



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1321DC-1 for District of Columbia Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

DCPS outlines bold initiatives tied to student learning and achievement along with the input of 8,500 convened stakeholders from students, counselors, community volunteers, business partners, universities, and administrators demonstrating a diverse viewpoint that informed and dreamed the vision.

Foremost, the goals and vision builds upon key commitments in "A Capital Commitment" focused on student centered learning, a five year reform plan, and high expectations for success including (5) goals. The strongest of these designed to implement: Improved graduation rates, and an investment in struggling schools. The goals intend to promote literacy in 32 schools, where reading still lags behind otherwise strong qualitative scores.

Inquisitive, engagement, and real-world problem-solving comes alongside the other (3) goals: increased graduation rate, improved satisfaction, and increased enrollment.

The four core assurances are evidenced by: accelerated learning, evaluative measures around school and academic leaders, graduation and transitions to career and college readiness, and the turn-around of low performing schools.

Governmental assurances create bold reform around OSSE (the Office of State Superintendent of Education), a new reform agency, with strong public support, and restructure of teaching and learning, recruitment and development of effective principals and teachers, adopting standards to align to a global economy and community and preparation to see students success in college and the workplace. In addition, the design and justification of building a data system to capture student learning, and the goal to turn around lowest-achieving schools around coordinated strategies. There is not enough specific details for implementation, and lacks criteria for sufficient evaluations centered on principal and teacher effectiveness. The plan lacks information on the persons responsible for deliverables and timeframe for those tasks implementations. Also, more specific information is needed to justify the overall plan implementation, although the rationale behind the plan is superior and research based.

Fact based strategies are in place to provide implementation interventions across 20 low-achieving schools. While there are technical reforms, the applicant seeks to strengthen goals in the adaptive culture and practice to create high learning bars for personalized learning achievement.

Theory of change is excellent with steady focus on the individual child, building of a collaborative network, school-level student success and identification of students interest and needs by instructional plans. A student success facilitator is an evaluative approach to monitor the implementation of the goals, in a clear and credible way to impact student tasks and deepen student learning through case management. The applicant set forth a comprehensive and coherent vision through higher teacher evaluation standards, accelerating student learning through efforts to analyze data from the data dashboard and other sources, sharing of information through counterparts in district offices, and improving the school culture and climate by reaching out to the community and to parents for more comprehensive individual personal learning through steady communication by websites, newsletter, and data systems. The extent to how the high quality plan wraps around the vision is significant in the four core educational assurance areas, especially in the focus to turn-around lowest-achieving schools. For example, the models for lowest achievement schools (9 schools from SY 2010-2011), has detailed intervention plans and timelines for deliverables. In addition, the same 9 schools planned the hiring of central office intervention staff with potential vendors, to create and sustain the impact of personalized learning environments and accelerated tasks for literacy improvement. If adopted the use of the rise of literacy scores in the elementary and middle schools will lead to successful graduation rates and increased opportunities for linkage to college and career ready goals. The value judgements of the stakeholders to focus on literacy and to take apart the barriers for "why" elementary and middle school students struggle with literacy is a key coherent factor in accelerating the learning, opting for managerial processes that evaluates high quality teachers and principals, and readily link graduation rates to career accessibility.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) The Aspire model provides the theory of change in terms of all students prepared for college and careers and graduation, alignment with the goal to improve literacy rates in participating schools, The LEA's made the determination to select the 32 lowest literacy schools, who were invited and accepted the invitation to proceed within the RTTT process.

The effort sets the goal for K-8 students in middle school within the district and LEA. These schools, on average, according to much support materials, are on average, " less than one quarter on reading level." All students in these schools are participants. A useful plan structure organizes the tasks and duties of staffing, planning, training, and the building of the infrastructure to timelines of deliverables, these are specific and quantitative, with clear, concise goals and outcomes.

Precise process objectives structure the model and allows for activities to impact the improved outcomes and performance measures as evidenced by project infrastructure to totally support full implementation and continuous improvement in the key goals such as improved literacy, higher teacher and principal evaluations, higher graduation rates, and links to career and college readiness.

The process is strong in the development of achievement goals centered around literacy: creating object driven lesson plans, adoption of a management system within the classroom, and creating innovative standards based and Common Core Aligned assessments to inform the process for these very low performing schools. There the process breaks down and aligns to Personalized Learning Environments where students are able to extend the school day.

b) 32 participating schools based on those schools with the highest needs ratio, where some students are less than one-quarter of the reading level. All are referenced in the appendix. The extent to the approach of selection of students and gradebands to participate in a high quality implementation rests with the comprehensive and cohesive vision to have all students in the lowest performing 32 elementary schools to read and excel with a tailored and coordinated effort to be far reaching in implementation and process as evidenced by structured professional learning communities (PLC'S), and access to SSP systems. In addition, further evidence ties the instructional coaches and students to the MTTs to assess student progress, instructional allocations, and interventions with support for all 32 schools who participate in the grant.

c) 10,400, 92% from low-income families, participating educators did not hit quite 70% across the platform. K-5 LEA wide school students who are TRC accessed, (2014-2015) school and grade-bands to administer new Common Core State Standards. Student in 32 schools to be compared in Scholastic Reading Inventory will mark student progress for career-college ready standards, and to determine if student are on track for graduation.

Achievement groups will support the high quality plan implementation based on the achievement gap methodology. How many score proficient and above and how it impacts the graduation rates (ACGR). This is evidenced through the co-hort measurements calculated between Non-White subgroups at participating schools and their White co-horts as well as assess different percentages with scores of FARMS students against Non-FARMS students LEA wide. A strong basis for securing the information and research data to impact the overall supports of the proposal. The exploration of how to build more participating students and schools impact about 10,000 students in the DC area.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

DCPS proposes dramatic reform for students in high need areas and made determinations to value the goal of raising literacy scores for elementary and middle school students in 32 schools across the district.

Key deliverables are dissected and what is analyzed to bring the most results are as follows:

Data dashboard competent implementation along with scaled multi-level supports, high student success plans, college involvement, and a high culture of expectation.

Effectiveness and scaleability rates and critiques school workers throughout the system. PCL models of learning and ASPIRE to support on-going professional development and school to work contextualized modules for learning.

Proof of the Aspire model to connect the vision to specific and doable measures for performance outcomes. The scale-up is multi-tiered to address the highest learning needs of students in the lowest performing schools. Specific lesson plans, community supports, extended day, data dashboard, professional learning community, and personalized learning environments scale and justify the plan's implementation to accelerate learning, connect to career-and workforce readiness, and provide

flexibility for personalized learning systems, whereby, the student is responsible for his own learning.

Goals are best centered with wrap-around methods/strategies to promote on-going, job embedded professional development, and enrichment programs for students. Personalized learning to incorporate lessons learned from elements of the proposed project into the work in the school. Plan evaluates the role of guidance counselors and social workers, along with student facilitators to solve problems and accelerate the learning process. This is worthwhile in building out the PLC and ASPIRE model as a rationale for the plan.

It is a strong vision and plan to support student success along with evaluation forms to judge the effectiveness and scalability of the student's work through the use of coaches, tutors, and support personell to reach across the spectrum in meeting or exceeding Common Core lexile and ranges LEA wide, thus improving proficiency amid decreasing achievement gaps. Thus a credible step in analysis of "why" literacy scores are low across 32 elementary schools.

In additon, strong linkage to interventions through partner agencies Partnership Coordinating Group, clear and cohensive objectives are expanded through extended school days and wrap arounds to incorporate lessons learned, utilizing student success facilitators. The logic and theory of the plan is compelling and powerful to address the myraid of literacy issues in low performing elementary schools. This plan is significant in it's key goal to Advance student learning through raising literacy rates, and to close achievement gaps, to accelerate learning through bold and ambitious systemic changes, and to boost high school and college-career readiness plans. This is evidenced by a clear record of success in the past four years, with rising achievement in math on both 4th and 8th grade (no information given on 2, 3, and 5 th grade improvements), but significant gains on NAEP testing since 2007.

Further supportive evidence includes: 4th grade math from 11 percent (2007), basic improvements increased from 36-59% (2011), along with solid growth among 8th graders 7-12 percent (2207-2011).

The meaningful reform outlines shows that students, on the whole, achieved 13.5 percent overall increases with DC-CAS.

Key goals and activities to be undertaken pre-reading skills, personal support, tiered interventions, literacy centers, technology and tutoring does a decent job of adding overall credibility to the plan. The strict policy of student dashboards involve the structure for success with the guidance of highly effective principals, teachers, classroom, and district structure. The value justifies the use of strong professional development, coaches, and expert teachers to guide and implement the process for sustained growth that explores timelines and deliverables for the plan implementation which was a bit vague in the plan. A few dates on the timeline are apparent, but others are not so viable.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Summative assessments show overall strong growth for math, with most students in 80-95% of students from low-income families.

a) LEA wide goals, a weak narrative, to explain summative assessements and how it assists the applicant to make improvements. The data is mostly projections based on baseline patterns.

Across the board, data of participating students reveal high needs in areas of reading impacting over 42 thousand students.

b)Decreasing achievement gaps in math and language, but high needs for reading to be adaptive, scores low and literacy is an achievement gap.

Benchmarks used to determine growth levels on DCCAS/PARCC ELA shows significant growth: nearly 3% overall with slight growth for Hispanics. DCAA/PARCC grades 2-8, 5.6% to establish a baseline.

c) High school graduation rates overall improved 6%, Asians improved close to 5%, Hispancis show a 9% growth in graduation rates, Whites graduation rates increased by close to 4%, and ELL showed the largest jump at nearly 13%. This is significant proof of growth within the LEA.

d) College enrollment overall 3% growth in enrollents into higher education institutions during the 16 months after graduation. SPED grew 3% to college and career enrolled students, and FARMS grew 3%, and Black enrollment grew 3% . The vison of establishing firm literacy strategies at the ELA level will lead to improved graduation rates over time. Goals to improve and close literacy gaps does increase the equity of students and ties to the vision of the plan.

