



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0430AZ-1 for County of Maricopa Buckeye Elementary District #33

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	7
(A)(1) Reviewer Comments: While the district details a plan for supporting students in personalized learning environments, the majority of their work lies in individual learning devices. The district does not provide adequate explanation as to how the environments will be individualized for learning through the use of electronic devices.		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
(A)(2) Reviewer Comments: All schools within the district were selected for this program. The district did not provide a rationale for why the schools were selected. The district does provide a list of those schools along with the targets for student achievement growth. The table of schools does identify the number of students needed for participation.		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
(A)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district has listed several activities within its goals for improving student performance. While the activities may lead to improvements in student learning, there is not a clear logic model that demonstrates how the activities work together as a system for improvement.		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
(A)(4) Reviewer Comments: This district addressed student achievement goals for identified subgroups. Some goals are ambitious yet not achievable. Also, some goals do not demonstrate a realistic trajectory of growth, expecting equal growth for each subsequent year. Achievement gaps were not addressed. Graduation rates were not address, nor were college enrollment rates.		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: Data presented does not demonstrate student growth consistently for the district. While the district has has some growth among grade levels, it did not present growth by school building. Further, cohort student groups, in many cases, showed decline as passed through each grade. Ambitious and significant reforms for each building were not addressed. The district has tried to provide additional support staff, including ELL educators, but data were not presented to demonstrate progress.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA (2) processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:		

The district has addressed its requirement to share the necessary expenditures. It holds regular meetings to construct the budget. Further, it allows for the salaries and expenditures to be made public, upon request.

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

The district addresses, without specificity, sufficient funds to support this work. Further, the necessary personnel are identified to meet compliance issues at the state and federal levels. The district has not clearly demonstrated sufficient autonomy to implement personalized learning environments.

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

The district worked to provide opportunity for input in the design on the plan, but there does not seem to be much presented as to the revision of the final application. The district appears to have the support of local stakeholders, with 5 of 6 elementary of signing letters of support as well as the mayor of the town. Further, there is a signature from the local education association. The application does not provide a lot of detail as to how various stakeholders worked through the application creation process.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The district has worked to address its student achievement gaps in the plan. It had demonstrated the need for professional development for staff in the use of technology as well as more pedagogical support. The district believes the virtual desktop of resources will allow for greater student engagement and reduction in lost instructional time. The district has created a logic model that focuses on remediation of students, with a support coming from Common Core resources.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

While the district has worked on curriculum maps with teachers and students, it has not addressed how student can learn the content individually. The district states each student will have access to digital content through a device, but wireless connectivity is an obstacle for some students at home, which limits their personalized learning opportunities. The district has made a sound effort to provide additional resources to students. The district has not defined how students will know why they need to learn something. The district has not specifically addressed the high-quality instructional approaches to be used in this program, stating only that professional development in technology and pedagogy will be provided. There is no discussion of the accommodations for high needs students. Further, there is little evidence of the mechanisms used to help students understand the tools and resources being provided.

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

The district has allowed site-specific PD plans to better meet the needs of each school. One common element appears to be the Bell-to-Bell training to improve instructional approaches and maximize learning time. The district does not explain how this training helps personalize the learning experience of students. The use of technology specific PD will also be helpful in teachers using the devices as well as supporting the students' usage of the devices. The continued work with curriculum maps will support the district's educators in better understanding and teaching the content. Feedback procedures are a component of the teacher evaluation, but the district does not address if feedback occurs after the implementation of professional development. The district states its student assessment data system will allow for more tailored instruction, but it does not explain how that data are used to personalize learning.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has provided additional staff members to support content knowledge acquisition, but no individual or role was identified to support a personalized learning structure. The district allows its school principal and leadership teams to make necessary instructional decisions, but it does not give example of the type of decisions that have been, or will be, made. The district provides no explanation for students to progress based upon mastery instead of seat time. The district explains that there are multiple manners to learn and demonstrate learning of the content, but no discussion is made about mastery of standards at multiple times. The district has made purchases specifically designated as resources for students with special concerns, such as English Language Learners.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: While the district proposes purchased personalized learning devices for each student, it does not fully address wireless issues at home. It will allow school computer labs to be open two nights per week to mitigate some of the issues, but students do not have fully equal access to the same learning opportunities. Professional support is provided for educators, and educators are expected to support students with technical assistance, but little evidence is stated for the level of support for parents other than a Parent Expo and support at the computer labs two nights per week. The district does provide a student assessment system that provides data for all stakeholders - students, parents, and educators. The district has worked to have the student information system and the student assessment system linked to share data. No other systems were addressed.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district Race to the Top committee will be the primary source of review for continuous improvement. There are Child Study team at each building to review data, but the district does not provide a comprehensive plan or approach to the subject of continued improvement for this reform effort. It stresses the needs for ongoing growth and change, but it does not sufficiently describe a process for it.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district does not identify strategies to gather input from outside stakeholders. It states that input is important, but it does not address how it will elicit input. The district does have Child Study teams to collect and review data for educators, but there are many stakeholders that are not included clearly in the communication process.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district addresses the need to focus on math due to low scores for the district and multiple buildings. Within its rationale, the district does not address how personalized learning environments will directly lead to gains in student achievement. The district does not sufficiently explain how these measure will lead to student improvement.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: The district provide a few examples of evaluation strategies, such as administrator walk-throughs, participation rates for professional development, and student performance measures, but those strategies do not indicate a high-quality plan for evaluation. While the district wants to improve student performance, it has not established a strong link between the programs offered, the impact on teachers and administrators, and the result in student achievement.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The budget narrative does not provide a clear rationale for its intended purchases. Throughout much of the narrative there is little clear discussion as to what the funds will be used for, except for personalized learning devices. There is not a clear delineation between funds that will be used for one time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs in the budget.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The budget narrative provides limited focus and clarity as to how the project will be sustained to be on the scope of the grant award timeline. The district states that some state and local funds have already been used to purchase the personal learning devices, but it does not state how much funding will be used to sustain the initiative. The district does identify some federal funds by name in its sustainability efforts.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The district has demonstrated efforts to work with local organizations to support and sustain its efforts for improved student learning. The various organizations address address the specific needs of students and demonstrate clear goals for improvement. The district has not provided clearly measurable goals, though, in its report of how organizations would support improved student learning.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: It is clear that the district is attempting to improve student learning for its elementary school buildings. What is not clear is a focus on personalized learning environments. Throughout the report, the district talks about personalized learning devices, and it focuses heavily on technology resources for improvement in student learning. While there are components of personalized learning environments with in the district application, a comprehensive and coherent plan has not been developed. There appears to be a great focus on teacher led instruction through the use of formative assessments, technology resources, and curriculum maps. There is not strong evidence to support that students are in control of their learning nor that they have significant input into the direction of their learning.		

