in a comprehensive two week Summer Institute where they receive 60 hours of PD delivered by external experts, the district, and teachers union quest center staff. • The Summer Institute and PD modules will provide a foundation of middle grades instruction, will adopt content and instruction to support their s's optimal learning approaches. • Teachers will be trained on using a new diagnostic assessment to monitor skill development, in addition, data generated through the system will be free of cost; improving teacher effectiveness using the district's Framework for Teaching. • Next Generation Learning teachers will have a single point of access to multiple sources of actionable data and accompanying tools to identify optimal learning approaches to meet student academic needs and interests. 		

- NGL teachers and schools will have access to and train on a variety of additional digital and nondigital resources and tools.
- Using digital interventions, teachers will identify whether these tools produce the intended impact and make adjustments as needed based on student performance data, and this information can be fed centrally to the district to demonstrate the efficacy of digital tools in accelerating student progress in district's classrooms.
- With student growth assessments being tied to individual teachers, evaluation observations, and ways to track participation in PD training, coaching, and use of PD modules, principals will be able to document the efficacy of PD resources in improving their teacher practice and increasing student achievement.
- The Project Director will monitor data in the context of specific tools and make programmatic adjustments as necessary.
- The district's approach to increasing the number of s's who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals includes: recruiting, rewarding and retaining.
- Recruiting- the district presented partners with the Frameworks for Teaching and hopes the partners will align their training to these Frameworks.
- Rewarding- the district will award stipends to those teachers who take on additional responsibilities.
- Retaining- NGL is providing teachers multiple grant supported opportunities to take on leadership roles.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated evidence to support the practices, policies and rules. • The district's executive office providing oversight for grant funded activities to drive, monitor and support the scale up of cross functional strategic initiatives; the district is redesigning the role and priorities of principals to give them the tools, freedom, and control necessary to do what it takes to make their schools successful. • The district designed the new Chicago Leadership Collaborative and selected partners to develop a robust pipeline of principal talent. • Students progressing at their own pace through a combo of personalized learning maps, teacher recommendations, and content generated through student interest based on personal goals aligned with college and career ready expectations. • The district is also exploring formalized mechanisms for flexible pacing that tie student progress and credit to mastery of content. • Teachers can access student mastery through performance tasks, diagnostic assessments, standardized state exams, digital badges, and embedded assessments in adaptive software, online social learning platforms, and internet based content tagging systems. • The district will implement a UDL approach in conjunction with tools that personalized instruction, the UDL is often employed in the context with Special Ed, ensuring all s's have physical, cultural and linguistic access to learning by tailoring how s's receive info, engage with info, and demonstrate mastery to student needs, learning styles and interests. • ELL will be able to access dictionaries to ensure they understand meaning of English terms. 		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant somewhat demonstrated evidence to support the school infrastructure. • All s's and families will have access online to the portal, low income families can have access through Internet Essentials, a partnership with the district if s's receive free meals. • Teachers and principals have access to a dashboard. • Having an orientation process the summer before to highlight the technology and introduce s's to what they will be introduced to in middle schools. • Using technology that allows parents and s's to export their data in a hard copy format. • Automating data sharing between district and charter school data systems. • Overall, the partnership described could have been more detailed. 		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated evidence of a successful strategy for implementing a continuous improvement process. • Teacher professional development efforts to increase teacher effectiveness. • Technology investments to support teacher personalization efforts and provide s's and parents increased access to information on student goals and progress. • Professional development and technology investments to increase student engagement, accelerate student growth in literacy and language skills and help s's get on track and stay on track for college and career. • The aforementioned metrics will be used to populate data dashboards created for Next Generation Learning to monitor progress regularly. • Implementation monitoring will include frequent collection, organization, review of cross district stakeholder input whose contributions will support and sustain progress. 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support the ongoing communication and engagement. • Providing forums to update stakeholders on progress, gather feedback to inform continuous improvement, and engage partners in supporting critical aspects of the initiative; updates will be shared on district websites. • The district will build on current efforts to engage stakeholders in creating a shared understanding of quality schools and progress toward their goals. • Overall, it seems there could be stronger strategies listed here to support ongoing communication and engagement. 		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has demonstrated evidence to support the performance measures by: • identifying a comprehensive set of targets and leading metrics to thoroughly track and evaluate the progress of Next Generation Learning • utilizing metrics for their ability to clearly and accurately measure the ultimate outcome of college and career readiness through ACT benchmarks, using a variety research based metrics and classroom observation rubrics based on the district's Framework For Teaching • utilizing strategic checkpoints that are built into the Framework for assessing performance in engaging s's early and often in their college and career goals and strengths • the overall aim of this balanced set of outcomes and leading indicators give the project team, district leadership, and other stakeholders a clear view of progress toward goals with sufficient opportunity to course correct where necessary • the six short term, intermediate and long term outcomes will improve the measure over time and gauge implementation progress by: • assessing the impact of professional development both in relation to personalized pedagogical strategies and teacher use of technology to support personalization • measuring responses on surveys and developing items to survey parents to gauge understanding of progress • analyzing data in comparison with student performance on annual and interim assessments to understand the potential impact on student achievement • calculating growth score on MAP will gauge student progress and assess the degree to which increased personalization impacts student learning • utilizing ACT college and career ready benchmarks will gauge whether participating s's remain on track in high school • tracking improvements in teacher performance will assess the impact of professional development efforts and allow the project team to provide additional supports where needed 		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		