Literacy measures equal or exceed the State ESEA targets for students and subgroups. Plan using wrap-arounds demonstrates applicants ability to deliver on the measurables that reside within the plan and saturate learning and achievement outcomes.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) Bold, systemic reform in learning, with a clear record of success over the past 4 years. Closed achievement gaps on DC-CAS from 31%-44.7%</p> <p>Rising achievements in Math in both 4th and 8th grade NAEP, strong upward trends throughout the data.</p> <p>A clear record of significant gains in 8th grade students scoring proficient in math from 35-42 percent. There are narrowed achievement gaps between Black and White groups, and Hispanic and White students; reflected greatly at the secondary level of learning. The gaps narrowed mostly between Hispanics and Whites by 14% in reading, and that proves the method of activities and approach to gaps is advancing student learning as evidence demonstrates in the application. Proficiency most in need is at the elementary level, which if not fixed will lead to lower graduation rates, and lower numbers of students entering into postsecondary learning. Graduation rates have increased modestly to 3% overall, with higher graduation rates for Hispanics about 5%.</p> <p>Moreover, a rise in 3% of students are seeking college and career readiness and being transitioned into postsecondary education.</p> <p>b) Persistent improvement in narrowing achievement gaps with Black, White, and Hispanic students, (2007-2012) with 14% in reading proficiency.</p> <p>Narrowed gaps by 21% in math proficiency, and gaps between black and white students narrowed by 13% in secondary reading. One achievement gap still remains in reading proficiency at the elementary level with highest need among Hispanic students. (one percentage point drop).</p> <p>c) Quarterly reports and report cards, school conferences, school revised ways to communicate to parents more efficiently and effectively:</p> <p>PIA Parent reports sent out to students in grades 2-10.</p> <p>Digital grade books (2012-2013) sends critiques to parents with online reporting benchmarks that pull specific examples from the data base.</p> <p>Parent Outreach: (2011-2012) Teachers conduct home visits designed to engage parents followed by parent-teacher data meetings at school.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A good level of transparency exists given the formats built through methods of managerial operations. The preferred method of transparent investment comes by the publication of practices for easy reading and ready consumption by the stakeholders.</p> <p>Administrative officials and officers prefer to use face to face outreach in the community to make public school and actual school-level expenditures, alongside technology platforms to communicate effectively.</p> <p>(2009) portal revamp to better inform students, parents, and community members. (2010) Digital Educational Achievement Award and Best Web award for Center for Digital Education accurate methods of updating on "scorecard" and "Overview" .</p> <p>Salaries are made available by a best practice of Detailed Budget Guide, Frequently Asked Questions, and on the website.</p> <p>All salaries are viewable holding to public forums, and printed budget publishing reports.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>DC schools restructured in 2007, Congress approved Office of State Superintendent of Education, first state-level agency as an umbrella over which education is depoliticized established clear lines of authority.</p>		

Conditions are now favorable to have autonomy given the agreements between the mayor and (OSSE). Strong interaction with state agency and positive relationships with OSSE.

Significant reforms through 1st RTTT grant, that has provided resources, data system, and school turn-around. DCPS and OSSE collaborative efforts are serving as the background of the progress and proposal.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a)(i) Excellent and comprehensive support for LEA with description of participating schools and individuals, letters for documentation, many strands of work present through (2012) Office of Curriculum and Instruction that convened the K-8 Reading Work Group to develop a literacy initiative. The committees of working group members played direct roles in guiding the overriding principles and providing powerful feedback to acutely sharpen the right key strategies and goals for implementation. This model along with the approach of the union and their support is reasonable for the choices made in the process. Union support is apparent in this plan. More specifics are needed to how there is sufficient autonomy at the local school level, and district level.

(ii) (2012) Office of Curriculum and Instruction initiate plans for literacy improvements, groups and bargaining units shape course and direction as a collaborative effort to develop proposals. Deep discussions with parents and stakeholders to inform the process, 8,500 offered input and feedback on the ASPIRE model. More definitions are needed around sufficient autonomy, and how the LEA's will hold accountable responsible parties.

Hopes and Dreams outreach effort brought the entire school community together so that the power structure was set-up in such a way to promote the plan and model and set it up for a successful outcome for student consumption of literacy learning.

b) 10 letters of support from various groups and agencies, both state, college, union, and local all supportive of the proposal.

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

5

5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

A strong high quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning for students is evident. The needs and gaps are identified.

(ASPIRE) lacks comprehensive tracking in data at present, but new data tool will make data on students ready and available. Timeframe and deliverables empower the student through common tasks and accelerators based on student's interest, needs, literacy goals, social-emotional, health and other non-cognitive extended days activities which lend superior structure for student success. A high quality plan builds on several webs of support for teachers and principals to have the necessary tools to inform the literacy process within the confines of the school, and after-school activities. Feedback given continually to improve the accelerated learning process, with integrating and management of data and performance to meet each student's need and interests to incorporate the whole student learning through PLE's. ASPIRE to address student success factors for better student literacy success.

Strong literacy based approach to implement elements of closing gaps by utilization of personalized learning environments and structures. Digital Learning a key component of the structure to access a network of personalized learning supports. Break through deep literacy challenges, some generational in spectrum.

Creates and implements a best blended-model, and strong school-based wrap-around supports for accelerated learning of students.

Grounded tasks both common and individual but based on student need and interest to spark more engagement of student learning and to close reading gaps that exists throughout the elementary levels.

SSP to be in charge of working with students to support and remediate to literacy success.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Supports for a high quality plan is evidence-based and grounded in belief that in order to achieve dramatically improved students scores; students must be engaged in the learning by focused target areas on student needs and interest. Literacy skills ensue at 32 elementary schools, and there is a high need to create a climate and culture of learning, which is aligned to DCPS, (ELA) and English Language Arts Curriculum.

Pillars of success outlined in a personal way to accomplish tasks:

(a)(i) Learning is key to success, Addition of key goal of personalized learning reading specialists to each core team, with high use of professional development tasking, to impact instructional strategies, this route clearly outlines the effectiveness of PLC's to discuss data, monitor effectiveness, and implement continual improvement through reading strategies. Students will understand what they are learning and how it connects to college and career-ready standards and graduation rates. Mastery of critical and academic content is incorporated such as teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication and problem-solving in the reading/literacy realm. Perspectives of the plan will motivate students to dive deeper into learning and to enable students to address and achieve personal learning goals including moving through the school system graduation ready, and college and career ready.

(ii) Identification and pursuit of developmental goals linked with college and career ready standards, created with tailored networks of support that is timely and based on measurable deliverables as resources are purchased and incorporated into the SSP. Literacy instruction in tiered levels promote incremental growths that become significant over time. ASPIRE to engage students from the youngest ages as essential partners in owning their learning and this is a significant goal and factor of the plan in starting at young ages to implement a high culture of high expectations in all academic goals.

(iii) deep-learning experiences, through ASPIRE, and other literacy (SSP) plans, to be collaborative in development and structure. A high quality of culture and implementation of high student expectations for stronger student engagement in learning that is relevant by using games, manipulatives, situational interest, online learning applications, in ways that allows the students to explore their own goals and interest in obtaining literacy mastery. The plan's structure supports the accommodations of high quality strategies for high needs students (high poverty) to reach graduation and transition to postsecondary education.

(iv) strong components in place to master critical academic content, in this case reading skills necessary for graduation and college-career ready standards, emphasis on teamwork, critical-thinking, communication, and creativity to develop 21st Century skills and traits. High core competencies available for use with alignment to the Common Core Standards, pre-screened intervention supports embedded into the system, schools to be held accountable for performance outcomes and improving reading results. Dashboard responsible for providing information that informs the process of learning and holds the plan together for accountable outcomes.

(v) Efficiencies are built to increase stronger webs of mastery and critical academic content to develop use of team concepts, as evidenced through personal reading specialists to serve as experts that provide deep personalized reading instruction and modeling for teachers.

(b) Rigor, Relevance, Relationship are the tools identified to engage and take students deep into the mastery of learning, there need to be more specific and detailed activities around this component.

(i) Personalized sequence of instruction content and skill development, as key strategy that builds components of learning in a flexible manner and designed to reach targeted goals of the personalized learning environment of the student through graduation and onto postsecondary education.

(ii) the plan demonstrates a variety of high quality structured environments for learning,

(iii) the plan shows appropriate digital learning content,

(iv) the plan describes frequently updated student data to inform the process of learning and needs,

(v) the plan accommodates high strategies structured around high needs students for most efficient and effective literacy outcomes (ie, homeless, foster care, incarcerated, disabilities, ELL).

Approaches appear anchored in research and research theory of Paul Tough (2012), How Children Succeed.

A. Student data tracked and monitored through data measuring tool (SSP) student success plan for learning. ASPIRE assures all teachers, students, parents and educators have relevant content tools, resources, and several platforms regardless of income for anytime, anywhere learning.

Multi-leveled tier system is a comprehensive based and researched approach to literacy instruction; it analyses and judges student strengths and weaknesses.

A critique to structured promising practices for prioritized implementation such as Common Core Strategies for alignment with ASPIRE.

The use of personalized reading specialist that can lead and guide student through to graduation and onto careers and postsecondary education is a productive model.

B. Accommodations are relevant to all learners in need with learning support models embedded into the process. Personalized learning recommendations negotiated with the student's current knowledge for a significant upgrade for learning that will last and be a foundation for life-long learning skills. To meet the needs of college and career ready graduation requirements, extra technology literacy based tools and programs within the schools to ensure the students and parents can use training effectively to develop and link the process of access to all components of the plan, in terms of timelines, deliverables, and measured outcomes for learning. This demonstrated through Double Line Partners and the ED-FI solutions.

C. Strong and investigative mechanisms in place to provide training such as professional development for teachers that will ensure students have an understanding of how to use resources (e.g. Read 180 and Burst, Wilson Writing) for more consistently monitored effectiveness. High levels of questioning and reasoning skills, and metacognitive strategies, asking students to explain what they know and how they know is, is self-evident.

The plan does not provide for improving teaching and learning to all students in all grade levels. High school has not been included into the plan. There is insufficient information on what consists of a highly effective teacher and administrator and how they are to be evaluated successfully.

There is good substance to prove that literacy does impact overall school improvement and can turn-around low performing schools.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

A high quality plan given DCPS teaching and learning framework to inform best practice and increase teacher effectiveness. Intensive, targeted, and universal strategies surround the resources to improve instruction by personalized learning environments. "ASPIRE will enable DCPS to personalize and change the culture across classrooms, schools, and the extended learning supports that surround classrooms and schools, creating and nurturing culture of high expectations."