Total	210	131
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0430AZ-2 for County of Maricopa Buckeye Elementary District #33

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 Buckeye Elementary School District (BESD) articulated a comprehensive approach to supporting individualized student progress through:

- the use of virtual desktops for continued accessibility to personal student data
- individual student devices that potentially connect to the District's performance database
- expanding the current District's data system to allow access for key stakeholders to student data and to inform instruction immediately, maximize instruction time, and provide immediate feedback to students.

The BESD described an all-encompassing vision that connects home and school through student performance databases, but also addresses the varied needs of learners, especially targeted populations such as FARMs, ESOL, and special education including impacted gender and ethnicities (302 ESOL students; 639 students enrolled in special education programs).

BESD set achievable goals for improvement of student performance in math for students in Grades 3-8, increasing yearly by 5% beginning in 2013 and using 2012 as baseline data as measured by the state assessment. Strategies to minimize the achievement gap included using benchmark assessments to identify additional student support.

BESD included additional instructional strategies to complement the virtual desktops and individual student devices: data analysis (present levels); small group instruction; one-on-one instruction; and, supplemental instruction as needed. All instructional strategies address the individual needs of students.

The school district adequately presented comprehensive ideas to increase student performance and minimize the achievement gap; however, the proposed plan did not explicitly address graduation rates and college enrollment. The applicant does mention the vertical articulation that occurs between elementary, middle, and high school and the discussions quarterly about curricula, but does not clearly identify the impact of the vertical articulation (i.e. outcomes).

The district did not explicitly communicate the names of programs for the individual student devices that would enhance learning or allow students to practice content skills.

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

The BESD clearly identified and described the six elementary schools that will participate totaling just over 4,000 students:

- 5 schools did not meet state assessment standards
- all 6 schools have significant free and reduced meal enrollment ranging from 55-86%
- students in specialized programs will also have access if the plan is funded

The plan indicated the following staff participation:

- all K-5 teachers
- Mathematics and language arts teachers in grades 6-8.

The performance goals outlined appear doable (increasing student performance on state assessment by 5%); however, the activities used to achieve the goal require significant professional development, which was listed categorically, but not explained. It would be helpful to have specific professional development opportunities listed along with a projected timeline

rather than the category "aimed at timeline". It was difficult to understand the aforementioned column and to interpret "when" the activity listed would occur.

The plan was ambiguous about the rationale for inclusion of language arts teachers in grades 6-8 when the identified focus area for the plan is math.

The aggregate data presented was helpful in understanding the target and specific school performance, but the goal of 5% increase in performance in math over the next few years still places the district's school in the underperformance category (2013 AMO=76; 5% increase in 2013 ranges from 11-71% by grade aggregately and disaggregately).

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

The district presented a plan that extends its current reform efforts in a way that does address the individual needs of students while including opportunities to build teacher capacity. The plan does effectively integrate technology as a means of increasing student learning, enhancing teacher preparation and instructional planning, and, informing students and parents about academic progress as well as areas of needs.

The plan outlines a comprehensive plan to improve student achievement within specific school groups (small group instruction; individual learning devices; virtual desktops; one-on-one support; and, professional development). Goals and activities are listed as required, but it would be helpful to know the specific programs or software that would be included on the virtual desktops and individual student devices besides the student information database.

The chart indicating the goals, activities, timeline, and persons responsible was confusing. A separate column indicating the timeline for deliverables would've been helpful in understanding the full scope of the plan sans the yearly goal of increasing performance by 5% in math.

The overall plan was credible; however, consideration of raising the goal of 5% should be re-visited as it does not appear ambitious or sufficient toward reaching the state's AMO.

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

The applicant clearly identified the performance growth measures for grades three through eight including special school groups. Similar information was presented in the decreasing achievement gap section. In both cases the plan fails to show "ambitious yet achievable" performance growth. The five percent increase yearly over the next four years does not meet the grant criteria of meeting or exceeding the state target.

For example, performance on summative assessments for 2013 is projected at 71% for grade 3; however, the state AMO is 76%. A similar pattern emerges throughout the grade levels over time as well as in the specific school groups (grade 3 AMO is 76%, Hispanic special education males are projected to perform at 53% proficiency rate).

The applicant failed to include the graduation rates and college enrollment as defined in the notice.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presented a graph showing aggregate student performance data over the past four years from 2009-2012. Based on the written interpretation of data, schools experienced success in:

- increasing the number of students from "meets" to "exceeds" in math and reading
- decreasing the number of students "falling far below" state standards.

The applicant significantly enhanced its instructional program over the past four years to include:

- implementation of core curriculum
- development of common assessments throughout the district

- creation of content maps for common core curriculum and alignment of assessments to the curriculum
- access for all stakeholders to student performance data.

Additionally, the reform efforts for lowest performing schools included district level personnel, support, and coaching through grade level meetings and professional development. It would have been helpful to have the specific performance data reflected for those two schools. Without specific school data, the reviewer could not determine if the reform efforts were ambitious or significant.

A student information system was fully implemented to allow students, parents, and teachers full access to individualized data including attendance. Teachers use the information to modify instruction and to provide individualized student support.

