



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1269GA-1 for DeKalb County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) proposes to establish three overarching priorities for STEM education that are intended to address the need to prepare its students for success in the 21st century.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase STEM literacy so all students can think critically in science, math, engineering and technology; • improve the quality and quantity of all teachers that teach STEM concepts; and, • expand STEM education and career opportunities for underrepresented groups. <p>In general, the implementation of these priorities incorporate elements of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and leadership to the extent that they show promise of being achievable.</p> <p>In addition, DCSD's recent systematic reform resulting from Race to the Top (RT3) funding has established a tested structure and support base that appears to be ready and able to accommodate the proposed plan. This base focuses on 1) Great Teachers and Leaders; 2) Standards and Assessments; 3) Using Data to Inform Instruction; 4) Improving the Lowest Achieving Schools; and 5) Targets Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).</p> <p>Other indicators that the plan is creditable include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the input of key leaders of the STEM community, the business community, non-profits, and major universities such as the partnership with Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to deliver the Direct to Discovery program, an educational model and strategy for teaching and learning • the creation of personalized learning environments that support STEM at every level in every school • alignment with college and career-ready standards that will be measured using the state's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) • emphasis on increasing teacher ongoing professional learning opportunities including Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies within STEM-focused content classrooms <p>All of these elements indicate an ambitious program that is built on a foundation conducive to the achievability of the plan.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The participating schools collectively (all 126 elementary, middle, high school, and center in the district) meet the competition's eligibility requirements. Since all students in the DeKalb County School District will participate, the program has the potential to close achievement gaps across the entire range of the district's subgroups at a relatively low investment of approximately \$100 per student.</p> <p>Regarding the Raw data section of the School Demographics table, the omission of any figures in column C, "# of Participating high-need students" is of concern because implies that all low-income students (column D) are also high-need, which is contrary to the USDOE's definition. Otherwise, this criterion is adequately addressed.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Since the district's plan encompasses all its schools, it does not need to specify any detailed strategy to scale up. However, the district does, in a sense, scale-up by planning to expand standards and assessments to include an alignment of all content areas with STEM-related activities at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

The scope of the plan seems to be achievable as well as ambitious in that it presents an instructional framework that organizes research-based and proven strategies to ensure knowledge of and use by teachers and administrators. The DCSD developed Instructional Framework of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Learning (CIAPL) appears to have a set of interrelated components that form a viable system for student learning and thus justify considering the plan to be of high-quality.

A notable element of the plan is the establishment of a CIAPL Network to support a differentiated approach to professional learning. Professional Learning Communities are another planned element that will allow teachers to work together to share best practices, reflect on challenges, and build new professional skills.

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

DCSD displays what it considers as realistic 5-year goals across the spectrum of subgroups in tables of performance on summative assessments of Mathematics and the physical sciences. The tables of goals for achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment are also reasonable in keeping with base line experience. However, other subject area goals are either not targeted or data is not available. Of concern is that since there is no narrative to support the rationale behind the projections expressed in these tables, it is difficult to determine their credibility

What seems to be a discrepancy is noted in the table, *Mathematics Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) Percent of students scoring in the proficient range the Mathematics 3rd grade*. Whereas the "All Students" cells SY2012-13 to SY2013-14 shows a % decrease, all of the subgroups show % increases.

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:

DCSD has made gains in student achievement as shown, for example, in an increase from SY 2010-11 to SY 2011-12, of 14% of all 3rd grade students scoring in the proficient range for mathematics but smaller gains elsewhere. The district is to be commended, however, for deciding to focus on improvement in all STEM areas for all students, especially in its efforts to close the achievement gap in STEM subjects. Since 2003, for example, eighth graders in Georgia have made consistent gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, yet the district still has persistent achievement gaps. For example, while half the district's white students score at or above proficient in math, only 18 percent of Black students and 29 percent of Hispanic meet the same standard.

There is data provided to show a past record of success in raising college enrollment rates. The graduation rate has shown an increase since 2004-2005 with 2010-2011 being the only year for a decline.

DCSD has taken several measures to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools, for example, the new implementation of Success for All, a reform model to specifically address reading elementary schools.

DCSD performance data are available to many stakeholder groups. For example, standardized test data are loaded into SchoolNet/Instructional Data Management System (IDMS) providing access to teachers and administrators Parents have access to student data through the district's parent portal, and data are available to all external stakeholders on the district's website. However, availability does not guarantee access or how to interpret and use information if accessed. Of concern is that no indication is evident that stakeholders receive information or training in this regard. Otherwise, all aspects of this criterion have been met.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

One way a school district demonstrates fiscal responsibility to shareholders is through transparency in school level and district expenditures. According to information presented in the application, the district provides salary information for all employees on the Georgia Transparency website and posts teacher salaries on various (unnamed) websites, but the information doesn't say whether it disaggregates it as specified in the criterion.

Also made available to the public are:

- any financial report upon request by the public
- grant and title award monies for community awareness
- annual budgets to the community and Board for review
- Consolidated School Improvement Plans on the web for constituents
- bidding processes, purchasing guidelines, vendor registrations, and RFPs

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

In addition to the usual autonomy and authority granted by state statute, DCSD falls under the umbrella of The State of Georgia's Race to the Top grant that allows it flexibility and autonomy, and is currently implementing programs under its auspices. All major initiatives of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) that require funding from local, state, and federal sources are presented to the Board of Education for approval, and are in compliance with State, legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. This indicates successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory environments exist in order to implement the personalized learning environments

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	2
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There is no evidence of support either from collective bargaining representation or 70% of teachers from participating schools as required.

The grant application was prepared by a cross-divisional team that brought input from various stakeholder groups, including district staff, school staff, parents, students, business partners, higher education, and government agencies. DCSD sought feedback and input from the GA DOE, eight mayors in DeKalb County, GA., and the CEO of DeKalb County, GA.

The application skirts the issue of the process use to gather specific input into the plan by describing efforts of the new superintendent to establish good will, build support, and establish communication channels in general. It is possible, however, that in doing so, productive discussions about the RttT-D plan took place. the superintendent scheduled and held parent round table meetings around the county; identified and scheduled community leaders, professional organizations and affiliations for an initial listening and learning session, and established a routine communication protocol with these groups; scheduled meetings with the established parent organizations for initial listening and learning sessions; and scheduled meetings with the established student leadership organizations.