Teachers are partners in learning and collaborate with one another to provide high quality components of rigorous instruction through extensive investments in the process and approach of learning. A powerful plan to have all educators, administrators, parents, and students involved in the process of the targeted specific goals of improving achievement rates, invest in struggling schools, increase graduation rates, and to increase enrollments. Supportive research and rationale behind lifting 32 elementary and middle schools

ASPIRE has the promise and creative innovation to take the literacy project deeper and make it more constructive and meaningful to students. The approach is one that allows teachers to build a model teacher blueprint, and to fundamentally change the school dynamics of those with low readers or illiterate students, this in turn has the potential to impact families, and lift communities. The OSSE provides the equity to restructure the teaching and learning in the District of Columbia Public Schools. This is a powerful tool in the overall structure and support of the plan to deliver on timelines that will see the growth of student scores. Teachers and principals do require training and on going job-embedded support and evaluation, and are held accountable for increased literacy performance by school.

The goals are achievable through reading strategies linked to Common Core Standards, that inform regular formative assessments, tied to student achievements made necessary through technical and adaptive forms which build a cohesive strategy within the plan to focus on increasing equity of the students through teamwork, co-hort groups, discussion methods, and projects that accelerate learning and tie to better graduation rates, and workforce skills.

Community linkages coordinated and channeled to support 21st Century skills, and to leverage and enhance public agencies in the process, along with training and ongoing job embedded professional development for teachers to best guide students as Master Educators. Specifics for how this goal will be achieved is lacking in the application.

Master teachers and principals to support educators, in turn principals and instructional coaches to receive support through PLC meetings, on demand training, and other supports. This section is a bit vague on specifics but does outline that all instructors will participate in annual data management trainings, Principals and district administrators will participate in quarterly PLC's. PLC's to be lead by instructional coaches, and to have Master Educators and principals to hold teachers accountable. The plan lacks specifics in the "how" of evaluative processes for teachers and principals.

Observe, develop, and debrief, implement one on one support, as a policy and procedure, reflect on progress, and evaluate the cycle. Grade level teams to build consensus to help particular educators, initially facilitated by change-management

consultants, but structures and teams eventually transitioned to the local school administration and leadership teams to manage policies and structures of learning.

Tier 2 and tier 3 strategies, Professional development resources developed by shared resources, reasonable and reliable with (9) teach standards, personal protocols, teacher performance data. and use of quarterly Professional Learning Community. These goals are outlined in the plan in order to support, recruit, realign, and reflect on all deliverables such as key goals, (raising literacy rates in 32 low performing schools), and structure, policy and proceedures are in place to execute Personal Learning Environments through timeframe and deliverables.

The evaluation of the plan is lacking in terms of addressing the literacy needs of high school students, as they are the ones closest to graduation and taking career steps into postsecondary education, in fact, the plan should have addressed measures to include high school students. There is unclear information and evidence as to how the literacy plan will improve the link to college and career readiness, an assurance that had to be met in the plan implementation.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>a) Good use of LEA practices from central office, consortium and governance structure as evidenced through letter of support, and implementation embedded within the project structures and system. Mastery demonstrates abilities to provide school leaders with the flexibility and autonomy needed for students to progress in a timely manner on time to graduate and proceed onto postsecondary attainment. Good use of structure and human capacity to support ASPIRE at a district level,with appropriate task monitors and oversight. Delivery of literacy instruction seems to support social, emotional, and tiered intervention strategies. Capacities are a bit lacking in the plan, as to how the framework will build on existing systems.</p> <p>b) Project director executes delivery to provide supervisors and 20 school level support teams with the capability to coordinate and monitor all tasks with "Proving What's Possible grant approach, empowerment to development and implement strategies of learning for higher gains with the help of 16 personalized reading specialists. Coordination of tasks of the plan breakdown the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders a bit stark, no real calendars to view.</p> <p>c) Specifics were not categorized well, however, methods for students to access the common core including the use of whole class instruction is present. No detailed informaton on how students progress and earn credits.</p> <p>d) Lacks specific information on how students can master standards and how they may do so in multiple ways, or in comparable ways.</p> <p>e) Somewhat outlines the learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to students, most of the resources are online tools for growth. The types of text, and books used to remediate students for literacy are not apparent.</p> <p>Technology based approaches to allow the student to progress and earn credit based on mastery is somewhat apparent through the aggregation of data, however no real timeline for when the activities are to be accomplished. Short formative literary assessments, appropriate tasks around reading level and interests, appropriate supports (SSP) and grouping of students for learning, some use of email, and the data dashboard. Evidence for tools and technologies to support blended-learning and flipped classrooms. However, there is not enough information to evaluate if these learning resources are adaptable and fully accessible to all students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) Describes that the ASPIRE tool is readily available for parents, students, educators, and other stakeholders, however, not all parents or students have access to email or other online resources, and this creates a gap of communication effectively. More ideas and analysis should be considered in how school materials are to be delivered to inform and support the implementation of the proposal, no real details explain how those regardless of income might be incorporated into the leverage for how learning resources support the plan outside of the classroom.</p> <p>(b) Universal Design principles to be utilized in a variety of formats: Student Success Plans, and Data Dashboard, exportable</p>		

and printable so that parents have access to technical resources. Timely information is suggested in the overall model of the plan ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support, for example the use of Student Success Plans and Data Dashboard are printable, and easy to export.

c) A variety of mechanisms in place to formulate information into an overall model used to assist and support the district and parents connectivity to Ed-Fi.

Ed-Fi is an open sourced, XML based, CEDS aligned platform to integrate the technology into useful and immediate technological learning supports.

This ED-Fi component acts as universal translator of academic data and can store informaton easily, protocols are in place to ensure students have secure portals.

d) Interoperable data systems formulate and interface in a myriad of manners so that information can be safely stored, but also available for student usage in terms of electronic tutors, and additional learning supports from the dashboards (dashboard support codes).

Overall, a mid-level plan in that high school students are not addressed to receive the benefits of literacy coaching and support. The high school students would appear closer to graduation and college and career success.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>ASPIRE, a model designed to be a continuous improvement process operational at the student, classroom. grade and school levels, continue to loop interventions and supports to help families and students become successful facilitators of their own learning. The use of personalized reading specialists explores improvement outcomes that make sense for students and will improve outcomes for the school if used correctly in the field.</p> <p>The plan allows the stakeholders: principals, parents, teachers, and students to make informed decisions about the frequency of assessment skills, the Student Success Plan, relevant performance measures, and how interventions will dissect the measures to be most likely to determine student success.</p> <p>The strategy to breakdown reading performance based on SSP, grade and school-level data, and Data dashboards and to utilize classroom observation is a powerful process to inform the learning and to evaluate the strength of the personalized learning environment. The goals of accelerated learning, will be achieved with the use of the reading and student success facilitators and personalized learning specialist will connect with the investments of being able to measure and publically share on-going corrections and improvements through the terms of the grant.</p> <p>Key goals proposed: The capacity to increase literacy is a concept that, if successful, will raise students to a level of on-grade reading, and in turn, over time, it can raise the scores of assessments, that in turn leads to higher graduation rates, and stronger components to transition to postsecondary education. The value of allowing Personalized reading specialists to work along classroom teachers, and co-teaching partners strengthen the supports of students in the 32 low-performing schools to receive the literacy supports needed to learn and excel.</p> <p>The applicant will monitor success based on data management and use it as feedback to revise and revisit goals and strategies of the plan implementation.</p> <p>The measures are integrated through the data dashboard and inform the need for periodic refreshers to align the results. These will be shared mostly in face-to-face encounters, with the student, one on one coach, with teachers through a project manager, and with prinicpals and school boards engagement at regular school board and consortium sessions.</p> <p>Professional development is a strong strategy to support technological and other mastery of content knowledge to be utilized in PCL systems, that process and manage the structure. Initially, outside facilitators will train and support staff, this is a powerful proponent of the plan.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Excellent use of strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, as evidenced by individual Student Dashboard, to show student project and performance breakdown,

The good use of an SSP to link to priority assessment data, and data dashboard information to inform parents and to guide facilitators meeting with family members to keep the conversation on course. DCPS, ED FI, all open sourced, XML, and CEDS aligned to integrate information from a broad spectrum.

Determinations on creating a long-term financial plan, to cover on-going cost structures seem plausible.

Financial support of the ongoing communication and engagement of technological supports that structure the data dashboard, Plan to build a broad base of support in order to inform stakeholders, who in turn, will continue to monitor, revise, and implement the plan.

Regular opportunities to invite the community in to see the school site locations, public engagement work, and assurances that there is closely connected partnerships, including specific links to the neighborhoods and to their schools.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

ASPIRE flowchart model based on theory and formative and assessment models, is rationale for measures and how the measures will provide for rigorous, timely, and formative information leading to tailored information. IMPACT teacher and school across all levels, Ambitious goal of 90% of highly effective teachers by 2017. Components are broken down and analyzed by grade appropriate academic indicators to judge effectiveness in each grade level, the strengthening of the reading lexicon provides students a chance to grow towards graduation rates, but there is not real criteria to inform the school to work model/approach.

Performance measures are robust with IMPACT teacher and school leadership assessment to provide accurate and timely information about teacher quality and on an annual basis. Measure of ambitious goal of 90% of effective teachers critical component in meeting the Capital Commitment and must offer extensive expert analysis for grades 4-8. Rationale is supported by research.

Information provided qualifies the number and percent of effective teachers and principals by subgroups, use of IMPACT dissects the information on teacher quality. IMPACT systems seem to propel the school leader to apply comprehensive data and review to overall teacher impact.

The achievement gaps between Black/White, Hispanic/White, and FRL/Non FRL targets school percentages of lower performing subgroups and compares groups to inform the process, supports achievable goals/measurements in the classroom.

Highlights the number of students active in the Student Success Plan by October 15th each year, strong feedback given for optimal and actional learning to ensure students are paired with a highly effective teacher, the ones in most need are targeted first. Highly coordinated wrap-arounds utilized to ensure that students work with teachers throughout the year.

Suspensions of students 100%. Students must be in school as a pre-requisite to creating a conducive learning environment. Categorize and analyze why culture and behavior supports suspension data, intensive school restructuring for the lowest performing schools in reading.

Gold% of benchmarking data on key literacy and language strands to inform best practices, and assessment linked to skills, trends, and rates of accelerated learning, explains and apprises of developmental early literacy trends at the school.