The applicant did not address improving student learning outcomes by increasing high school graduation rates or college enrollment.

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

5

2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The plan clearly communicated the transparent process for the district's spending, which includes regular public hearings and an adoption process.

The applicant did not fully disclose the actual personnel salaries for subcategories a-d. Rather, the applicant referred to Appendix A, which was the district's policy on sharing information with the public.

The description only indicated that the personnel salaries were available "upon request from any stakeholder". Information on non-personnel expenditures was not addressed or included.

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

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided sufficient evidence of collaboration between state and local mandates including:

- employing a State and Federal Program Director to ensure fiscal fidelity and compliance
- appointment of a financial specialist to further ensure proper handling of federal, state, and local funds
- employees in both positions work directly with the district's business manager and Assistant Superintendent.

The BESD has the autonomy to develop such plans and have additional resources to and from other federal, state, and local sources to help fully implement and fund the personal learning environments to increase student achievement.

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

10

8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant extensively provided evidence of collaboration regarding this proposal. The district did the following to ensure stakeholder feedback and used the feedback to further refine the application:

- created a Race to the Top committee, which included participating school parents and teachers as well as district level personnel.
- Identified, defined, and refined plan based on committee feedback including which devices to purchase, the technological infrastructure of the district, and the training required for full implementation

The proposed plan received overwhelming support as indicated by numerous letters from the:

- Superintendent
- President of the Buckeye Education Association (non-collective bargaining entity)
- PTA presidents from the participating schools
- Mayor.

Each letter expressed strong support of the plan for personalized learning environments through such comments:

- The Town of Buckeye has a long-standing commitment to children. Support would be substantial and long-term. (Mayor)
- This grant will help us to prepare our kids not only for success while in elementary school, but also ensure future

success as they advance to high school and college. (PTA president, Bales Elementary School).

Although direct letters of support from student organizations, early learning programs, or business associations were not presented, the principals from participating schools engaged local parent and student groups through school level School Level Site Councils and Student Councils.

Letters from civil organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education were not included.

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

The intention of the plan was fully conveyed using student performance data in math. The plan indicated the district's struggling efforts to meet adequately yearly progress in mathematics over the past several years. Personalized environment and devices will: increase access to supports and interventions to reduce the achievement gap.

As such the applicant detailed a comprehensive roll-out plan for the first round of personalized learning devices as well as training:

- October 2012 personalized learning devices delivered to the lowest performing learners
- devices will provide remediation or acceleration
- teachers will use devices to create personal learning strategies
- students will receive instruction in multiple modalities.

The applicant presented a thorough implementation plan, which began in August 2012. The plan reasonably meets the needs of all stakeholders, but especially addresses the identified needs and achievement gaps that exist within the participating schools.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district plan ambitiously incorporates a student learning model that provides acceleration and remediation for students. A clear understanding of what students need to know and be able to do was presented in the plan in the following ways:

- district belief that all students can learn
- translation and communication of Common Core standards and curriculum in a kid-friendly manner
- students accountable for their own learning through monitoring current performance and goal-setting
- individualized learning devices that indicates mastery of content and extends learning experience for students
- individualized learning devices that indicates need in content area and remediates
- students have multiple opportunities using multiple modalities to demonstrate understanding of concept
- teacher strategies are matched to student needs, either deepening student understanding or re-teaching concepts
- integration of higher order thinking skills and problem-solving for students.

Research-based instructional approaches along with professional development was mentioned as a district expectation to meet the needs of students, however, explicit strategies were not outlined.

The plan detailed specific ways that the personalized learning environment will increase teacher to student feedback thereby increasing student's opportunity to improve his/her work. Students will have the opportunity to readily reflect on their performance and use the personalized learning recommendations by using the student performance database. Implementation of the personal learning devices proposed in the plan would decrease the wait time on feedback during assessments periods thereby maximizing instructional time according to the plan.

Students with high needs would benefit from the digital content and assessments that adjust based on the learning level of the student and provides learning recommendations for educators.

The plan proposes indirect pathways to career and college ready graduations requirements by enumerating that the use of personalized learning devices students would:

- allow students to have access to content that would deepen their understanding of concepts and allow continued investigation
- mastering grade level content and deepening understanding could potentially ready students for algebra prior to high school.

Continuous professional development documented in the plan (by district and school level specialists) demonstrates the districts' commitment to ensuring all stakeholders have the necessary tools, knowledge, skills, and understanding to ensure student progress.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

District comprehensive professional development expectations and plans were clearly outlined and defined through the use of:

- standardized needs inventory produced by the National Staff Development Council and used to identify teacher learning gaps
- professional development plan includes specific research-based instructional practices such as small group instruction; response to interventions; Bell-to-Bell; student engagement; and, differentiation to only name a few.
- ambitious timeline for professional development delivery - school and district calendar listing professional development month to month
- weekly early dismissal across participating schools to ensure delivery of professional development and professional learning community meeting time.

The plan highlights Bell to Bell training, which provides sufficient support to teachers on arranging instruction and appropriately grouping students to meet students' needs independently while conducting a small group. The plan indicates that the Bell to Bell training addresses adaptation of content and instruction to meet students' needs, but it does not clearly indicate "how" other than potentially through project-based learning, videos, manipulatives, or audio. It would be helpful for the reviewer to have specific examples of an adapted lesson or content area to complement the strategy.

Multiple data points were highlighted to indicate student progress: DIBELS, Galileo Benchmark and Formative Assessments, curriculum unit resources, and mathematic placement tests as tools to be used for continuous monitoring. Performance data is accessible by teachers, students, and parents and reviewed weekly with students. Teachers use performance results to inform instruction -- remediation or acceleration.

A well-defined professional growth system for teachers and administrators was included in the plan. The extensive evaluation system:

- is conducted several times throughout the year. An established schedule was presented to include periodic evaluation indicators.
- performance evaluation (1/3) includes student performance
- instructional effectiveness tests are included in the evaluation (test administered in August and January)
- a specific improvement plan is developed for teachers or principals who need or request it
- coaching, training, and intervention provided to struggling teachers or principals.