One mayor and the DeKalb CEO provided a letter of support as did Georgia Tech and two private companies. There are no letters of support from parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, or local civic and community-based organizations.

The low score awarded for this criterion reflects these deficiencies.

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

The district has developed a high-quality plan to analyze and to make recommendations for eliminating all instructional gaps. A team of educators was convened and used an instrument to guide the identification of specific needs and gaps. The tool used was the CCRPI, an accountability system that provides flexibility in the measurement of accountability of schools and the identification of improvement of struggling students. However, the applicant has not presented a high-quality plan for an analysis of it's current status in implementing personalized learning environments.

After review of student data including needs, gaps, and successes, as well as review of the community's job and career opportunity landscape, the planning team determined that the reform must engage in appropriate and relevant work toward the expansion of personalized learning environments to include the elementary and middle school levels aligned to the current learning structures at the high school levels.

The curriculum will also be expanded to include a focus on mechatronics and engineering in general as the vehicle to use problem-based learning to teach STEM concepts and engage students in design and creativity. They identified performance measures that DCSD will use to determine future success of the initiative

Examples of strategies and activities that fall under the three components of Triple A: Academics, Advisement and authentic Application are

ACADEMICS: Provide daily hands-on science activities in every elementary school.

ADVISEMENT: Create an aligned structure for personalized learning and advisory from elementary through high school.

AUTHENTIC APPLICATION: Develop and implement a district-wide structure for student leadership and competition.

Overall, these elements constitute a high-quality plan for an analysis as specified in this criterion.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A strength of the plan is that it recognizes that STEM fields are in high demand and that STEM education is critical in early grades. Elementary and middle school exposure will draw attention to career opportunities and help place an importance on high school pathway selection.

It also shows an understanding that

- problem-solving and critical thinking are vital to student achievement and career-readiness.
- Engineering-focused activities provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to that process, but still allow flexibility to explore a wide range of career clusters.
- A K-12 focus on career advisement is critical for students to become college and career-ready.

The application then goes on to indicate that these understandings will be addressed at the elementary, middle and high school levels through the plan's triple-A concept, but there are no details of specifics such as activities or deliverables that indicate how or by whom they will take place.

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

This section is one of the strongest and most appropriately addressed of the plan. DCSD demonstrates a comprehensive

structure for developing teachers. They also demonstrate how they will use TKES and LKES to identify professional development needs, and discuss how Georgia Tech will provide professional development around D2D. The is commendable since proposed projects will require significant training and development in order for teachers to operate effectively and confidently.

The training structures are aligned with Learning Forward's, seven Standards for Professional Learning. Its goal is to ensure that all professional learning for teachers and leaders increases educator effectiveness and student performance results. To illustrate just how comprehensive their program is, the plan specifies that these programs may include, for example, professional learning communities; new teacher induction; instructional strategies; use of technology resources to support instruction; STEM instructional strategies; pedagogical and content knowledge enhancement; RtI (Response to Intervention) development; use of the Instructional Data Management System (IDMS) Professional Development Planner Portal; district-wide teacher, administrative, and classified leadership conferences; cognitive coaching support of teachers with alternative certifications; and an array of intensive results-based professional learning courses.

Teams of teachers and leaders in each individual school building meet to plan out their professional learning needs based upon student outcome data from the previous year. Schools are provided the opportunity to customize their professional learning opportunities based upon their individual needs which are reflected in their Consolidated School Improvement Plan (CSIP). The Department of Professional Learning is also allocated funds to support the needs of central office staff and leaders. District based professional learning opportunities are designed based upon surveys which are collected from every professional learning session offered and the data collected from the Professional Learning Needs Assessment. The CIAPL Network is a tiered framework by which the professional learning is differentiated to meet the needs of teachers and paraprofessionals.

To assure that they develop and support teachers based upon targeted observation and student achievement data, DCSD uses the state of Georgia's Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) developed as part of the Race to the Top (RT3) initiative. The TKES has three components: Student Achievement and Growth, Teacher Performance on Assessment Standards, and Surveys of Instructional Practice. As a piece of Student Achievement and Growth, teachers are evaluated based upon the results of the growth of their students, and this information is tied into the teacher's professional growth development plan.

The high score reflects the high-quality of this portion of the plan.

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D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In this section, DCSD describes its well-crafted system to create opportunities for personalized learning. It describes a variety of instructional methods and content, much of which recognizes that STEM fields are in demand and that STEM education is critical in early grades.

The district also is commended for adopting and making use of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), an accountability system that provides flexibility in the measurement of accountability of schools and the identification of improvement of struggling students. Activities within this proposal are based on impacting student learning that will be measured using the CCRPI.

The proposed plan consisting of academic, advisement and authentic application (AAA), has been developed based on a comprehensive assessment of performance measures and needs. As a result, it focuses on STEM instruction supported by a variety of technology and special environments such as Mobile mechatronics labs. Triple A will provide each student the support to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career-ready standards and college- and career-ready graduation requirements and accelerate his or her learning through support of his or her needs.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The DCSD plan provides a substantial range of technical support to school-level staff and to students (e.g., mobile Mechatronics labs). DCSD's Information Technology Department provides Informational Technology Technicians (ITT) to oversee all hardware and software. The budget does not provide for maintenance and repair of equipment, nor is it indicated whether this responsibility falls under ITT's duties. This is of concern, given the large expenditure for equipment proposed for the first year of the program..</p> <p>The plan does not describe how these reforms will be used for personalized learning (which is a requirement) or how students will be supported outside of the school or classroom.</p> <p>Proposed is a pilot to put an electronic device into every middle school student's hands and to install wireless infrastructure to expanding the current wireless access in all schools beyond the Media Center. This is commendable because, among other advantages, it allows and supports personalized learning.</p> <p>DCSD plans to purchase mobile mechatronics labs for grade levels K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 to enhance science and mathematics instruction for each classroom teacher for STEM implementation across the K-12 curriculum. Elementary classrooms will be outfitted with mobile mechatronics labs where students can engage in activities with early simple machines, Lego WeDo Robotics and Lego Mindstorms kits and software.</p> <p>Georgia's new Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS), designed to help teachers make informed decisions to improve student learning will allow principals and teachers to obtain longitudinal data on students. However, there is no indication of how the district will leverage the Statewide Longitudinal Data System to provide data to parents and students.</p> <p>The plan does not respond to the required questions around how IT systems will allow students and parents to export student achievement data and connect to other electronic systems to access learning supports or whether they have interoperable systems.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	6
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district is to be commended for seeking to build a culture of accountability. It is laudable that it intends to do this through application of a Management Theory (Plan-Do-improvement). However, other than providing internal engagement opportunities through ongoing employee forums and community task force groups, little detail as to strategies, activities, timelines or deliverables are provided.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>DCSD provides as examples of how they intend to communicate with stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a webpage dedicated to RttT-D activities • the school district's intranet • a quarterly newsletter with RttT-D information and updates • an RttT-D advisory Council comprising representatives from all stakeholder groups <p>All of these allow for ongoing feedback and input, PROVIDED they are accessed and that users, especially parents, are trained/informed and how to use them (there is no indication that this is to be done). Data will be collected, recorded, analyzed for themes, and shared with staff so that adjustments can be made. Also, RttT-D leadership will meet with community, state, and national stakeholders.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This criterion is not adequately address by the applicant because baseline data for the specified performance measures are not available since this is the first year of implementation of the Teacher Keys Evaluation System that will generate the data. If possible, data from previous evaluations would have been welcome. State targets are, however, included in the Appendix. Also, the applicant does not comply with the requirement to provide for each measure,