TRC % benchmarking is sufficient to meet Text Reading Comprehension based on running school records, TRC data, to inform all curriculum decisions. Seat time a priority of all school interventions, " children must be in school to learn and to increase literacy scores."

Strong in seat attendance for all grades and levels of learners. Scholastic Reading Inventories is highly constructed and used for all subgroups, and measures of student satisfaction is incorporated, also intensive truancy initiatives involved throughout the grade levels.

High school programs and college and career information data does not exist as it is not a part of the overall plan or strategy goals for improvement of literacy skills at that level to embark on better graduation rates or improved transitions into postsecondary education. There is no clear path to measure teacher efficiency and effectiveness, as outlines in the plan, other than coaches and a director will model and train teachers, It is not a high quality plan in terms of how the rating of teachers and principals are impacted by evaluative measures.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is a continuous loop and feedback process within the structure of frequent assessments of the student's literacy skills and the monitoring of social and emotional health to inform a cohesive SSP.</p> <p>Developed by experts in the field there is a greater opportunity for success with these measures as they will likely predict student growth. Aggregated data used to target specific tasks will be complete and formative to give critical information to principals, other staff members, literacy coaches and the public.</p> <p>Using data, and data dashboards will inform the process of students who are not progressing, so that remediation measures can commence in a logical and practical manner. Performance Management and PLC's will facilitate the sharing of best practice in efforts to hold educators accountable for student learning and success.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Bridge building to recognize and re-evaluate the budget sources beyond the cycle of the grant and to support long-term financing plan, seems coherent and does focus on the value of implementing literacy into the selected schools.</p> <p>Project business manager salary main component of helping to oversee the RFP without being able to dissect into specific focus strategies may determine some outcomes, although the personnel is in place for oversight of the funding to be dispersed.</p> <p>School level systems in place to negotiate contracts and to oversee bidding processes seems practical in its approach to support the proposal and is an overall strength.</p> <p>Training funding in place for staff development, and over time the staff will take over the staff development modules as a way to support the implementation of the proposal. In this structure, the funding incurred during the grant will be for start-up training, with the rest to depend on human capacity to maintain it.</p> <p>Project manager salary and benefits in key position for the dissemination of the grant, and ASPIRE once institutionalized and in place, will delete the need for this position.</p> <p>Recruiting costs and evaluative costs to cease after the project ends. One time investments for ASPIRE and it will draw on community and non-profit groups and public agencies to continue to leverage the work.</p> <p>Budget components are reasonable given the parameters of the scope of work and implementation of the plan to support the proposal.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Current resources have to be re-evaluated at various times to develop projects around sustainability and to develop stakeholder engagements through business forums and regular meetings. Financial supports over time will depend on families, community, members, and non-profits for sustainability.</p> <p>Creation of regular opportunities to engage with the community to see what is happening in the schools is one factor of providing a pathway to build supports around the plan. Building a broad base of support is one strategy that can work; but at this time the range and breath of such a strategy is unknown.</p> <p>A good portion of the plan's costs is start-up cost, and individuals who are hired to begin and sustain the project initially are not kept over time.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan and stakeholders made determinations in terms of a partnership model-ASPIRE-All Students Prepared and Inspired to Read and Excel.</p> <p>It does engage the child into literacy, and builds a high culture of expectations for all children to learn inside and outside the classroom. The flaw remains that there is not a plan around high school students, those closest to graduation and postsecondary education to excel within the parameters of the grant.</p> <p>The value judgement of the stakeholders does not negate the plan, per say, but it does lessen its scope and impact to reach all learners,</p> <p>Partnerships focus on Department of Health and Department of Mental Health, key services provided to schools include social workers to overcome challenges within the school climate-social, emotional, and behavioral. A Partnership Coordinating Group (PCG) consisting of Office of Youth Engagement. and Special Education, and works to promote in and out of school arrangements and wrap-arounds. The City Bridge Foundation is a partner in the social and instructional imports, the plan, however, does not list or connect postsecondary institutions. The grant is built around partners to fuel improvement.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Core educational assurances break down to analyze students accessibility to literacy at the elementary and middle-school age levels, where there is still a change to turn-around and improve 32 failing schools for over 10,000 students in the D.C. area. One weakness of the plan is that it does not focus on high school students closest to graduation or promotion of those students into postsecondary education, Nonetheless, there is significant research to think that the interventon of the middle and elementary grades would make a difference and signify a significant school population that is on track and ready to graduate with career ready skills and postsecondary advancement. This is qualified by the fact, that there is still time to intervene and make sweeping changes to advance the target goals of increasing literacy in the lowest performing schools.

The 1st RTTT grant allowed for significant acheivements, and the district by all appearances, has been a good steward of the resources, in that there are strong achievement benchmarks in math, and at the high school, perhaps that is the reasoning behind putting the focus on the elementary and middle school students.

A clear, concise path shows the types of results garnered for families and students that have academic and social needs, The connectivity to the the neighborhoods and community based partnerships reflects strong value judgements about the culture and climate of the surrounding community, and how they are to be invited into the process. The core assurances to be build include the use of accelerated learning, based in part on school support staff to lead,guide, and direct the learning of literacy components through instructional based activities: ASPIRE, a management team, SSP's to evaluate progress, 5th-8th grade school involvement. and PCG's to conduct regular community assessments. Literacy is a key ladder to scaffold learning into stronger realms of student mastery in math and Language Arts, if a student can read, they can learn.

Partnerships play a key role in district programs engagement, autonomy, and new sources of funding. This is a strong component of the plan in connecting accelerated learning, the goal of hiring and maintaining higher quality educational leaders, and helping to sustain and grow graduation rates over time.

It is less clear how the literacy goal will impact future graduation rates and transitions into career-readiness, but it is thought that being prescriptive now will lead to stronger performance outcomes later.

The plan is weak on projections to graduation rates, although the data shows there is a strong correlation to reading and graduation rates. It is unclear how building literacy in the elementary and middle school will fully impact the graduation outcomes now. But, there is the promise for future growth with the accomplishment of higher literacy achievements in the middle and elementary schools, that is the hope on which the plan is evidenced and structured.

School and Career readiness embeddedness is not clearly described. However, there is informaton to detail that an increase of students are attending college within 16 months of graduation. The scope of the plan is limited in its reach for career and college readiness and should be expanded upon in some measure. Still, the graduation rates and goals are sufficient to have met the absolute priority. Strong structural supports also exist for accelerated literacy achievement thought to be the springboard to lead students to higher graduation rates and transitions to postsecondary and career-readiness standards of learning.

Total	210	172
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1321DC-2 for District of Columbia Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has succinctly provided a comprehensive and coherent reform vision and embeds the four core educational assurance areas within the vision. #1 Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. To meet this assurance area, the applicant proactively adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for SY 2011–2012 in July 2010, with approval by the State Board of Education. The applicant also reports that the district maintains an active and involved role in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as a governing board member. The applicant has also aligned to the Common Core district's Teaching and Learning Framework which guides teaching and learning in the district. It is also noted that the district is implementing ELA and Math Common Core standards and assessments in the 2012-13 school year. The applicant has been actively preparing for this CCSS alignment as teachers and principals receive extensive support for Common Core implementation through aligned curricula, video lessons, instructional coaching, and Educator Portal Plus, an online social network for DC educators featuring instructional strategies, lessons, tools, and best practices aligned to the Common Core.

#2 Building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. The applicant reports that they use a sophisticated series of interconnected data improvement systems to measure student growth and success and to inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. However, specificity is lacking on what these series of interconnected data improvement systems actually are and how they work. The applicant does say that annual summative assessments such as DC-CAS (the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System) are used as well as regular formative assessments in reading and literacy. These assessments are used to guide educators' decision-making around instruction and interventions. Instructional coaches help teachers and principals interpret data and make improvements.

#3 Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. The applicant reported that they implemented the IMPACT evaluation and professional development system, a system modeled across the country, to identify, develop, recognize, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, using multiple measures of effectiveness. It is designed to boost all teachers' and principals' effectiveness and to ensure that the most effective teachers and leaders are serving in schools where they are needed most. A new five-year \$62 Million Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the Department of Education will support implementation of career ladders and leadership development for teachers and principals, with a focus on building high-impact teacher and principal leadership teams in the lowest-performing schools.

#4. Turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The applicant reports that the district has begun several coordinated

strategies to turn around their lowest achieving schools. For example, as part of participation in DC's State Race to the Top efforts, the district has begun to implement intervention models for 20 of the district's lowest-achieving schools. In SY 2011–2012, the district established a detailed intervention plan and timeline for each school slated for intervention, hired central office intervention staff, and identified potential vendors to support intervention work. A key goal in the 2012-2017 strategic plan is to invest in struggling schools.

The applicant believes that to articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests requires a two-fold approach. This includes (1) focus on the individual child to identify and address the interests and the academic and social-emotional needs of each and every student through a variety of tailored, comprehensive, and research-based approaches; and (2) build a collaborative network to support teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, counselors, providers, and student success facilitators to work together to use data and feedback to personalize instruction and improve the delivery of individualized supports, interventions, and accelerators that address the specific needs of every child.

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

The applicant clearly described their rationale for school implementation in the lowest performing schools. Because of the intensity of need in the lowest-performing schools, and because the applicant is proposing a complex change in how teachers, students, staff, administrators, and others work together in the service of student learning, this effort will concentrate on the 32 lowest-performing elementary, K-8, and middle schools in the District. In these schools, an average less than one-quarter of students are reading on grade level and in some schools, proficiency scores are in the single digits. The applicant's well-founded approach to selecting the participants will support the high-quality implementation of the proposal.

(a) Because the schools are still struggling with low reading scores, particularly in the lowest-performing schools, the applicant has selected the 32 lowest-performing elementary and middle schools for this proposal. Each school will be provided with a support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation through a tailored, coordinated network of support called ASPIRE to focus on increasing the reading levels of all of their students. The applicant reports that reading was chosen as the subject area of focus for as reading achievement scores continue to be unacceptably low and have actually declined by two percentage points. For example: grade three - reading declined from 43% in 2007 to 41% in 2012 in the lowest performing schools, while performance in math steadily climbed from grade three - 30% in 2007 to 39% in 2012.

(b-c) The applicant provided a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities along with grade levels and numbers of students participating. In the 32 elementary and middle schools, 10,400 students in preschool through grade 8 will participate. Of that number, there are 9,629 participating students from low-income families, 10,400 participating students who are high-need students (the entire population to be served), and 1262.5 participating educators.