- The applicant has demonstrated evidence to support the investment in evaluating effectiveness.
- The evaluation will provide a rigorous examination of the effectiveness of the intervention of improving student achievement, classroom instruction, and student support.
- It will also provide information on the factors that facilitate or prevent the implementation of personalized learning in the middle grades.
- The independent evaluator's team includes personnel with extensive experience conducting school based efficacy studies, including studies with randomized control designs, short interrupted time-series, cohort comparisons, and qualitative methods to be used for this evaluation.
- The independent evaluator's team has substantive expertise and publication histories in the areas of college readiness, middle grades, technology use, and non cognitive factors.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support the budget for the project. • The district will leverage existing funding, staff, and resources by capitalizing on one time grant funded costs that benefit the district beyond the grant period. • The district identifies one time costs such as project management, professional learning, school emotional learning, data, and education technology. • The district identifies ongoing expenses at the district level and school level. • The district identified funding, which includes principal discretionary funds, public funds and private funds. • Overall, the budget is difficult to understand and does not appear to be sufficient enough to carry out the plan. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant hasn't articulated a plan for sustainability after the grant term has ended. • The district will hire personnel staff to manage the grant, offering fringe benefits, and travel costs, equipment, supplies, contractual, and stipends. • There was no mention for summer school pay for teachers. The pay was not included in the budget. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support the competitive preference priority. • The district will leverage existing relationships to establish a partnership to provide social emotional and behavioral support services, and has identified 10 population level groups with results including educational, family and community. • The district included track indicators through current district data college methods through student survey responses, parent survey responses, misconduct report, school climate report, attendance rates, suspension rates, expulsion rates, district Early Warning Indicators system and 8th grade EXPLORE exam results. • The district will use data analysis and collaborative problem solving to match s's to the most appropriate interventions and regularly monitor student progress; and will use the models as innovation labs to generate and document effective practices. • The district will improve over time due to the partnership continuing with progress monitoring at school level by teachers and teacher teams. The partnerships will train teachers and school staff to update the assessment annually and will 		

leverage substantial existing partnerships with city agencies and youth and family service providers to assist each school team in establishing a sustainable partner and resource base aligned to specific school needs.

- The district will work with each school to complete a needs and resources assessment to determine needs and service gaps; the needs assessment will be guided by the partnership to inventory existing resources and programs at the school level against demonstrative quantitative and qualitative demonstrations of need to identify gaps in existing services and eliminate redundancies.
- The partnerships will engage parents on training of student data, adolescent development, and social emotional and behavioral needs.
- The district will have quarterly meetings to assess progress and make appropriate adjustments.
- Overall, not enough detail to support what the decision making process is and how it involves parents and students in the process.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant clearly articulates an ambitious approach to goals of accelerating student achievement utilizing the Next Generation Learning Initiative that will personalize instruction in 150 middle grades classrooms in Chicago by improving teacher practice and supporting the development of literacy and language skills aligned with college and career ready standards.</p>		

Total	210	175
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	8
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has somewhat demonstrated evidence to support the optional budget supplement. • The district will develop and utilize a tech based personalized learning tool to match special needs s's with the right learning resources. • The district hopes to duplicate this plan in other school districts across the country. • The district wants to create a system to address Response to Intervention through personalized learning plans on iPads or other tablet computing devices. • The district will diagnose needs using the districts s's assessment data, help special needs s's set their own academic goals, personalize each s's learning plan with the best tablet app and online learning resources, challenge s's to complete assignments and lessons in educational app and online resources, monitor and track the progress of each student through a teacher, student and parent dashboard. • The proposed budget adequately details the project costs. • Overall, not really sure if iPads are needed to do progress monitoring using RTI. 		