- (a) Its rationale for selecting that measure;
- (b) How the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and
- (c) How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

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

DCSD proposers to evaluate the effectiveness of various components of its RttT-D plan as follows:

- 1) Great Teachers and Leaders will be measured by annual evaluation outcomes, endorsement data, and student academic growth data.
- 2) Standards and assessments will be measured by student achievement on district-wide benchmarks (Formative Data) and state and/or PARCC assessments (Formative and Summative Data).
- 3) Turning around the lowest achieving schools will be measured by student achievement growth data and evaluation data.
- 4) STEM will be measured by student achievement in the areas of math and science, graduation rates, career and technical education pathway completion, and other indices reflected on the state's new accountability report card termed the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI).

Some organization in the effort is evident since they will measure effectiveness in each priority area. However such details as who will be conducting the evaluation provided are not provided. The information provided does not mention how the evaluations will determine if RttT-D activities can be attributed to any of the improvements they hope to see.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. It is presented in three sections, one for each project (Academics, Advisory, Authentic Application) with the vast majority allocated to Academics (predominately STEM), and therefore is organized in a reasonable and sufficient way in which to support the plan. As this project will serve every student in every school in the district, the investment of this grant will cost less than \$100 per student per year for four years. One-time investments for this grant include equipment to establish robotics labs in all elementary, middle and high schools; updates of middle school labs; Engineering is Elementary kits for each elementary school; and High Definition Video-Conferencing equipment at two high school.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	1
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district intends to sustain its RttT-D initiative beyond the grant period by relying on continuation of its professional learning plan supported by Perkins IV Grant. Although the professional learning plan is comprehensive (it includes job-embedded professional learning, professional learning communities, common planning, a district-wide symposium, as well as individual professional learning plans) ultimately, it is the everyday work of the school staff .that is expected to sustain the reform. This response does not meet the criterion's specifications that call for a purposeful, high-quality plan for this purpose because it fails to provide details for support from State and local leaders.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	1
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is no evidence that DCSD has partnered with other organizations in order to provide non-academic supportive assistance to children, especially those in high need. Nor is there is any indication that it has directly met the other elements of this criterion. However, although not directly related to this criterion, the district has provided additional attention to its persistently lowest-achieving schools, for example, through the implementation of Success for All, a model to specifically address reading in the elementary grades. The research on early literacy consistently indicates that the ability to read at grade level by third grade is a strong indicator of future academic success, and early literacy skills often serve as a foundation for future learning across subject areas.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Through its emphasis on and evidence of credible goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and leadership, especially in the areas of K-12 SPED instruction and professional development, DCSD has addressed the core educational assurance areas necessary to meet Absolute Priority 1. This is also demonstrated by such elements as the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the input of key leaders of the STEM community, the business community, non-profits, and major universities such as the partnership with Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to deliver the Direct to Discovery program, an educational model and strategy for teaching and learning the creation of personalized learning environments that support STEM at every level in every school alignment with college and career-ready standards that will be measured using the state's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) emphasis on increasing teacher ongoing professional learning opportunities including Response to Intervention (Rtl) strategies within STEM-focused content classrooms 		

Total	210	148
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1269GA-2 for DeKalb County School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant plans to offer a comprehensive vision with the institution of 12 STEM focus initiation. This initiative will be district wide.

The applicant explains the three A approach for this review: Academics, Achievement, and Application.

The applicant explains three areas of STEM Those areas are: quality of teachers, increase STEM literacy, and education and career opportunities to the underrepresented populations.

The applicant offers a clear theoretical framework that describes their process of reform. The conceptual framework addresses the expectations for student learning and function in an interdependent mode.

The applicant states the adoption of common standards that are currently apart of the district assessment plan.

The applicant clearly identifies outcomes for the 2012-2013 implementation years.

The applicant fails to describe the current status of the district in order to establish a baseline for reform. The applicant fails to offer information and data related to the student academic standings, learning skills or district standings to establish a plan for this reform vision.

The applicant will adopt and utilize the STEM curriculum but doesn't express how the curriculum will accelerate student achievement, or improve student learning.

The applicant does state that they have a goal with STEM that would increase underrepresented groups in STEM careers but that doesn't clearly support an increase in equity across the division.

Overall the applicant offers some information but failed to address some key areas resulting in a midrange score from the reviewer.

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

10

8

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that all students within the county will participate.

The applicant provides data from all schools in the county describing the demographic breakdown, number of high needs students, number of educators and percent of educators in the district.

The lists of school that will participate are clearly noted within the chart provided by the applicant.

The total number of participants is clearly noted in the chart provided. The demographic information is also clearly broken down within the chart as noted.

The applicant does fail to offer a high quality explanation of implementation. There is not a description of how this plan is to be implemented to participating schools.

The reviewer offers a lower high range score for this section due to the lack of further implementation information from the proposal specific to the identified participants.

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

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant explains a new curriculum that will be implemented in the 2012-13 year that includes expected outcomes and assessment strategies.

The applicant focuses heavily on the implementation of a STEM curriculum. The utilization of information relative to targeting early students as a part of the whole plan is a strength to support the scale up criteria.