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

The applicant provided a description of how they will use what they learned from the activities of the proposal to inform the work throughout the school system. Some examples of these activities include: an evaluation of the effectiveness and scalability of student success plans to see how they might be implemented in all schools; a review of the roles of counselors and social workers, many of which will become student success facilitators in the 32 participating schools, to see how or if they or similar education support personnel might become student success facilitators in other schools; adapting the infrastructure for student level dashboards for all students; and replicating and adapting the Professional Learning Community model in ASPIRE to support ongoing, job-embedded professional development and school improvement work throughout the district.

The applicant does include gathering, reviewing, and evaluating data as activities, with timelines, and persons responsible in their Project Activities and Timeline. However, of the lack of evidence of all elements of a comprehensive, high-quality plan as required for this selection criterion (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) to support their LEA reform and change efforts, the applicant receives a mid-range rating on this selection criterion.

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

The applicant has a compelling vision, to make critical, adaptive reforms changes in culture and practice that deepen student learning and increase equity. They believe that fundamental changes are necessary to build a culture of high expectations for all students and accelerate student achievement through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks based on student academic interests. The results of this vision are likely to be impactful with improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

The applicant's ambitious yet achievable annual goals are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets for the district, overall and by student subgroup for each participating school. Examples of baseline and goals include: a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth). The applicant's baseline is 43.5% for SY 2011-2012 in proficiency in reading in grade 2-8 on DCCAS (state exam)/PARCC and anticipates growth to 70.0% by the SY 2016-2017. It is noted that, starting in the 2014-2015 school year, the district will administer the new Common Core State Standards assessment, which is called the PARCC (Partnership of Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). This assessment will replace the DC CAS. It will chart student progress to ensure students are on track for college and careers as well as provide teachers with timely information so they can improve instruction. (b) Decreasing achievement gaps. The performance measures for decreasing the achievement gaps are baseline 5.6% SY 2011-2012 decreasing to 1% for SY 2016-2017. (c) Graduation rates. The performance measures for graduation rates are baseline 53% for SY 2011-2012 to increase to 75% for SY 2016-2017. (d) College enrollment rates. The performance measures for college enrollment rates are baseline 44% for SY 2009-2010 to increase to 59% for SY 2016-2017.

The applicant received a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant has conclusively demonstrated a clear track record of success of student achievement in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. Student achievement growth is particularly notable in math. For example, since 2007, the district has achieved significant growth in student achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The portion of students scoring proficient in 4th grade mathematics increased from 11% in 2007 to 23% in 2011, while those at or above basic increased from 36% to 59%. During that same period, the portion of 8th grade students scoring proficient increased from 7 percent to 12 percent, while those scoring at or above basic increased from 35 to 42 percent. Also, significant increases were seen in the percentage of students scoring proficient on DC-CAS, the state exam, with strong gains in math and in overall proficiency at the secondary level. The applicant provided several charts and tables to document this increase. For example, composite scores on the DC-CAS show that students achieved a 13.5-percentage-point overall increase in scores over the five-year period between 2007 and 2012, and, following a plateau, increased with a 1.6 percentage point increase in 2012 over the previous year.

Increasing equity was apparent also. For example, between 2007 and 2012 at the secondary schools made substantial progress in closing the achievement gap. The achievement gap between Hispanic students and White, non-Hispanic students narrowed by 14 percentage points in secondary reading proficiency and 21 points in secondary math proficiency. Similarly, the gap between Black students and White students narrowed by 13 percentage points in secondary reading and 20 points in secondary math. The applicant noted some gains in high school graduation rates, but believes that a new formula for determining graduation rates has been responsible for limiting the evidence of this. They do report growth from 53.0% in 2010 to 53.6% in 2011-12.

The applicant also reported their five year graduation rates to be 59% (no baseline reported) as they have a high population of high-needs students. They also noted that, using the old formula their graduation rates would have increased from a 66% in 2006, to 80% in 2011.

The applicant only recently began to track college enrollment using outside vendor to help with the time-consuming effort of matching student data to the National Student Clearinghouse's college enrollment data. Preliminary data show that 44% of 2010 graduates were enrolled in college during the four months after graduation.

(b) The applicant has demonstrated ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools. For example, as part of the district's reorganization, the connection between the Office of School Turnaround and the district's Instructional Superintendents was strengthened to ensure that interventions specific to the persistently lowest performing schools

complement district-wide programs and improve coordination between district level staff and school-based staff. Also, In 2012, the district dedicated \$10.4 million in re-allocated local funds to a new competitive grant program designed specifically for the persistently lowest-performing schools. The district has also implemented reform for attracting and retaining top talent through incentives for the persistently lowest performing schools through a human capital and performance-based compensation strategy. First, the performance evaluation system, IMPACT, provides detailed information on how the teacher cadre is performing in these schools to assist in allocating resources—e.g., 11% of the teachers were rated highly effective, but 17% were rated minimally effective or ineffective. IMPACT helps determine the specific professional growth needs of teachers in these schools so that they can be trained to be effective and terminate those who do not become effective. Also, starting in the current school year, teachers serving in the 40 lowest performing schools who earn a rating of highly effective will earn a significant pay boost, an additional \$25,000 annual bonus plus greater increases in base pay. The plan is to expand this system, called IMPACT *plus*, to include principals with resources from the district's new TIF grant.

(c) The applicant noted several sources of access to student data for educators. For example, with mClass Beacon, an online tool, teachers and school leaders have access to visual information and analysis on how each child in a teacher's class has done on the district's new Common Core-aligned Paced Interim Assessments (PIAs, 2nd-10th grad), standard by standard. Assistance is provided to analyze the information in order to inform instruction. Teachers also can access basic information on course grades, attendance, and other information via the district's student information system (STARS). When the system identifies a potential problem for a child or finds an anomaly in the data, it will generate an automatic message to the teacher notifying him or her. The applicant reports that many of the data sources are not connected, providing a piece-meal view of the data. The ASPIRE Student Success Plans and Data Dashboard proposed with this grant application will address this issue.

Although the applicant has described some promising new approaches to increasing student and family involvement, these have not been implemented system-wide or over time to demonstrate a clear track record of success. For example, the applicant notes that, until recently, the quarterly report card and the annual fall parent-teacher conference were the primary ways that parents were provided with formal feedback on student performance. Recently, the applicant has implemented some methods for improving communicating with parents on student performance. Specifically, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, all middle schools will have access to "digital grade books" that provide parents and students with on-line information regarding student performance, classroom work, and student attendance. Also beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, a structured system of parent outreach supported by the Flamboyan Foundation was enacted in four DCPS schools where teachers conduct home visits designed to engage parents in their student's learning, which are followed by parent-teacher data meetings at the school.

The applicant receives a high mid-range rating for this selection criterion.

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

It is apparent that the applicant has expansive policies and procedures to provide fiscal transparency including detailed school budget guides planning and detail expenditures at the school level. For example, the applicant reports that individual school budget sheets, available for public viewing on the district website, provide detail on planned spending, down to the position level, including FTEs, for all staff, both (a-c) instructional and non-instructional (Appendix B9) as well as those "flexible positions" that can be determined by individual schools. The budget document also shows (d) non-personnel budgets. The district also makes available a document showing side-by-side comparisons of school allocations for all schools across the city.

The applicant receives a high rating for this selection criterion.

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

In this section, the applicant provided a description of the reorganizational history of the district under the city leadership in 2007 and successful educational relationships and collaborations with city and state entities. While the applicant provided assurances that they have successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environment described in their proposal, these conditions and allowances for autonomy were not described. The applicant does make reference to conditions of autonomy of some schools in the DC Budget Development Guide (Appendix B7), noting that DC3 Schools, partnership schools and autonomous schools have autonomy to make staffing decisions to support their needs consistent with applicable low or bargaining requirements. It is unclear how this relates to personalized learning environments. In the Section (D(1) narrative, the applicant noted that, for consistency with the process for budgeting and staffing schools, they would use a combination of "tight" (holding schools accountable for results, monitoring results through Data Dashboards,

requiring principals to submit plans for improvement) and “loose” (allowing schools to develop team-teaching approaches and implement appropriate supports) and management strategies. It is unclear how this autonomy is applied to the personalized learning environments described in this proposal.

The applicant receives a high mid-range rating on this selection criterion.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant involved several groups of stakeholders in meaningful discussion of in the vision and development of the proposal. This included the K-8 Reading Working Group which developed a district-wide plan for improving literacy instruction, input and feedback from principals and key central office literacy, and family and youth engagement staff. Input incorporated from work completed by each of the 32 participating schools and other schools that are currently piloting methods to boost student literacy achievement and substantially improve conditions for learning. In addition, feedback was received during the Hopes and Dreams outreach effort which provided input from more than 8,500 teachers, students, and community members that they wanted to see a strong focus on engaged learning and academic improvement, particularly at the lowest performing schools. It is reported that the Hopes and Dreams served as the inspiration for strategic plan and the ASPIRE approach to personalized learning and student success. However, it is unclear if any of these discussions included direct feedback and engagement from students and families on the elements of this proposal, which is the essence of this criterion. (i) Evidence was provide that the Washington Teachers’ Union endorsed the proposal (as acknowledged by signature pages included in this application).

(b) Many letters of support provide evidence that there is strong support for the proposal in the community from other external stakeholders, including local businesses, community service providers, and political representatives. The letters of support from key stakeholders were included in the Appendix B 11.

The applicant receives score within the lower high rating on this selection criterion.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant chronicled past inconsistent efforts and results to personalize learning stating that they have not been strategic, systematic, or coordinated. The logic behind the reform proposal is that the district must fundamentally change the way students learn and teachers teach through implementation of personalized learning environments so that every student in the district develops the reading and literacy skills he or she needs to graduate from high school and be prepared for college and career. The applicant then provided a chart clearly listing the gaps and solutions to the gaps, through the implementation of the proposal, ASPIRE, All Students Prepared and Inspired to Read and Excel. For example, Gap: No comprehensive system for identifying individual student needs and interests and tracking student interventions and supports to meet needs, deepen interests, and accelerate learning. ASPIRE solution: Creation of online SSP will make data about students and their needs, interests, and supports readily accessible. Gap: Student success facilitators will be tasked with helping students and families develop and use SSPs, with educators and providers, as a tool for supporting student literacy and success. However, the applicant does not include all elements of a high-quality plan (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) for an analysis of the applicant’s current status in implementing personalized learning environments as required in this selection criterion.