All performance data is readily accessible to stakeholders (summative and formative assessments, attendance and anecdotal data) including student learning goals through the personalized learning environment. Continuous training was indicated in the plan to ensure accurate and effective use of the personalized learning devices by teachers, students, and parents.

Governing Board Policies coupled with the Department of Human Resource efforts supports the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers and principals in all schools.

The applicant addressed the professional development plan, evaluation plans, and access to data thoroughly. Additional examples of the tools and resources to identify college and career readiness would have added substantial value to the proposed plan.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

Available

Score

(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This applicant thoroughly outlined the practices, policies, and rules governing the district. The plan indicates complete alignment of central office human resources in a productive and collaborative way including the creation of additional school-based positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • added positions include Mathematics Specialist, Literacy Director, and Assessment Specialist each spending 75% of their time in participating schools • central office staff support leadership teams, but do not prevent school based autonomy and flexibility in developing school schedules, allocation of resources, hiring of personnel, or definition of roles and responsibilities • permits school based leadership to decide/define procedures for determining student progress and intervention/acceleration needed. <p>Plan incorporates a specific mechanism for identifying students' appropriate academic setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • placement assessments administered • personalized learning plan developed post-placement test. <p>Students are given sufficient time to master a concept and have multiple opportunities and multiple methods for demonstrating mastery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of time spent on a topic does not determine mastery • paper and pencil not used as a single indicator of mastery • games, word problems, and digital resources provided as an alternative method to demonstrate mastery • adapted considerations are appropriately included to address special needs groups such as English Language Learners through printed material in his/her first language. <p>The overall organizational structure from central office support to school-based support for teachers, students, and parents was well-documented.</p>		

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
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<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district's plan indicates a sound, reasonable, and transparent plan for supporting the personalized learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disbursement of personalized learning devices (180) began in the fall of 2012 in addition to the virtual desktops to schools • access to school files, digital curriculum, and other resources for teachers, students, and parents increases learning support and opportunities for students • personalized learning devices distribution would support low-income families without current access to technology • participating schools will avail computer labs two evenings weekly to technically support and train families. <p>Parents and students will have the capability of exporting data from the student information systems to their electronic learning system, which enhances the level of academic support. Information included in the school level data is interoperable in that it includes required access to human resources data, student information data, budget data, and continuous improvement data.</p> <p>The proposed plan engages various health and human organizations to further support low-income families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local hospital will provide health care services to highest poverty school • a kiosk Medicaid station will be hosted at one school to provide convenient way for low-income families to apply for services • some participating schools have Early Head Start and Head Start programs to support early intervention for low-income families • a safety program will be implemented to reduce crime, violence, and gang activity • school counselors and school psychologists will support schools with bullying and harassment • one school will have a School Resource Officer on site to reduce truancy, crime, and bullying at that school. <p>The information presented in the plan for this criteria was very detailed and specifically addressed/exceeded all components of the criteria.</p>		
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E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant submitted robust continuous improvement plans that included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ambitious continuous improvement plans from the district and participating school sites that clearly addressed teaching for learning environment; acceptable use agreements for the technology; analyzing and using data; professional development; gaps in achievement; tier two interventions; school improvement plans and more continuous improvement plans described specific goals within the broad categories. For example, under the broad category analyzing and using data, the specific goal states that results are used to help teachers review essential grade levels skills and design instruction tailored to the needs of their students. the continuous improvement plans indicated status, start and end dates as well as action steps for implementation. <p>The plan described how the grant will be monitored and evaluated in specific intervals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Race to the Top Committee will meet quarterly to review student achievement data and adjust plan accordingly existing Child Study teams will continue to meet and collaborate with the Race to the Top Committee to ensure the academic needs of students are met participating schools are open to visitors to share student progress and district's progress toward program goals a wide range of measurement tools were listed including state standardized assessment (AIMS); DIBELS; Galileo Benchmark Assessments; curriculum maps, and more. The measures are given at various intervals ranging from weekly to yearly. The weekly assessments such as Easy CBM for Math is a weekly assessment for students classified as "high risk". The frequency of monitoring allows the district opportunities to evaluate and adjust in a timely manner. <p>The plan enumerated distinct measures for evaluating progress toward grant goals; however, it is unclear as to the feasibility and support required for teachers to deliver the assessments that require daily and weekly administrations. The plan does not indicate how the assessments will be delivered - via personalized learning devices, by the teacher, or a combination of both.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan clearly conveys continuous communication with internal and external stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stakeholders will receive quarterly updates on the progress toward goals and the impact on student achievement grant progress and investments will be shared quarterly through District's newsletter, website, and the local newspaper various stakeholders will assist in evaluating effectiveness of program including students, parents, administrators, school leadership teams, district leaders, parents, board members and other community members. <p>Notwithstanding the quarterly updates at the district and participating school levels, the newsletters, and articles in the local paper, no specific measurement tool for frequent evaluation of the professional development opportunities for students and teachers was included in the plan.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan did include nine achievable performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all students and targeted subgroups (males, Hispanic) are being served by 100% highly qualified teachers and principals assessment measure indicating student growth was identified as the state assessment (AIMS) 		

- discipline referrals will measure non-cognitive growth among students
- formative assessments (Galileo Benchmarks) will indicate student progress and mastery on Common Core curriculum.

The plan failed to include the rationales for selecting the measure, how the measure will provide timely feedback, or how the district plans to review the measures over time for effectiveness. In addition, this criteria requires 12-14 performance measures, but this plan only outlines nine.

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

The plan does address the need and intention of district teams and leadership teams to frequently evaluate the effectiveness of the program goals through:

- a variety of sources including students, teachers, administrators, school leadership teams, district leaders, Board members, and other community members.
- administrative walk-throughs to gauge use of technology within the learning community
- professional development evaluation
- parental input regarding the implementation of the personal learning environment and additional supports needed
- identification of student performance measures that indicate impact of the individualized learning environments
- flexibility with school schedules to accommodate the needs of students.