The plan focuses on all students matriculating within the overall project.

The professional learning community is a good element to allow teacher to collaborate and to contribute to the impact of improving student learning outcomes.

The applicant offers strong evidence of a high quality plan in most areas evaluated but fails to provide goals for the improving the graduation rates as a part of the high quality plan resulting in a lower high tier range score by the reviewer.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant presented data charts that provided information on the goals and vision of the district.</p> <p>The applicant offers data to address the performance on assessments of students. There is no explanation of the applicant's vision related to the results or improvement plan to increase performance.</p> <p>The applicant offers extremely ambitious goals of a nearly 20% increase from the previous year to current year then incremental increases during the functional years of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant offers another example of an extremely ambitious goal for 4th grade math students with special needs where their current year performance was 35% but the first year goal is 57% proficient.</p> <p>The applicant offers no goals for science during the grant years. This raises questions for the reviewer since STEM curriculum focus is on science.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't offer any information to explain the score reported or the plan to address decreasing the achievement gap. The applicant offers data chart but several goals are missing data (ex. 3rd grade science).</p> <p>There is no data presented for college enrollment or goals for college enrollment.</p> <p>The applicant failed to provide a comprehensive vision that would demonstrate goals and achievable targets resulting in a lower midrange rating for this section.</p>		

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
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states the district recognizes the need for improvement in STEM areas for all students. The applicant notes data collection is "somewhat harder to track over four years, due to change in curriculum and integrated mathematics pathways verse discrete pathways."</p> <p>The applicant states that science scores have been improving but doesn't offer any data to support that claim.</p> <p>The IDMS system description was not carefully explained in details to demonstrate its value to the applicant as a data management.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't offer a clear record of success to improve learning outcomes and closing the achievement gap. The applicant states improvement is needed to increase achievement specifically in students from different backgrounds.</p> <p>The applicant states that graduation rates have increase but doesn't offer any information about the current rate of graduation.</p> <p>The applicant offers data related to the lowest achieving schools. The applicant discusses increase in Math, and literacy programs but fails to provide 4 years of information to demonstrate a clear record of success.</p> <p>The applicant discusses standardize score and states that partners will have access to information as apart of the grant process.</p> <p>The reviewer noted several key areas that needed more detail, yet the overall section supported a mid-range score by the reviewer.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that it will collaborate with the community partners to ensure transparency and success.</p> <p>The applicant state that a part of the Board's goal is that the district must ensure fiscal responsibility and mandates a safe and healthy learning environment that support academic programs, resources, and services to all students. The applicant's</p>		

statement supports the Board's commitment to high transparency which helps to support this criteria.

The applicant continues to explain that it will work to maintain a high level of transparency but failed to provide details as to how this will happen.

The applicant states that high transparency exist but doesn't provide any examples or evidence that it exist. The applicant simply lists the criteria of evaluation for this section but fails to offer any evidence or example of demonstration of transparency, resulting in a mid-range score by the reviewer for this section.

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that the county is a previous recipient of the RTT grant and therefore is in compliance with state, legal, statutory and regulatory requirements.

The applicant doesn't explain the level of autonomy under the law that it has to execute this grant. The applicant explains that it has support by the various state departments to support the grant but don't provide details to the level of support.

The applicant offers a strong explanation of personalized learning environments and how the implementation of the program maintains sufficient autonomy under the law.

The applicant explains the STEM activities that would support a personalized learning environment but fails to explain the autonomy to implement the program.

The applicant clearly stated the district is in full compliance and states autonomy is met supported by the previous RTT award. However, with no detailed information provided by the applicant regarding autonomy to implement the project, the reviewer must score this section lower high range score.

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

10

5

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant doesn't provide any specific information about who the stakeholders are that are involved in the program. The applicant simply states stakeholders will be involved.

There is no description of students, family, teachers or principals in participating schools and their level of engagement within this grant.

The applicant discuss the superintendent meetings with the mayor, legislative delegation, and other government officials, community leaders and partners but there is no statement on how there is a partnership with any of these listed folk and the grant.

The applicant notes that "stakeholders" will be a part of an advisory council that will convene quarterly to review projects. The applicant also states they will assist by sharing the work of the partnership across business, but there are no specific activities listed to support or describe the level of partnership.

There are several letters of support from external stakeholders to support this project.

The applicant failed to provide a clear description of how students, family and principals were engaged in the development of this proposal. The applicant presented evidence of support via letters of support from key stakeholders to meet part of the requirement in this section. The reviewer scores this section in the mid-level due to limited detail about the engagement of stakeholders.

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

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant offers a plan for the implementation of a program to identify gaps in the instructional process.

The applicant states that they reviewed the student data but presented no data as a part of this review section.

The applicant offers a list of activities for implementation of the program, but fails to explain the personalized learning environment for the program.

The applicant discusses the ongoing training to take place for teachers but doesn't explain who is responsible for this objective.

The applicant doesn't offer any timelines for the listed of activities presented within this section that would meet the high quality plan requirement.

The applicant doesn't explain the logic behind the reform proposal. The applicant simply states the project and the plan for implementation. The applicant doesn't clearly demonstrate or share data related to the needs or gap, but does state that they reviewed relevant data to determine that a gap exist.