The applicant receives a mid-range rating.

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 describes a solid approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students 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. The essential components of the plan are well designed and articulate from the applicant’s belief on how to improving learning and teaching. The proposal’s approach, All Students Prepared and Inspired to Read and Excel (ASPIRE) is grounded in the belief that in order to dramatically improve students’ literacy skills in the lowest-performing schools and prepare students for college and

careers, learning experiences must be deeply personalized and create a culture of high expectations for all students. This approach should powerfully impact and improve student performance. Specifically, the applicant focuses on each student's needs and interests, motivating and engaging students, through a Student Success Plan (SSP). The plan, which will be developed collaboratively by student success facilitators, parents, and teachers, identifies each student's needs and interests, relevant achievement and behavioral data, and academic, behavioral, health, and social-emotional interventions and supports tailored to address those needs and interests. Literacy instruction and tiered interventions and supports, aligned to the DCPS English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum and the Common Core standards, will be tied to regular student assessments, so that each student's learning needs and interests guide the learning process. Students will be also engaged through much-needed extended learning and community-based programs that provide both academic (e.g. tutoring, reading support) and behavioral, health, and social emotional supports. All of these efforts will be coordinated to provide a highly targeted, personalized network of supports, surrounded by a culture of high expectations.

The applicant sets the stage for high student engagement and work by ensuring that (a)(i) each student understands that literacy and reading skills are crucial to her/his success. By building a culture of high expectations and engaging every student, from the time he or she enters the school system in learning about his or her interests and needs, and explicitly addressing those interests and needs, ASPIRE seeks to engage students from the youngest ages as essential partners in their own learning process. This is an essential element of the program and ensures that students understand how their learning is key to their future success and accomplishing their goals. (ii) With the help of student success facilitators, families, and educators using their own personalized and targeted plan, ASPIRE students will begin to identify and pursue learning and developmental goals linked to college- and career- ready standards. Then, as they progress through elementary school and into middle school, they will become increasingly more involved in the development, monitoring, and refinement of their Student Success Plans. They will become accustomed to, and develop ownership of, the process of reviewing and updating their plans; monitoring their progress; identifying their interests, strengths, and challenges; and tracking their progress toward high school graduation and preparation for postsecondary education. However, the applicant does not include all elements of a high-quality plan (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready that are required for this selection criterion.

The applicant receives a mid-range rating.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a well-defined approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students 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. The components of this thoughtful, thorough plan to teaching and leading educators should powerfully impact and improve instruction and further increase educator's capacity to support student progress.

(a)(i) The applicant has included appropriate, intensive measures and training for ongoing job-embedded professional development for teachers and leaders to support and enhance instructional practice. Specifically, full-time, school-based instructional coaches will work directly with educators to implement Common Core standards and improve teaching methods, and personalized reading specialists will actively support classroom teachers through co-teaching, best-practice modeling and other strategies. Also, Master Educators, the independent evaluators of teachers, will spend additional time in the lowest performing schools and will align their professional development and feedback to ASPIRE objectives and the specific needs of teachers in participating schools. Initially, all participating educators and student success facilitators will participate in orientation and training so that they understand key components of ASPIRE. Initial training/orientation will be supported by on-going professional development for student success facilitators, teachers, instructional coaches, and leaders to increase effectiveness. Targeted monthly PLC meetings, at the grade and school levels, and quarterly meetings at the district level, will guide instructional practice and improvement. These PLC meetings, guided by distinct protocols, will provide the needed opportunity to review student data, discuss, and troubleshoot challenges in reading instruction and personalization of learning, and implement and monitor practices and specific interventions for improving student achievement. Grade-level teams, guided by instructional coaches and with support from personalized reading specialists, will also work cohesively to develop and implement daily lesson plans, technology, and other supports in the classroom.

(a)(ii) The applicant stresses that an essential component of the plan is to help educators modify both content and instruction. School-based instructional coaches will help educators implement, practice, and improve their skills and abilities. Coaches and personalized reading specialists will support educators throughout the continual improvement process. Other instructional leaders in the building, principals as well as Master Educators, will work to support educators as well, and in turn, principals and instructional coaches will receive system-wide support through quarterly PLC meetings, as-needed training, and other supports. It is also noted that the district's Educator Portal Plus provides online and as-needed resources for teachers and

other educators, helping them to continually refine and improve practice to personalize learning and improve achievement. Crucial supports are provided for students who are identified as below grade level, at-risk, or significantly above grade level. Specifically, they will participate in appropriate interventions and supports, and formative data will be tracked throughout the year, based on individual students' needs and interests, both to accelerate students' progress and to improve individual and district instructional practice.

(a)(iii) As thoroughly discussed earlier in the applicant, teachers will collect literacy benchmark data three times a year (beginning, middle, and end of the year). Students who are identified as at-risk during benchmark literacy assessments will participate in interventions and be monitored regularly (every two or four weeks depending on student performance levels) between benchmarks to track growth and the effectiveness of interventions. Students who exceed benchmarks will participate in accelerated learning activities. Principals and district administrators will participate in quarterly PLCs, designed to help them understand school-level data and use them to help particular educators, grade-level teams, and other teams, to improve educator practice student outcomes toward meeting college- and career- readiness goals.

(a)(iv) IMPACT, the applicant's teacher and principal evaluation system discussed comprehensively throughout the application, is designed to provide teachers and principals with frequent and systematic feedback on effectiveness, as well as recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement at the teacher, school, and district level. Specifically, teachers are observed throughout the year (four to six times per year for teachers depending on their prior year's effectiveness rating), and receive both written and oral feedback on their observations. Principals receive on-going management and feedback from their instructional superintendents and receive twice annual written reviews that measure leadership, school culture, and student outcomes. Principals and district administrators will participate in structured, quarterly PLCs, designed to help them understand school-level data and use it to help particular educators, grade-level teams, and other teams, to improve student outcomes and educator practice.

(b)(i) The applicant reports that the extensive data gathered and charted in Student Success Plans will be used to identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student needs and interests. Specifically, the SSPs will be integrated so that students' needs and interests are easily identifiable; needs and interests are connected to and supported by instruction; academic and behavioral interventions are identified and designed to support individual student needs; and designed learning tools (e.g., digital learning programs, manipulatives, reading tutoring) match students' needs and interests. Student Success Plans and online student data dashboards will demonstrate this information so that educators, students, families, student success facilitators, and other supporters can use it to identify and build optimal learning approaches that respond to individual students' academic and social-emotional needs and interests.

(b)(ii) The applicant sufficiently listed categories of resources available such as common core ELA standards for each grade level, aligned curricula, scope and sequence, and sample unit lesson plans, a variety of paper-based and on-line, digital resources to enhance and deepen instruction, and aligned assessments. They note that additional resources can developed ongoing through and the Educator Portal Plus, a digital platform that will allow educators to develop new sharable resources. The applicant also reports that ASPIRE will build and integrate resources by strengthening educators' understandings of and abilities to use MTSS tiered instructional and behavioral strategies effectively. Through ongoing training and job-embedded support (through PLCs and direct support from personalized reading specialists, instructional coaches, and Master Educators), educators will learn to use tier 2 and tier 3 strategies to meet students' needs.

(b)(iii) The applicant will use innovative tools call Personalization Protocols to identify and make available effective digital resources. Many of the participating schools use a variety of digital platforms for both in school and out of school learning and have chosen these resources based on the particular interests and needs in their student populations. The applicant indicates that to ensure that these resources are research-based and effective, they will be vetted against the Personalization Protocols. It is not clear how this process will occur or how the end results will look. It is not specified what other resources will be used for instructional content. The applicant has specified, in other sections of the proposal, a wide assortment of assessment resources that will be used to inform instruction. As additional methods of rigorous support, grade-level PLCs will help educators match student needs with specific tools and resources and continually improve feedback about the effectiveness of specific resources; and student success facilitators will support resource matching and continual improvement by coordinating both in school and out of school resources and supports for students.

(c)(i-ii) The applicant reports that the 32 participating schools principals will participate in a quarterly Principal Professional Learning Community. This professional development activity should be very helpful to principals as the instructional leaders of their school. Specifically, principals will review student performance data, teacher performance data, and other relevant data for the purpose of improving instructional practice and overall school effectiveness, determining individual and collective professional development needs, and other strategies for improving teacher, school, and individual student performance. Principals will also regularly review and use IMPACT data to work with teachers, Master Teachers, and instructional coaches to continuously improve individual teacher effectiveness, and school culture and climate.

(d) The applicant has proactively developed an added component to IMPACT to address the needs in the low-performing schools. IMPACT *plus* is designed to include incentives to recruit and retain highly effective teachers in the low-performing

schools that serve students with the greatest learning needs. IMPACT *plus*, provides higher base pay and bonuses to highly effective teachers who work in higher-poverty schools, with the greatest incentives going to highly-effective teachers who work in the 40 lowest performing schools, including the 32 schools that are the focus of this proposal. This enticing incentive, plus other incentives built into the proposal (e.g. additional training, resources, professional learning communities, and other systemic supports provided by the ASPIRE model) are designed to ensure that the district recruits, supports and retains effective and highly effective teachers in these schools. The applicant has established solid performance goals in this area to include the number and percent of effective teachers and principals by subgroups. The applicant has set an ambitious goal to have 90% of teachers effective or highly effective by 2017. The system undergoes an annual review and improvement based on school leader and teacher leader feedback on an annual basis.

The applicant has described a sound approach to teaching and leading and does provide professional development as activities, with timelines, and persons responsible in their Project Activities and Timeline. However, there is lack of evidence of all elements of a comprehensive, high-quality plan (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) to support the improvement of learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

The applicant receives a mid-range rating on this selection criterion.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant describes a well-designed approach to central office organization to support ASPIRE, the project of this proposal. The project would be located in the district's Office of the Chief for Teaching and Learning, which also administers the ongoing literacy reform work. This is a logical location, since the project will focus on improving reading in elementary and middle schools of the lowest-performing schools. A visual organizational model depicts the organization. Team members at the central office who oversee the project to provide support to all participating schools include an RTT-D project director (who will report to district Chief of Teaching and Learning), assistant director, student success director, personalized reading director, technology director, and performance management director. In addition, there are a host of additional individuals who provide supports to the schools under the leadership of these central office leaders.