The plan inadequately describes the measurement tools to be used to ascertain information from the variety of stakeholders listed (i.e. online surveys for students and teachers).

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The plan details all funding sources including potential grant funds including:

- eRate, local, state, and federal funds excluding potential grant funds.

The district began implementation of the personalized learning environments and individualized learning devices in August and October, respectively, through the use of external, LEA, state, and federal (Title I, Title II-A, Title IV, Idea-Basic). The funds requested are sufficient to support individualized learning devices. It is not clear, however, how effective purchasing 540 yearly over the length of the grant will readily service over 4,000 students.

The plan completely outlines the frequency of investments and sustainability:

- 540 devices first two years; 520 devices final two years of grant
- \$30,000 for formatting and training technology staff, which is 20 days over the term of the grant
- \$70,000 for professional development, which is 68 days over the term of the grant
- operational costs will be sustained by LEA and state funds to continue personalized learning environments (training, license renewal, maintenance of devices and infrastructure).

The plan comprehensively and fully addressed the criteria outlined under budget.

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

The district's plan has a feasible plan for sustaining personal learning environments and individualized learning devices along with continued professional development once the grant term expires.

- in addition to funds the district and participating schools allocated in 2012-13, eRate funds, state and local funds, and federal programs administered through the Arizona Department of Education will be allocated (Title I, Title II-A, Title IV, and IDEA Basic).
- the district's Technology Director plans to develop an upgrade/replacement plan for the devices to ensure usability after

grant term expires.

A three year budget post-grant term was not included in the plan.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear description of the partnership it has forged with public and private organizations over numerous years:

- First Things First - supports high risk families and assists with paperwork associated with Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Buckeye Police Department - assists school sites with improving attendance and minimizing truancy
- Banner Health Services - provides health care services for all schools at participating school site (highest poverty level)
- Head Start - family support and educational services for preschoolers; readiness program for preschoolers
- BESC Preschool - preschool screening for early intervention
- Lions Club - assists with eye exams and glasses for students
- Rotary Club - provides books and other materials to support participating schools.

Plan identifies four population-level desired results:

- preschoolers - educational result, kindergarten readiness
- participating students - family/community result, receive healthcare and family services needed to help success in school
- participating 3rd graders - educational result, exit third grade at grade level
- participating students and families - family/community result, safe learning environments and communities.

The plan proposed tracking data longitudinally by:

- reviewing attendance rates including reasons for absences
- monitoring discipline referral data
- analyzing summative and formative student performance data (AIMS, Galileo Benchmark assessments) and making necessary modifications to plan and instruction
- identifying English Language Learner reclassification rates, attendance rates, and discipline referrals
- extracting targeted school data to ensure students and families are supported.

Social-emotional needs of students and families are assessed and supported by school psychologists and counselor, then referred to appropriate specialists.

- school psychologists and counselors will work with staff to support students and families
- resources and supports within the school community would be catalogued and shared with participating school staffs.

The district is developing a multi-faceted decision-making process and procedure for selecting, implementing, and then evaluating the success of supporting services for students. A tentative completion date for the survey is May 2014. It would be beneficial for staff to complete a similar survey to ensure they understand the services offered and how to access and utilize those services.

The efforts documented by the district for this criteria are extensive and thoroughly represented.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant addressed the tenants of Absolute Priority 1 by building on the four educational assurance areas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposing a plan that enhances student learning opportunities through personalized learning environments and individualized learning devices. These devices gives immediate access to core curricula lessons, assessments, student performance data, and additional intervention/acceleration software. Students, teachers, and parents have the opportunity to view and receive immediate feedback on learning goals while also gaining exposure to learning recommendations to increase student and teacher capacity. access to the educational programming (Common Core curriculum; Galileo Benchmark assessments; problem-solving and critical thinking content) increases students' opportunity to engage in meaningful learning at grade level, but also looking toward graduation required courses the proposed plan includes software programs that immediately reflects student academic performance and generates individualized learning goals and recommendations, which are helpful for students who've mastery the content. Those students would receive learning experiences that extend their learning and deepen their understanding of a concept. professional development is a huge priority in the plan. The district developed an ambitious yet achievable professional development plan to address the technological and instructional components of the personalized learning environments. Participating schools dedicated Wednesday afternoons weekly as sacred professional development time - students are dismissed two hours early. for participating schools all students are taught or led by 100% highly qualified administrators and teachers. Plan documents specific strategies to address the achievement gap particularly with Hispanic male students. Evidence provided included Hispanic male performance on state assessment (AIMS) compared to all peers. Hispanic males performed significantly lower than same age peers by approximately 40%. The proposed plan lacked information on efforts to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. <p>The applicant provided extensive informaton to fully meet the criteria for Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	169
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0430AZ-3 for County of Maricopa Buckeye Elementary District #33

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sets forth a comprehensive vision that builds on its work in the four educational assurance areas. Specifically, the district has been working for the past 3 years on revamping evaluations for teachers and principals, creating a longitudinal data system that can be accessed by students and parents while informing teachers' educational delivery, and finally working to improve its lowest performing schools. The applicant has implemented a new teacher and principal evaluation system and has a heavy focus on training, preparing and supporting effective teachers.

The applicant does articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement. Based on the

level of proficiency in Math, the applicant has determined this should be the primary focus area of the project. Through the use of digital learning tools, the applicant seeks to deepen student learning and increase equity through personalized student support by providing students either remediation or acceleration based on the individual need of the student.

Another way the applicant plans to deepen student learning and provide more personalized student support is giving "virtual desktops" to all students by December of 2012 to access their school curriculum, assignments and resources anywhere anytime, so long as there is access. For those students who do not have access, the applicant has established sites including the local library in which students and parents can access their virtual desktop, and there are plans to distribute personal devices to close the digital divide.