The applicant fails to provide a strong high quality plan for this section. The reviewer found a demonstration of evidence in other sections from within the entire proposal to offer a holistic perspective that would support a higher score from the reviewer.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states that attendance, graduation rates continue to be important indicators of student improvement and performance.</p> <p>The applicant states that the Triple A project will offer a rigorous course of study that's aligned with college readiness.</p> <p>The applicant identifies STEM fields that are in demand to justify the purpose of this proposal, the implementation of STEM in early grades, the K-12 focus on career advisement, and the individualize career plans as a rationale. These ideas are the platform for this proposal, but no details of timeline, implementation strategies, deliverable or goals were offered by the applicant.</p> <p>The applicant breakdown of activities by grade level and offers a quality plan for implementation of this project. There is limited information regarding the personalized instruction noted by the applicant.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't offer any information related to parents and educators in related to learning keys, partnership, personalized instruction or a high quality instructional approach. There were no details presented by the applicant regarding training or professional development of educators involved in the project.</p> <p>Overall the applicant fails to provide all of the attributes of a high quality plan and omitted critical information vital to warrant a high score for this section, consequently, resulting in the reviewer offering a midrange score.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states the superintendent, senior leadership and professional learning staff have administrative responsibility for assuring that a continuous program of staff development is operative. There are no additional details by the applicant as to how this will be achieved.</p> <p>The applicant offers a strong professional development plan for teachers that will help the recognized need areas.</p> <p>The applicant explains an assessment strategy to support Marzano High Yields strategies utilizing benchmark assessment data that mirrors the current system focused on student learning and instructional improvement.</p> <p>The applicant states DCSD provided learning opportunity for teachers in leadership academies and for teachers in a curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional learning network.</p> <p>The applicant explores a 4 tier design for over 6000 teachers and paraprofessionals that work at the campus level. The tier 1 explains highly qualified title but within the details the applicant states, "We encourage teachers to seek graduate degrees". This is not discussed in detail by the applicant to demonstrate the approach or implementation plan for this tier.</p> <p>The applicant labels the Tier 2 as Teacher Leaders. The applicant offer teachers several leadership opportunities at their schools. There are no detailed information presented by the applicant.</p> <p>The applicant explains that tier 3 focuses on profession learning communities for all teachers based on data but fails to provide details related to the data process.</p> <p>The applicant presents a breakdown of certified personnel that are a part of the professional development target group to</p>		

support student improvement.

The applicant fails to explain how the improvement plan is in aligned with current standards and how it is progressing toward increasing student performance or closing the achievement gap.

The strength of this section is the approach to professional development to utilize specific needs of teacher to increase STEM instruction supporting the score of the reviewer. The lower midrange scores is due to the lack of detail within this section to meet the comprehensive objective.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	8
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states there are major organizational restructuring occurring within the district. The applicant states the Board has granted full authority to the superintendent to restructure the district that will help meet grant standards.</p> <p>The applicant explains the organizational changes are targeting more than 300 central office positions to provide cost savings to the district. The applicant explains and apparent redesign of the infrastructure of the district. There is no explanation by the applicant on how these changes will influence the learning and performance of students participating in the program.</p> <p>The applicant explains that it identified a nationally recognized vendor to assist with standards. No details are provided related to this partnership by the applicant.</p> <p>The applicant states data will be used to plan for student remediation, but no details were offered by the applicant on the plan.</p> <p>The applicant also states the Board has a system wide policy indicating the district adhered to guidelines by the state related to special Ed.</p> <p>The applicant fails to offer details on learning resources for students with disabilities.</p> <p>There is significant information that is not addressed in detail by the applicant and the reviewer must score this section midrange because of the missing details.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	4
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant states the district provides each student with tangible and electronic tools to learn both in and out of the school. The applicant explains that computer labs, mobile labs and other items are available to every student. The applicant states that this grant will increase and ensure more equity and access during and after school.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't offer details as to how the grant will provide that to the students. No details are provided to explain how this technology is made available to every student. The applicant fails to explain or demonstrate technical support for students.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't provide a statement that parents can access the parent portal that includes student grades, assignments and attendance. Yet no additional information is provided as to how the implementation and utilization of this parent portal related to student learning improvement.</p> <p>The district already stated that every student has access to technology yet, the applicant states it plans to purchase additional technology for students.</p> <p>The applicant describes the K-5 classrooms will be outfitted with new technology but fails to explain the 6-12 grade students access to technology.</p> <p>The applicant expresses excitement over a new data system and states it will provide teacher resource links based on student performance statewide. The applicant doesn't offer any more details about the data system that would support a high quality plan.</p> <p>The applicant doesn't provide a high quality plan to explain the details, outlines, goals, timelines, or personnel responsible for activates to promote student learning, resulting in a low range score for this section.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes the Superintendents Excellent in Education plan that will facility building a culture of accountability. The applicant explains a plan for improvement and continuous monitoring to support ongoing communication and engagement.</p> <p>The applicant continues to explain engagement to include a robust diverse set of channels to communicate DCSD messages, internal engagement opportunities for hosting ongoing employee forums with school leadership, community task force groups related to topics appropriate for stakeholder discussions and advice and the creation of cross functional teams to address school district business. The applicant also doesn't offer information to explain the strategy for implementation of rigorous continuous improvement.</p> <p>The applicant does not offer any information to explain any of the previous statement.</p> <p>There is a list but that doesn't constitute a high quality plan resulting in a midrange score. Although, the applicant doesn't offer a high quality plan, several key criteria are noted but lack the detail needed for a high score by the reviewer.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant noted in the previous section the Superintendents Excellent in Education plan will facility building a culture of accountability. The applicant explains a plan for improvement and continuous monitoring to support ongoing communication and engagement.</p> <p>The applicant stated that the basic lines of communication will be utilized in the implementation and planning phases of the program more frequently than once the program is up and running. The applicant will utilize phone calls, face to face and email will be common means for communication.</p> <p>The level of engagement among stakeholders is not clearly explained by the applicant and cannot be determined by the reviewer. The engagement of the stakeholders is critical to the improvement plan for this project. The amount of input or feedback from the stakeholders is not offered by the applicant.</p> <p>The statements from the applicant in this section does not constitute evidence, but enough narrative information provided by the applicant supports a midrange score by the reviewer.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not complete this section in detail. The applicant didn't offer any data related to the performance measures of student groups. The applicant failed to provide target goals for student groups.</p> <p>The applicant failed to provide information in a clear plan related to the rational for measures, demonstration of rigor or how this performance measure would be reviewed. There is no information available for all student groups. The minimal information presented in the narrative of this section doesn't provide the reviewer with enough information to evaluate the criterion for this section. The score is a low score by the reviewer.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant didn't offer any data related to the performance measures of student groups. The applicant failed to provide target goals for student groups.</p> <p>The applicant failed to provide information in a clear plan related to the rational for measures, demonstration of rigor or how this performance measure would be reviewed. There is no information available for all student groups.</p> <p>The applicant noted information about four subcategories related to expected outcomes: Effective teaching, Standards and</p>		

assessment, Data and Lowest Achievement schools.

The applicant stated that it would utilize this fund from the grant to work in the found reform areas.

The applicant sets that the district scorecard will provide data to the public in monitoring district level performance.