(b) The applicant listed some flexibility and autonomy in responsibilities of some school personnel. For example, they will give the personalized reading specialists and supervisors the primary responsibility for monitoring implementation of tier 2 and tier 3 interventions, along with broader student reading supports. Other examples provided did not address flexibility and autonomy, instead addressing factors such as providing professional development and needed resources. Also, the applicant does not clearly address the intent of the sub-criterion, to ensure that schools have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets.

(c) The applicant discussed regrouping of students based on mastery of specific standards. However, the applicant did not address the intent of this sub-criterion which was to ensure that students are given the opportunity and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery (credit-based mastery courses or content), not the amount of time spent on a topic (required time in course or in a subject).

(d) The applicant has provided a wide range of strategies that ensure that students will have multiple ways to access content, including whole-class instruction in this response and throughout the proposal. Some examples cited include teacher use of at least two high-impact, research-based strategies, technology-based literacy programs, books of high interest to students, traditional literacy centers, and tier 3 interventions such as one-to-one tutoring and Wilson Reading, as needed.

(e) The applicant discussed using personalization protocols for MTSS, in which schools will select tools, resources, and practices from a pre-screened list provided by district staff that will be fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. Specifics were lacking to clearly understand what resources and instructional practices will be provided.

The applicant does not describe all components of a high-quality plan (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need,

when and where they are needed as required in this selection criterion. The applicant receives a high mid-range rating.

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

10

6

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant has designed a comprehensive LEA and school infrastructure that supports personalized learning. The project, ASPIRE, is designed to ensure that all participating students, parents, educators, and other relevant stakeholders have access to content, tools, and resources—via several platforms—regardless of income and both in and out of school. To ensure that all students have access to content, tools, and other learning resources in and out of school, the district will make materials will be available in a variety of formats. For example, Student Success Plans and Data Dashboards will be exportable and easily printable so that students and families can receive real-time updates to their child’s SSP. The district will also use existing text messaging platform to notify families of updates to SSPs and important news and events. The district will also use the personalization protocols for MTSS, and Universal Design for Learning principles to ensure that materials are accessible and available to students and families.

(b) The applicant reports that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (e.g., student success facilitators and social service providers) will receive technical support through a variety of mechanisms in a timely manner. It is also noted that a district-based technology director will be hired whose responsibility will be to ensure technical functioning of the online SSP and Data Dashboard system and of the technology-based literacy tools and programs in the schools to ensure that students, families, and educators have the supports and training they need to use resources effectively. However, the applicant did not explain what these support would be or how they would be provided.

(c) The applicant indicates that the SSP and Data Dashboard will be designed so that information can be easily exported in open data formats and used in other electronic learning systems. Ed-Fi, an open-source, XML-based, CEDS-aligned platform will be used to integrate information from a broad range of existing sources so it can be used by teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators every day. The applicant reports that Ed-Fi solution is a universal educational data standard and tool suite that enables needed academic information on K-12 students to be consolidated from different data systems. Ed-Fi components act as a universal translator of academic data, integrating and organizing information so that educators can start addressing the individual needs of each student from day one, and can measure progress and refine action plans throughout the school year. Protocols will be established to ensure that data and support systems can be linked to support student learning across a variety of platforms (e.g., electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, etc.), and that digital learning content can be shared and/or made available via a variety of formats. Although the many benefits that this system will provide for educators to prepare appropriate instruction for students was discussed, it was not clearly outlined how this will allow parents and student to maintain a record of school performance data in an open format, which was a intent of this sub-criteria.

(d) A discussion of how the data system will be interoperable (systems that include information such as human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement) was not provided.

The applicant does not describe all components of a high-quality plan (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed as required in this selection criterion.

The applicant receives a mid-range rating.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes a highly focused plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

(e)(1) The applicant reports that educators and principals will meet monthly in highly structured, rigorous, and facilitated professional learning communities (PLCs) that use a performance-management process modeled after the CompStat process used by the New York Police Department. This process is in concert with ongoing data reviews to assess the effectiveness of individual offices, to ensure projects are on track, and to measure performance on a variety of metrics. This

process will ask teachers, personalized reading specialists, instructional coaches, student success facilitators, and principals to analyze data from the SSP and Data Dashboards, along with process data such as teacher absenteeism and classroom observations, to make adjustments to students' SSPs and to the interventions and supports that surround them. In addition, principals will meet quarterly with district administrators in a similar process to share best practices across schools and to hold schools accountable for results. The Data Dashboards and school- and district-level PLC meetings will serve the district as a research-based, highly structured continuous improvement process.

Also, all stakeholders will be able to access school- and district-level Data Dashboards on the district website, and administrators will discuss the Dashboards and the overall project in meetings with community members and media. Project information will also be shared through the district's web portals such as Educator Portal Plus, and on the main website, and regular updates will be shared by the chancellor in community forums and other community meetings.

The application receives a high rating for this strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process for the proposed project.

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

5

5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant clearly elaborates on several strategies that will be used for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. For example, for internal stakeholders, the applicant report that school staff will meet monthly with principals, and principals will meet quarterly with district leadership in highly structured PLC meetings designed to analyze and make real-time use of the SSP's Data Dashboards. These tools and meetings will ensure ongoing communication among and engagement of internal stakeholders such as teachers, personalized reading specialists, instructional coaches, student success facilitators, principals, and district administrators. For external stakeholders, students and their families will participate in and have access to their SSPs online or, if the families prefer, in a printed format. SSPs and Data Dashboards will be used to inform parent-teacher conferences and to help track student progress generally. In addition, student success facilitators and administrators will coordinate wrap-around services as part of the delivery of social-emotional supports for students. All stakeholders will be able to access school- and district-level Data Dashboards on the website, and administrators will discuss the Dashboards, and the project as a whole, in meetings with community members and media. Project information will be shared through the district's web portals such as Educator Portal Plus, and on the main website, and regular updates will be shared by the chancellor in community forums and other community meetings.

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has succinctly identified 15 ambitious yet achievable performance measures. The applicant has included appropriate performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets. (a-c) The performance measures include a well-articulated rationale of why each performance measure was selected. One example is the performance measure - number and percent of highly effective teachers and principals by subgroups. According to the provided tables, the baseline in 2011-2012 was 8.3% or 745 of highly effective teachers served black students and the end goal for 2016-2017 is for 40% of those teachers serving black students to be highly effective. The applicant indicates that the IMPACT teacher and school leader assessment provides accurate information about teacher quality on an annual basis. The belief is that effective and highly effective teachers are critical to meeting the capital commitments and goals outlines in the application. The IMPACT system will undergo an annual review and improve the project based on school leader and teacher feedback, a comprehensive review, and expert analysis.

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has outlined a solid plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the funded activities. Specifically, the project director and performance management director will monitor outcomes through review of Data Dashboards and participation in project-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and a sample of school-level PLCs. They will also coordinate work with the Partnership Coordinating Group, made up of staff from the Office of Youth Engagement, the Office of Family and Public Engagement, and the Office of Special Education to ensure that in-school and out-of-school supports and connected, high-quality supports meet the needs of students and families. In addition to the internal evaluation of the project, the district will contract with an external evaluator, who will answer research questions using a mix of data collection and analysis methods. A sample of the questions that will be posed include: To what extent are schools providing students with literacy

instruction, interventions and supports, as well as social-emotional interventions and supports that address their individual needs and interests? To what extent are performance measures being met? How are project resources being used? In what ways can the project be improved?

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant presents a well-developed budget that identifies all funds that will support the project and is designed to reduce funding from year to year as the initiatives become more self-sustaining. The applicant notes that a good portion of the costs associated with ASPIRE will be start-up costs or costs that decrease over time as the district builds capacity. For example, the project business manager role will phase out at the end of year two, data system integration and development of the data dashboards will be completed by the end of year one, training for staff on Tier 2 and 3 Reading Interventions will decrease each year, and the project manager position will be phased out after the grant ends as internal personnel assume leadership roles in project activities.

(b) The budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development of the applicant's proposal. The applicant explains costs relative to all grant expenditures by overall budget costs per year and itemized breakdowns by the four projects of the grant per year.

(c)(i) The total request for the four year grant period is \$28,374,013. Funds from other sources total \$16,487,613 for the four-year period. Funds for each of the four projects in the proposal are outlined by project name and include funding for the requested Competitive Preference Priority. The four projects include Data System Development/Performance Management, Educator and Student Supports, Family and Community Partnerships (Competitive Preference Priority) and Project Evaluation. The greatest expenditures are in Educator and Student Supports. This includes school staff to support personalized learning and coordination of academic and social-emotional support. It also includes costs for professional development and supplies. Key project leadership personnel include the project director and assistant project director/business manager. Additional budgetary breakdowns are described for the four proposed projects by year. These budgetary breakdowns provide sufficient itemization to demonstrate how costs were calculated.

(c)(ii) One-time costs include a contractor to integrate existing data system, develop the Data Dashboard, and develop user interface for SSPs, as well as a recruiting firm to assist in hiring Student Success Facilitators (64 needed) and Personalized Reading Specialists (32 needed).

The applicant receives a high rating on this selection criterion.

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

The applicant discusses many solid strategies that will be used for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. These are included under the general categories of building a broad base of support for ASPIRE, continuing opportunities for engagement with the community, creating a long-term budgetary plan for the on-going costs of the project, and including personnel, professional development and technology costs. The applicant estimates that the cost of maintaining the key elements of ASPIRE at the 32 lowest performing schools will be approximately \$11.5M annually, \$7M of which will be covered by the end of the grant period through strategic staff reallocation and/or identification of additional resources. The applicant succinctly notes that this additional \$7M represents less than 1 percent of the district's annual operating budget of approximately \$800M. In addition to reallocating the current resources, the district plans to look to maximize other public and private sources to cover the ongoing costs associated with ASPIRE. The applicant also discusses logical methods of scaling up the project. Beginning in years two and three, the district will seek ways to bring the most effective strategies developed as part of ASPIRE to other schools and will also set aside/reallocate resources to cover scale up costs.