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

The applicant has identified all of the schools in the district to participate in the project. Five of these schools did not meet annual measurable objectives. Specifically, the applicant has acknowledged that Math scores are below expectations and improving those scores is major priority for the district. Additionally, all of the schools in the districts meet eligibility for free and reduced lunch students.

The applicant includes a list of the schools participating in the project along with the population and percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. All of the schools have over 50% and one school is as high as 86%.

The applicant has also determined there will be a specific focus on Hispanic male students and Hispanic male students in Special Education. These two groups in particular, the applicant has indicated have struggled with meeting annual measurement objectives.

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

The applicant includes a high quality plan that establishes goals, activities, timelines and makes clear who is responsible. Some of these goals include increasing the overall academic performance for Hispanic males and Hispanic males in Special Education, to have 100% of students having access to personalized learning environments, and an increase in Math student achievement by 5% each year.

The applicant does not include a scale up plan perhaps because all of the students who attend school in the district are participating students.

Based on the proposed activities for students including remediation, tutoring outside of class, and individualized learning plans, the applicant has identified ways that will meet the needs of students, creating a more personalized learning environment. These are strategies that will be key to improving student learning outcomes for students who will be served by the applicant.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity based on the ambitious goals they have set for students. They acknowledge the goals set are ambitious, however they are confident based on the individualized approach and additional supports they will meet the needs of their students.

Specifically, the applicant has set goals in two of the four areas above. These are performance measures on the AIMS assessment for students in grades 3-8, and a focus on decreasing the achievement gap among Hispanic males and Hispanic males in Special Education.

Because the applicant only serves students up to 8th grade, there are no graduation rate or college enrollment rate performance measures set. The applicant will not receive full points for this section, however, they have established ambitious yet achievable goals for their participating students.

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	13
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant demonstrates a clear record of success since the 2009 school year, specifically in the areas of mathematics and reading. According to the information provided, more students moved from the meets to exceeds categories and there was a decrease in the number of students who are falling far below the standards in reading and math. Importantly, the applicant acknowledges that while these gains are significant, they are still lagging behind in AMOs. Based on the data, it also appears that among 8th graders passing has been on the decline or stagnant since 2010.</p> <p>The applicant has employed a number of reforms to address many of these issues including ensuring that all students and parents have access to student achievement data, including discussions on data during parent teacher conference meetings, and seeking parent and student input throughout the instructional process.</p> <p>Additionally, the applicant has indicated they provide additional support from district level personnel, providing additional professional development and coaching for teachers on an ongoing basis. The district ELL Coordinator also provides additional support in response to the larger ELL population than the other schools in the district.</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated through these efforts a focus on closing achievement gaps and the priority given to students who are higher needs. While they acknowledge a record of success in moving the needle, they understand there is more work to do to close gaps and meet both state and locally established AMOs.</p> <p>Based on the grades served in this school district, high school graduation and college enrollment rates are not relevant.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has acknowledged that information regarding expenditures and salary selected information is available during the planning and adoption process each budget year, and additional information not included during this process is available to stakeholders upon request. While it is laudable that the applicant will provide this information to parents and other stakeholders, it is not necessarily readily available. For the average parent or stakeholder who does not know to ask for specific information or cannot attend budget meetings, they would not otherwise have access to it. This does not demonstrate a high level of transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not address whether it has the conditions and autonomy from the state to implement personalized learning environments. It acknowledges receiving funding from the state and notes its compliance under financial and reporting guidelines. It is not clear whether the applicant understands the importance of having the ability to implement personalized learning environments in a state that has successful conditions, laws and policies that pose no conflict to the plans and provide the district with the autonomy to make the necessary decisions to implement the project.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a basic level of stakeholder engagement in the process of developing the proposal. The applicant created a committee consisting of representatives from participating schools, district personnel and parents. According to the applicant, the committee met several times to discuss the plans and explain to the community how this project would look in implementation. It is apparent the applicant prioritized ensuring the community was aware of the proposal.</p> <p>The applicant does point out that some feedback was provided by a teacher and principals who all expressed concerns about specific technology plans and those concerns were addressed and refined in the proposal.</p> <p>Although the applicant acknowledges that the district is not involved with collective bargaining with the local teachers organization, the President has signed the application. There are also letters of support from the mayor and four school parent organizations in the district. Notably, the letters of support are individualized and not form letters simply signed by the entities. This speak to a basic level of understanding of the proposal and support of the project.</p> <p>There are no letters of support from civic and community based organizations, the business community or student organizations.</p>		

It appears that there is support for the project in the community but the applicant does not demonstrate substantive involvement in the development of the proposal or any evidence of direct engagement from teachers.

The applicant did provide a number of opportunities for members of the community to comment on the plan and its ideas in a number of ways. This is not engaging the community early on, however the applicant did make it a priority to seek feedback from stakeholders once the plan had been developed.

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

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant lacks a high quality plan that analyzes its current status in implementing personalized learning environments. The applicant does provide a narrative that explains how they plan to provide personalized learning opportunities to students particularly in the area of math, how they will provide teachers with support and development and how they will provide support for parents to learn about Common Core Standards as well as access their child's attendance, grades and assessment information. Some of these activities have already started. There is no indication however of goals or a specific timeline.

There is also no mention of overall needs and gaps and whether they have already been identified or if there is a plan to identify them. The applicant does point out that personalized learning devices will be implemented designed to address the achievement gap in math with the lowest performing learners. This is important to point out however it is difficult to determine if this is the best use of resources without having a high quality plan that addresses the current status, the logic behind the reform proposal or a plan to identify other needs and gaps.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has indicated that students in the district are told the learning objectives based on Common Core standards in student friendly language. In addition, students are involved in setting goals that are linked to Common Core Standards. The applicant indicates in the narrative the following:

- Students are involved in deep learning experiences and are able to select the ways in which they will access this learning once they've mastered a particular concept
- Based on the curriculum, students have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives
- Students have access to a wide variety of approaches including, small and big group work, digital learning, etc.
- Regular feedback that will be available more frequently once each student has access to a personal device in order to cut down on the use of paper and manual entry from teachers
- Personalized learning recommendations received through the data system that may recommend remediation or acceleration based on the need of the students
- There is already training for students, parents and teachers to learn how to use the devices. The applicant indicates there is a support plan for curriculum, resources and tools that include training for students, parents and teachers

While the applicant indicates that all of these elements have taken place or there is a plan for them to take place, there is no high quality plan that specifically lays out goals or a timeline, makes clear who is responsible for which aspects, or a thorough listing of activities or deliverables. It is difficult to determine any quantitative information in terms of where the district is, where they want to go and what the plan is reach their destination.