The applicant doesn't explain a high quality plan to represent the best thinking to evaluate effectiveness of investments. The information presented by the applicant is minimal and a low score is given by the reviewer.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides a budget that identifies all the funds needed to support this project. The applicant offers some reasonable and sufficient information to support the development and implementation of the proposal The applicant doesn't offer any information related to the rational for the investment priorities The applicant doesn't offer any conclusive information to explain the areas in the grant identified as one time investments. The applicant's presented information limits the reviewer from completely comprehending the fiscal plan, therefore resulting in a midrange score.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant state that the district is facing financial hardship. The applicant states the district will support the sustainability of the grant through funds by the Perkins Grant they currently received. The reviewer is concerned by the applicant's statement of fiscal support by another grant. The applicant stated that the program will be a part of the district core plan and therefore will be supported at the conclusion of the grant cycle. The applicant doesn't offer any details or fiscal data to justify statements made previously. There is no high quality plan developed or illustrated by the applicant to support the statement of sustainability. The applicant doesn't offer times lines, deliverables or list responsible persons to support the sustainability of this project. This missing information fosters a mid range score by the reviewer.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: no information presented by the applicant for this section resulting in zero rating by the reviewer.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that attendance, graduation rates continue to be important indicators of student improvement and performance.

The applicant states that the Triple A project will offer a rigorous course of study that's aligned with college readiness but applicant doesn't offer additional information to justify the term rigor.

The applicant throughout this proposal identifies STEM fields in demand to justify the purpose of this proposal, implementation of STEM in early grades, K-12 focus on career advisement and individualize career plans. These ideas are the platform for this proposal, but details of a timeline, implementation strategies, deliverable or goals were not offered by applicant.

The applicant breakdown activities by grade level and clearly states that all student and all schools will be participants in the program. Although, several key areas could be stronger by the applicant, throughout the grant the applicant offered substantial information to justify meeting this expectation.

Overall the applicant therefore meets Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	122
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	0

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

no application submitted.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1269GA-3 for DeKalb County School District

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 has successfully set forth a comprehensive coherent reform vision.

The plan provided evidence in the form of a framework with 4 components necessary for student learning with the district implementing the reform areas of great teachers and leaders, standards and assessments, using data to inform instruction, improving the lowest achieving schools and focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The evidence that the plan builds on the 4 core assurance areas includes piloting new teacher and leader evaluations that will include the use of student academic growth evaluation, the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and align them to existing Georgia standards, partnering with the Partnership of Assessment Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) in 2014-15, the development of a Year at a Glance View of curriculum with units and model lessons, data usage that includes quarterly benchmarks and formative writing assessments that connect to the state's

longitudinal data system, improving the lowest achieving schools by utilizing a transformative model with strategies and practices to improve learning outcomes for students.

The plan included a 5th goal area for enhanced implementation of STEM. The 5 goals and associated strategies in this plan clearly support the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning and increasing equity through personalized student supports through hands-on robust, enriched and challenging learning activities based on the common core curriculum that stress design and creativity.

In light of the identified strengths, this application received a high score.

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

The applicant successfully set forth an approach to implementing its reform proposal to support high quality district and school implementation.

The plan provided states that all students in the district's 126 sites will participate; and while there is no description of the process they used to decide the sites, it is clear from the applicants description of their plan that they are focused on all students. Charts which include a list of the schools that will participate as well as address school demographics are included in the plan. These demographics include the total number of participating students, participating students from low income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators.

In light of the strengths identified, the application received a high score.

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

The applicant did not set forth a high quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform as evidenced by the fact that this section of the plan is absent from the plan provided. However, in a previous section of the plan, the narrative describes a scaling up and expanding the work of standards and assessment to include an alignment of all content area with STEM-related activities at he elementary, middle, and high school levels. They also describe a timely window of opportunity to expand the use of problem-based learning during the continued implementation of the CCSS to ensure students are well-positioned for success upon implementation of the national assessments.

In light of the weaknesses and limited strengths identified, this application received a medium score.

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

The applicant did not set forth a high quality plan describing the extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance.

While the plan provided contains charts with performance on summative assessments for all students as well as subgroups, and data on decreasing achievement gaps and graduation rates, there is no data for college enrollment. Furthermore, there is no evidence of the goals, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties that would demonstrate the applicant's success in meeting the criteria. In addition, there are no narrative goals identified in sections(A) 4b and (A) 4c. Only chart data is included so it is unclear what the goals are. There are several pages in the appendix that appear to reference performance targets in grades 3, 5, and 8 but they are not mentioned in the plan so it is unclear how they relate to the plan.

In light of these weaknesses and limited strengths identified, this application received a medium score.

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	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant did not set forth a plan demonstrating a clear track record of success.

The plan provided shows no evidence relating to the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement. While there is a description of some student achievement data in math and science, it is confusing and inadequate. There are no charts or graphs or descriptions that demonstrate the district is closing the achievement gap. The brief information about graduation is confusing and inadequate.

Data relating to reforms in the district's persistently lowest achieving schools is included. There is no evidence of which schools are lowest achieving or low performing and whether the data included is helping in their reform efforts. However they do describe some of the successes in the lowest achieving schools including Success for All. However, the narrative about making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents does not inform readers how to improve participation, instruction, and services.

In light of these weaknesses and limited strengths identified, this application received a medium score.

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

The application demonstrated increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.

The plan provided includes a bulleted list of ways the district works to maintain a high level of transparency in all operations including school level and district expenditures. Two items on the list relate to salary information. It is unclear if the district provides the required areas of actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school level instructional and support staff, actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff and teachers only, and actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level listed in the criteria.

In light of the limited strengths and weaknesses, this application received a medium score.

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

The applicant successfully demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

The plan provided describes that this district is one of 26 districts being supported by the State's Race to the Top grant, which includes implementing a growth model, teacher and leader evaluations, Common Core standards, the cohort method for calculating the graduation rate and measuring accountability. Therefore, it would appear that the applicant has the support of the State to implement the changes required to personalized learning environments. The plan further describes how major initiatives are presented to the Board of Education for approval and that this plan supports current initiatives in the district.

In light of the strengths identified, this application received a high score.

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

The application successfully demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal.

The new superintendent that arrived in the district in September 2012, has a plan in place that has her meeting with internal and external stakeholders to better understand the workings of the district and communities. By establishing a strong community presence immediately she was able to listen, learn and lead from the feedback. After gathering feedback, the Superintendent prepared and reported a summary outline what she had heard and proposed a plan.