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

20

10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It is clear the applicant understands the critical need to prepare and support teachers to be effective in the classroom. The district lacks a specific plan with elements of a clear timeline, goals, and actions. The applicant does mention that many district staff are responsible for providing training along with a contractor. The applicant also mentions a general time period in which certain trainings will take place for teachers, however, a more specific timeline and overall plan is required.

The applicant describes extensive efforts being taken to ensure teachers understand how to use the technological tools to assess students, utilize high quality resources to provide individualized learning opportunities for their students.

What is not clear is whether the Common Core Standards being used are also college and career ready standards and whether these particular standards are being measured.

The applicant identified an area of need for teachers in the district in the area of small group facilitation in middle grades. As a result, the applicant provided training last school year and will continue this training into this school year. Given the goal of the district to provide personalized learning environments for students, they have keyed in on this important skill set to enable their teachers to effectively administer this learning opportunity. Other training and professional development for teachers offered includes:

- Individual learning devices and how to maximize uses for students
- Galileo Student Information System
- Curriculum mapping
- Student Engagement and higher levels of thinking

The applicant indicates that providing constant feedback from data collection has become an embedded practice in which teachers discussing student progress on a weekly basis in a non-threatening environment. This practice allows teachers to share best practices as well as try new strategies, thus taking risks and creating a more personalized learning environment for their students.

The applicant describes the evaluation process for teachers and students in which educators receive feedback on a regular basis to help improve practice. 33% of the evaluation is based on student performance. It is not clear as to whether or not this element holds the largest percentage of the evaluation but it does indicate the district's priority on improving student performance. Teachers are trained at least annually on the evaluation process and there are at least two observations for all teachers per year where struggling teachers receive additional support and intervention as needed. The applicant also indicates that support is provided for those who request it as well.

Teachers are able to use Galileo to create formative assessments as well as develop a response plan for individual students based on the findings. Collaboration is also a strategy used among teachers to ensure there is communication and educators are optimizing opportunities for students.

The applicant has indicated that hiring policies require "highly qualified teachers" upon hiring as a response to whether or not there is a commitment and plan to increase the number of students who receive highly effective teachers and principals. The applicant seems to use and understand the terms highly qualified and highly effective interchangeably. Given the great concern about student achievement in Math, it seems the district would consider focusing more on effectiveness than qualifications. Given the priority placed on teacher training and providing teachers with ongoing feedback, it is imperative that the district connect these practices with placing their highly effective teachers with the students who have the highest need. There is no plan evident to ensure this practice.

While the applicant clearly has a plan to ensure teachers can increase their capacity to support students in meeting college and career standards and create personalized learning environments, a high quality plan is missing that includes specific timelines, deliverables, clear actions and a delineation in responsibilities. This weakens the credibility of the plan as there is no clear guide to ensure these plans are in place and no way to measure them.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates that the central office has been designed to support participating schools in this project. Staff support includes the traditional positions at the district as well as additional staff such as Math Assessment Specialists and a Literacy Director. These individuals will provide direct support to participating schools as it will be their primary jobs to ensure schools have what they need to be successful. This certainly demonstrates the level of commitment from the applicant as their central office will be poised to assist the staff hired specifically for the project.

The applicant has indicated that principals have the level of autonomy and flexibility needed to make decisions that are in the best interest of the school community.

The applicant understands the the value of removing time as the constant and enabling students to master material at their own pace. Additionally, through the use of multiple approaches, students are able to demonstrate mastery in a number of ways. The applicant notes that all resources and instructional practices are available to all students including high needs and

English Language Learners.

This applicant has provided a narrative of its plans, but has not included all of the elements of a high quality plan. These elements include a specific timeline, deliverables, goals that can be measured, and a delineation of who will deliver what.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant places a high priority on ensuring all students have access to the learning resources available through this project. As such, the district has already begun disseminating individual devices to students. They have also made it possible for virtual desktops to be accessible to all students wherever they are. Finally, the applicant has commitments from school sites' computer labs to remain open twice a week to ensure parents and students have access to computers and therefore have access to their learning opportunities.

The applicant states that parents and students will have access to training at the school sites to learn how to utilize the technology, understand the resources and the information systems. The district plans to also provide such training at the Annual Parent Expo. It is not clear when this Expo takes place nor what specific opportunities will be provided for parents to learn the technology. For the purposes of fostering parental engagement, this is a key piece. It would be beneficial to offer a set of trainings for parents to accommodate schedules and ensure comfort.

The applicant discusses in the application, the ability for parents to be able to export their student's information into an open data format and use this information to provide additional recommendations and services for their students. Additionally, the district and school level data is interoperable, thus allowing access to information from human resources data and budget to student data needed for continuous improvement.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has indicated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and information sharing. This is demonstrated in the creating of the RTT committee which will meet quarterly to view student achievement data, discuss progress and address needs as they become evident. Additionally, the applicant indicates that stakeholders will be updated quarterly on the progress. Importantly, the applicant points out that there will be a specific focus on the progress of professional development for teachers to ensure those practices are meeting the individual needs of the students.</p> <p>Finally, the applicant notes that grant investments will be shared with stakeholder through a number of mediums including the district website, newsletter and the local newspaper.</p> <p>These are strong approaches to both continuous improvement and sharing information with stakeholders. Having quarterly meetings ensures that all stakeholders from teachers to community members have real time information to make any necessary adjustments, are constantly getting feedback and a space to have their voices heard as well. These kinds of practices are good ways to hold everyone accountable while building greater buy in.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has embedded an ongoing communication process in which stakeholders will receive quarterly updates, both on the progress as well as the investments. They will receive information in a number of ways including the newspaper, website and a newsletter. Additionally, internal and external stakeholders will be invited to visit classrooms, view technology and attend professional development sessions if desired. This creates a transparent process as well as promotes ongoing engagement among all stakeholders. Having multiple ways in which the information is available also ensures that stakeholders have several opportunities to engage at the level of their comfort.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant has developed a set of ambitious yet achievable performance measures primarily in the areas of Mathematics.</p>		

The rationale is based on the fact that students in the district are not performing at at least state standards. Moreover, Hispanic male students are among the lowest performing in Math. As such the applicant seeks to focus efforts to improve scores overall and provide a special emphasis on Hispanic males.

The applicant set performance measure for students k-8 looking at multiple assessments, mostly targeted at Math. This is a strong approach to give a more thorough picture of the student's achievement in Math.

The applicant does include performance measures regarding the number of students with a highly effective teacher and principal. According to their baseline data, all of the students have access to highly effective teachers and principals. This includes Hispanic male students, the group the applicant has identified has had the lowest performance. This calls into question two things. One, if all of the students have access to highly effective teaching, why the district has placed such a high priority on professional development, and two why the students are performing at lower levels than their counterparts across the state.

Because the applicant is only focused on k-8, there are no performance measures in the area of college readiness or access. Additionally, the applicant does not include any health or social -emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of its plan. There is documentation of disciplinary referrals and goals to minimize them, however, there is no specific plan, rationale or narrative that speaks to how the applicant will address the number of students who receive such referrals.

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

The applicant has established a thorough plan that includes ongoing meetings, feedback, and adoption of new strategies to meet personalized learning opportunities for students and to make any necessary adjustments to policies at the local level in order to improve results.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has noted that the vast majority of funding will go to purchasing personalized learning devices for students, all of which will receive a device by the end of the grant period. This is the foundation of their project that will enable students to access personalized learning opportunities.

The applicant provides a description of all of the funds used, including those that come from sources outside of the RTT grant to both sustain the work beyond the grant period but also supplement items such as training, hardware and software, as well as the student information system.

The applicant has identified a number of funds and resources to sustain personalized learning environments and the devices in which this process will rely so heavily upon, beyond the grant period. These include the use of eRate funds, state and local funds as well as federal program grants earned by the district.

The applicant does identify some of those funds which will be used for one time purchases, such as the personalized devices, and which of the items will be used for ongoing operational costs, such as licensing, training and maintenance of devices.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not include a high quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. Based on the fact that most of the RTT funds would be used to purchase devices, the applicant has the ability to utilize other state, local and federal funds to sustain the operations of the project. The applicant does acknowledge, however, that availability of funds will determine the amount of funding dedicated to this project. Inasmuch, the applicant notes the district is committed to implementing personalized learning environments and will provide the support that is needed to achieve its expected outcome.

While it is noteworthy that the district is committed to this project and has identified potential funding for sustaining it, an actual plan with a budget for the years subsequent to the grant period would demonstrate a stronger commitment. It is also important that the applicant explore relationships with local, state and national partners, corporations and foundations who can also support their work. There is no demonstration of relationships outside of the community. Developing such relationships

would be helpful in sustaining the proposed project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	9

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a strong set of partnerships with community organizations. Some of the organizations include First Things First, Banner Health System, Head Start and the Lions and Rotary Clubs. The breadth of community resources meet many of the social -emotional needs of the students residing in the district. The applicant indicates that the partners support personalized learning for all students and have a strong commitment for supporting the needs of the students. Additionally, all of the services provided are available to all of the students in the district. Some of the services available to families include:

- Support for high risk families to find resources, completing paperwork and accessing state resources
- Safety support and assistance with truancy reduction
- Health care services for schools with the highest poverty level
- Family and educational support services for pre-schoolers
- Screening and early intervention for pre-schoolers
- vision support and eye exams
- books and other support to participating schools

The applicant has included desired results that will lay the foundation for a successful student entering the district. The applicant will track outcomes giving special emphasis to data points for students with the highest needs to ensure they are accessing such services to address any issues preventing them from being successful in school.

The applicant will employ several tactics to create the infrastructure to support students and connect with the overall project. Some of these tactics include:

- Having counselors and psychologists assess the needs of students and families to see how needs can be better addressed
- Catalog the assets of the community and share with participating schools to ensure school staff are aware of available resources
- Once a semester, review the community partnerships and plans for improving services

In addition, the applicant will develop a decision making process and procedure for selecting, implementing and evaluating the support for individual students with each school having its own team to facilitate this process. This is in line with giving schools the autonomy needed to make decisions based on the best interests of their students and direct resources accordingly.

Lastly, the applicant indicates that parents will be invited to participate in this process by providing input, sitting on the decision making committee as well through the Superintendent's Advisory Committee.

The only weakness to note here is that the applicant does not make clear who will coordinate and oversee all of these efforts, and ultimately who is responsible for the success of these partnerships. Based on the level of community support expressed and the number of organizations who are able to provide services, there is great opportunity and strong potential for these partnerships to serve as a valuable support system and safety net for students and their families.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant meets this priority in that it will build on the core educational assurance areas through its use of personalized devices that will be accessed by students anytime and anywhere. Decisions regarding personalized learning environments, teacher professional development, acceleration or remediation, and supports for students and teachers will all be driven by data and the performance goals of individual students. The applicant will be able to accelerate student

achievement and deepen student learning by providing more customized learning opportunities for each students based on his or her style and pace. The applicant has a major focus on developing effective teachers.

There is still a question as to whether or not all students have access to the most effective teachers and whether decisions are being made to place teachers in classrooms with the highest need. Because this applicant is focused on grades k-8, there is no pronounced effort to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school.

Total	210	142
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