The district's Excellence in Education Plan, on which this RTT-D application is based is the culmination of a variety of activities created to gather meaningful input from all stakeholder groups. This final plan provided was prepared by a cross-divisional team that brought input from various stakeholder groups including district staff, school staff, parents, students, business partners, higher education and government agencies. Comments were then received from the draft application and changes made.

Included in the plan in the appendix are copies of letters of support. In addition, the representative of the bargaining unit has signed the application.

In light of the strengths identified, this application received a high score.

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

The applicant set for a highly qualified plan for the analysis of needs and gaps that this plan will address.

The plan provided included a narrative of how the district determined what specific supports or improvement were needed in the district. Using the district's strategic plan and the Theory of Action for Change as cornerstones, the logic behind the reform proposal is reinforced by the data and instructional processes in the district. The Response to Intervention process will be used for eliminating instruction gaps. The district also used the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), which replaces AYP and NCLB. CCRPI scores will be calculated in three area to "capture the essential work of schools"--achievement score, achievement gap closure score, and progress score.

After looking at these scores and the community job landscape, the committee charged with this work, identified a list of performance measures. In addition, the curriculum will also be expanded to support STEM concepts and help the district expand personalized learning environments.

In light of these strengths, this application received a high score.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has successfully set forth a plan for improving learning and teaching.

The plan provided included an approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable them to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college-and career-standards as evidenced by all core content areas in the district are weighted equally as a measure of student readiness to enter the 21st century ready for college and/or a career.

The plan includes evidence of exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives and the opportunity to master skills and traits such as goal setting, teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving through the goals addressed in their vision.

The emphasis on STEM in this application enhances the variety of high quality learning approaches and content offered to students. Individualized career plans for each student will be developed as early as 7th grade and Triple A will provide each student the data and support to pursue a rigorous course of study toward mastery of college-and career-ready standards, or college-and career-ready graduation requirements.

However, there is no clear timeline or identified persons responsible detailed in the plan. In addition, while parents play a supportive role for their students, there is no identified role for them defined in the plan. Further, there are no clear accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students identified to help ensure that they are on track nor mechanisms in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure they understand how to use tools and resources provided them.

In light of these strengths and weaknesses, the application received a medium score.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set for a high quality plan that helps educators to improve instruction and increase capacity to support progress toward meeting college and career ready standards.

Their plan describes a culture of learning that begins with support from the Board of Education through policy. The

Superintendent and staff annually prepare a system wide strategic plan for professional learning that supports curriculum and student learning. The professional learning opportunities occur through job-embedded learning structures and are implemented at the school level. The program includes but is not limited to:

- professional learning communities
- instructional strategies
- new teacher induction
- use of technology to support instruction
- STEM instructional strategies
- pedagogical and content knowledge
- Rtl (Response to Intervention) development
- use of the Instructional Data Management System (IDMS) professional development portal
- district-wide teacher, administrative and classified leadership conferences
- cognitive coaching support of teachers with alternative certifications
- and an array of intensive results-based learning courses

The plan describes how teachers and leaders in each building use student outcome data to plan their individual professional learning needs as well as district needs. The district provides these learning opportunities on a tiered basis to meet the differentiated needs of teachers and leaders based on the CIAPL framework (curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional learning) described earlier with the student's needs embedded in the middle. These opportunities allow the teachers to learn how to accelerate student progress as well as structure an effective learning environment.

Further, the district plan recognizes that in order to help educators to improve instruction through professional learning that they need to implement personalized learning environments that meet each student's academic needs and adapt content and instruction to respond to students. They use data to monitor and measure its effects on educator and student performance in order to close the achievement gap.

To assure that the district develops and supports teachers based upon targeted observation and student achievement data, they use the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System and the Leader Keys Effectives System, developed for Georgia's RT3 initiative, a very comprehensive evaluation model for both teachers and leaders. These systems all participating teachers and leaders to have training, policies, tools, data and resources that enable them to structure effective learning environments to increase student performance and close the achievement gaps. However, there is no timeline, deliverables or parties responsible detailed in the plan.

School leaders in each building meet to plan their professional learning needs based upon student outcome data from the previous year. Schools have the opportunity to customize their learning and take steps to improve educator effectiveness for the purpose of continuous school improvement.

The plan provides learning opportunities for leaders based on a tiered structure to meet the differentiated needs of teachers and leaders. There are four tiered levels identified that include highly qualified/highly effective who are adding additional certifications in high needs areas, teacher leaders serve in such capacities as department and grade level chairs, academic coaches and book study facilitators, teacher and paraprofessionals have professional learning based upon district and teacher needs in support of the curriculum, common core standards, problem based assessment strategies and instructional strategies, and new teacher induction where new teachers meet monthly by content in cohort groups.

The critical component of rich, deep implementation of Rtl (response to intervention) in every classroom helps to ensure that all students receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

In light of these strengths and limited weakness identified, this application received a high score.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant successfully set forth a high quality plan to support practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning.

The plan provided included a description of the restructuring and organizing the central office to provide support and services to all schools. They have also granted the Superintendent the authority to redefine school based positions to create a more efficient and effective service model at the school level. They have also completed a comprehensive review of Board policies and related regulations and identified those polices that require revision or elimination. They are now using an aligned management system that will facilitate building a culture of accountability and provides a means to manage, monitor and measure school district activities, decisions and performance.

Students have the opportunity to progress, demonstrate mastery and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery of standards in multiple ways through the use of benchmark assessments that are aligned to the district's curriculum and units of study in grades kindergarten through grade twelve. Resulting benchmark data will be used to plan for student the appropriate remediation and support experiences or enrichment opportunities.

The district implements practices and procedures that differentiate instruction for all students, including students with disabilities and English Learners through ongoing professional learning opportunities that address best practices, co-teaching, behavior management and sheltered instruction for English learnings. Students have access to computer software, individual tutoring, and additional reading and math programs to meet individual needs.

In light of these strengths identified, this application received a high score.

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

The applicant successfully set for a high quality plan of LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning.

The plan provided included a summary of how they provide tangible and electronic tools necessary to learn both in and out of school. Computer labs, mobile labs of iBooks and laptops as well as electronic access to textbooks for home use are available for every student. The district's Information Technology Department provides information technology technicians to oversee all hardware and software issues in the schools and are the first line of support at the local level. There are also trainings on software applications, a district support desk and online support in the form of webpages containing "how to" documents and video tutorials. Parents can access the Parent Portal for students' grades, assignments, attendance and teacher messages.

The district has interoperable data systems for human resources and budget data, student information and instructional improvement but does not have an open data format to export personal records. Wireless infrastructure plans include expanding the current wireless access in all schools beyond the media center to include access inside and outside of all schools. The district will also take advantage of the State's new Longitudinal Data System designed to help teachers make informed decisions to improve student learning.

In light of the strengths identified, this application received a high score.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant successfully set forth a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process.

The plan provided included a description of an Aligned Management System for Continuous Improvement to facilitate building a culture of accountability and full transparency which provides a means to manage, monitor and measure the strategic plan activities. They describe it as a Plan-Do-Check-Act process for ongoing operational effectiveness and improvement. Some of the other strategies the district will use include:

- a robust, diverse set of channels to communicate district messages;
- internal engagement opportunities through ongoing employee forums with school leadership;
- community task force groups for each division related to topics appropriate for stakeholder discussions and advice; and
- creation of cross functional team to address school direct business.

They have established a RT3 Accountability Team which represents senior leadership. The will use 2 methods for

building capacity. First, recognizing all stakeholders must understand the intent, goals, strategies, and activities of the plan and second, everyone involved in implementation of the plan was to be trained on appropriate aspects of the plan which will use various options for training. Two-way proactive communication strategies will include press, releases, community meetings, survey, and focus groups. However, details of the plan including timelines, deliverables were not included.

In light of these strengths and limited weaknesses identified, this application received a high score.

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

The applicant successfully set forth a plan for ongoing communication and engagement.

The plan provided included a process which will be continued and scaled up with the award of this grant as evidenced by new activities for ongoing communication and engagement that will include:

- a dedicated webpage to RTT-D activities;
- dedicated Discussion on First Class, the school district's intranet
- a quarterly newsletter with RTT-D information and updates
- an RTT-D Advisory Council comprising representative for all stakeholder groups; and
- regular reports provided to Senior Leadership and the Board by the RTT-D Project Director.

Data will be collected, recorded, analyzed for themes, and shared with staff involved in all aspects of RTT-D activities so that mid-course adjustments can be made. In addition, the RTT-D leadership plans to meet with community, state, and national stakeholders who share a common vision of improving student outcomes through innovative learning opportunities and experiences.

In light of the strengths identified, this application received a high score.

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

The applicant did not set forth a plan for ambition yet achievable performance measures.

While the performance tables are included in the application, they are empty--no baseline indicators. It appears that the district will be using 2012-13 data as the baseline. While state targets are included in the appendix, there is no narrative about how these targets will relate to the local targets. Also, there is no rationale included for selecting any measure or how the measure will provide information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern.

In addition, there is no mention of how the district will review and improve the measures over time.

In light of these weaknesses, this application received a medium score.

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

The applicant successfully set forth a quality plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the investment of the RTT-D funded activities.

The plan provided included a listing of expected outcomes in each priority area--effective teachers and principals, standards and assessments, data systems and lowest achieving schools. There is also information relating to looking at the effectiveness of the RTT-D funded activities and the assignment of capital and human resources.

In light of these strengths identified, this application received a high score.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant successfully set forth an overall budget for the project which is reasonable and sufficient to support the plan.</p> <p>The plan provided included identification of all funds that will support the project including external support and clearly identifies funds that will be used for one-time investments and evidenced by the budget narrative. The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the plan as evidenced through extensive and comprehensive professional learning that will impact teacher quality and effectiveness.</p> <p>In addition the district provides a detailed budget that describes how the funds will be used as well as a description of one-time investments that include equipment to establish robotics labs in all school buildings in the district, updates of labs in middle schools to provide for flexible project-based learning, engineering is elementary kits for each elementary building, and high definition video conferencing equipment at two high school centers for advanced mechatronics coursework.</p> <p>In light of these strengths identified, the application received a high score.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant successfully sets forth a high quality plan for sustainability project goals after the term of the grant.</p> <p>Evidence of sustainability is, in part, ensured through extensive, comprehensive professional learning. The plan includes job-embedded professional learning, professional learning communities, common planning, a district-wide symposium, as well as the individual professional learning plans that are part of the Teacher and Leader Keys Evaluation Systems.</p> <p>In addition, the science/STEM leaders and facilitators will ensure that teachers are adequately developed in the STEM work so that at the end of the grant period, best practices will be sustained through the everyday work of the school staff. No additional district staff is included in the plan because the district want to build capacity throughout the district with teacher leaders who can sustain the work.</p> <p>For future budge decisions, the goals of this reform will be at the forefront and local funds will be allocated. Further, the district will use Perkins IV Grant funds to help sustain with the district providing the mandated match.</p> <p>In light of these strengths identified, this application received a high score.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	0
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This application does not include the competitive preference priority.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The applicant has coherently and comprehensively addressed Absolute Priority 1 in the following ways:

* build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements:

- piloting new teacher and leader evaluations;
- adoption of the Common Core State Standards and align them to existing Georgia standards;
- partnering with the Partnership of Assessment Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC);
- development of a Year at a Glance View of curriculum with units and model lessons;
- data usage that includes quarterly benchmarks and formative writing assessments;

*accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student--

- supporting the lowest achieving schools by utilizing a transformative model with strategies and practices to improve learning outcomes for students;
- focus on all students--126 sites in the district;
- alignment of content area with STEM related activities at the elementary;
- problem-based learning during the continued implementation of the CCSS to ensure students are well-positioned for success upon implementation of the national assessments;
- performance data on summative assessments for all students as well as subgroups

*increase the effectiveness of educators and expand student access to the most effective educators--

- professional learning job-embedded and implemented at the school level
- multiple opportunities for professional learning that includes but not limited to professional learning communities, instructional strategies, new teacher induction, use of technology to support instruction, STEM instructional strategies, RTI,
- pedagogical and content knowledge,
- teacher evaluations based on the Georgia Teacher Keys Effectiveness System
- leader evaluations based on the Georgia Leader Effectiveness System

*decrease achievement gaps across student groups--

- data on decreasing achievement gaps;
- Response to Intervention will be used for instructional processes;
- use of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI);

*and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers--

- data on graduation rates
- students have opportunity to progress, demonstrate mastery and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery of standards in multiple ways and not just seat time.

In light of the strengths identified, this application has met Absolute Priority 1.

Total	210	170
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