The applicant does not describe all the components of a high-quality plan (key goals, activities, deliverables, timelines, and persons responsible) for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The applicant includes some activities, persons responsible and timeline in their overall four-year Project Activities and Timeline chart under the section, Project Transition, as RTT-D Funding Ends. The overall goals for the project are located in a separate section from the four-year

overall process objectives, activities, timelines, and persons responsible and all are not clearly aligned to sufficiently create a high-quality plan as required to address the content of this selection criterion. The applicant receives a mid-range rating.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has developed a feasible project that supports the academic goals of the proposal. The Project integrates public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students, giving highest priority to students in participating schools with high-need students.

The applicant comprehensively describes the cornerstone of this project, Family and Community Partnerships, which is the establishment of a Partnership Coordinating Group (PCG) to ensure that partnerships and supports are coordinated and channeled, so that providers are helping those students and families most in need and that in-school and out-of-school supports are aligned. The PCG will be composed of staff from the Office of Youth Engagement, the Office of Family and Public Engagement, and the Office of Special Education. Led and facilitated by the Student Success Director, PCG will ensure that resources are allocated to the 32 participating schools in ways that enhance and complement existing school-based supports, family support programs, and programs supporting students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs and interests.

Specifically, the grant will be used to expand three existing partnership efforts that are helping to fuel improvements, including: 1) Turnaround for Children sponsored by the City Bridge Foundation. Turnaround is currently partnering with four of the 32 participating schools to provide mental health, social, and instructional supports that improve each school's culture, learning environment, and capacity to support students. Over a three-year period, Turnaround will work alongside district teachers and student success facilitators to provide extensive professional development for teachers and leaders in instructional and behavioral strategies, help create effective behavioral and academic intervention systems, and support principals in key school leadership issues. Additionally, Turnaround will help schools establish effective partnerships with community-based mental health providers and other child-serving agencies. The Turnaround Intervention is rooted in a powerful organizational change strategy for meeting the highly predictable needs of students in high-poverty schools. 2) The Family Engagement Partnership sponsored by the Flamboyan Foundation. This partnership is currently testing several models of varying intensity for improving family engagement, including: intensive coaching, technical assistance, home visits, and a new model of parent-teacher conferences. Several currently participating schools have shown significant student achievement gains, improved engagement of families, increased average daily attendance, and declines in short-term suspensions. The applicant is proposing two strategies for expanding this partnership: choose five additional schools to participate in the intensive engagement model that includes teachers conducting home visits; and develop a modified training plan for five other schools that for any number of reasons are not ready to adopt the full model. 3). The Literacy Lab. The Literacy Lab provides trained tutors to work with small groups of students to enhance literacy skills. Following research recommendations from the National Reading Panel, students working with the Literacy Lab make, on average, 1.5 grades of progress in their reading levels from just 42 hours of time in the program. The applicant will look for ways to enhance and expand this program to additional participating schools as well.

(2) The applicant has identified sound eight population-level desired results for students in the LEA that align with and support the applicant's broader proposal. The applicant has provided a chart that outlines the eight population groups, type of result, and the desired outcomes. These desired results include: academic targets are met; students have access to personalized learning and are supported by a qualified, caring adult; students are reading on grade level; students have the academic and social-emotional skills needed to succeed in school and be prepared for college and careers; student learning is enhanced through connections to community partners; schools are partnering with families to support student achievement; students are receiving services for identified social, emotional, and health needs; and students feel safe and respected in their schools.

(3)(a) The applicant has several solid methods for tracking selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA and at the student level for participating students. The ASPIRE management team will review data on academic performance, behavior, attendance, and other relevant data from SSPs to evaluate progress against the ASPIRE performance measures. For example, the ASPIRE management team and the PCG will analyze student satisfaction data from annual surveys of 5th-8th grade students to identify engagement in school, engagement with the broader community, safety, and other attitudes as noted in Section E on performance measures. In addition, the PCG will develop and conduct regular parent/family surveys to identify engagement and supports that feed into SSPs as part of the bi-annual Stakeholder Survey process. Specific questions about family engagement that assess the work of the partnership will be included. This will also include teacher satisfaction and feedback. The PCG will also conduct regular surveys of community providers to assess collaboration, service provision satisfaction, and gaps in services related to their partnerships with the

district.

(c) As clearly noted throughout the application, the PCG will focus on the lowest performing elementary and middle schools. Some aspects of this effort that will be readily scalable with little additional cost include: use of individual student dashboards; connections between Student Success Plans and Individual Graduation Plans; and assessment of partnerships. As monitoring of the SSPs begins, the district will look for avenues to scale up aspects of the ASPIRE approach for low performing high schools by reallocating resources from other district programs that are not showing a positive return on investment with their current use; any new sources of funding that become available to the district; and partnerships with government agencies, foundations and other community groups and corporate partners.

(d) The applicant aptly notes that partnerships play a key role in their vision of how to improve academic outcomes, by creating and ensuring that students have access to the wraparound supports and services that they need to be ready to learn and excel. Specifically, the PCG will work in concert with key partners and the larger ASPIRE project team to monitor implementation, progress, and outcomes, to ensure that a continual improvement process drives decision-making and leads to expected results for students and all involved. The applicant will track the performance measures established in this project, most of which are related to student, family, and teacher satisfaction. For example, percent of students receiving needed services, by service type (health, mental health, housing, etc.) from baseline in 2012-2013 of 80% to desired result 90% in 2016-2017. The applicant will also track performance measures listed in the broader application particularly attendance, suspension rates, and Student Success Plan measures, as well as all measures related to literacy outcomes, as they are directly related to the partnership's focus and impact.

(4) The applicant has clearly noted earlier in the application that school-level student success facilitators will work with students and their teachers and families to develop a Student Success Plan (SSP), which will include each student's most recent and relevant performance data (e.g., attendance, behavioral data, grades, formative assessments), identify each student's interests and needs, and outline instructional plans and academic and social-emotional supports. These non-academic services will be provided through the efforts of the PCG. The student success facilitator will monitor implementation of the SSPs belonging to all students in her/his caseload of approximately 150 students.

(5) (a) To assess the needs and assets of participating students, the applicant succinctly reports that data on services and outcomes will feed into the proposed SSPs and data dashboards, and into the regular continuous improvement loops created for ASPIRE, ensuring that students get access to resources, services, and supports they need the most. Services and supports will be monitored by Student Success Facilitators, as part of the PLC and continuous improvement processes.

(5)(b-c,e) At the district level, the Partnership Coordinating Group will conduct a wide-reaching needs analysis across and within schools to determine wrap-around needs and gaps and outline processes and identify partners and providers to fill gaps. Data collected on various programs and providers, such as data on parent engagement collected as part of the Family Engagement Partnership, will be shared with the PCG to monitor effectiveness of plan implementation and desired results. Also, the PCG will work with the Family Engagement Partnership and other partners to identify schools most likely to benefit from their approaches. In addition, the creation of the PCG will help the district to continue its ongoing work around resource allocation, by using the PCG to identify partners and projects that provide the highest return on investment.

(d) The applicant did not specifically address how parents and families of participating student will be engaged in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs.

(6) The applicant listed 22 CCP performance measures that are ambitious, yet achievable. For example, for the performance measure - school does a good job identifying student needs and support - the baseline in 2010-11 was 69% of those surveyed agree and desired result is 90% on those surveyed agree. However, It was difficult to follow a linear progress of aligned competitive performance measures and desired results for students, as only eight desired results for student were outlined in sub-criterion 2 above and there was no correlation tool to chart the correlation between the performance measures and the desired results.

The applicant receives a high mid-range rating on this Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has successfully met the intent of Absolute Priority I: Personalized Learning Environments. The applicant has

clearly demonstrated how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. For example, relevant to (1) adopting standards and assessments, the applicant proactively adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for SY 2011–2012 in July 2010, with approval by the State Board of Education. Also, the district maintains an active and involved role in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) as a governing board member. In addition, the applicant has aligned the project to the Common Core district's Teaching and Learning Framework which guides teaching and learning in the district. It is also noted that the district is implementing ELA and Math Common Core standards and assessments in the 2012-13 school year. The applicant has been actively preparing for this CCSS-alignment as teachers and principals receive extensive support for Common Core implementation through aligned curricula, video lessons, instructional coaching, and Educator Portal Plus, an online social network for DC educators featuring instructional strategies, lessons, tools, and best practices aligned to the Common Core.

For the core educational assurance area (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success and informing teachers and principals with data about how they can improve instruction, the applicant indicates that annual summative assessments such as DC-CAS (the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System) are used as well as regular formative assessments in reading and literacy. These assessments are used to guide educators' decision-making around instruction and interventions. For personalization of the learning environment, the applicant's describes an innovative approach to teaching and learning. All students will have an online personalized plan, called the Student Success Plan (SSP), developed with, and monitored by student success facilitators, teachers, and other educators in consultation with families. All plans will include a student-level dashboard and a description of parent responsibilities and support services. A student-level dashboard will show key outcome data about the student. Individual student data will integrate into classroom, grade, school, and district dashboards that will be used by teachers, instructional coaches, and school and district administrators to monitor student progress and to make decisions about the effectiveness of interventions. Updated SSPs will be sent periodically to each student's family, using a variety of approaches to ensure easy access. At the district level, the Partnership Coordinating Group will conduct a wide-reaching needs analysis across and within schools to determine wrap-around needs and gaps and outline processes and identify partners and providers to fill gaps. Data collected on various programs and providers, such as data on parent engagement collected as part of the Family Engagement Partnership, will be shared with the PCG to monitor effectiveness of plan implementation and desired results.

The applicant discussed a comprehensive evaluation system for meeting educational assurance area (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed the most. The applicant reported that they implemented the IMPACT evaluation and professional development system, a system modeled across the country, to identify, develop, recognize, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, using multiple measures of effectiveness. It is designed to boost all teachers' and principals' effectiveness and to ensure that the most effective teachers and leaders are serving in schools where they are needed most. A new five-year \$62 Million Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the Department of Education will support implementation of career ladders and leadership development for teachers and principals, with a focus on building high-impact teacher and principal leadership teams in the lowest-performing schools.

The applicant plans to meet educational assurance area (4), turning around the lowest-achieving schools, by ensuring that the lowest-achieving schools will receive the first, and most intensive, support for this transformation. The applicant reports that the district has initiated several coordinated strategies to turn around their lowest achieving schools. As part of participation in DC's State Race to the Top efforts, the district has begun to implement intervention models for 20 of the district's lowest-achieving schools. In SY 2011–2012, the district established a detailed intervention plan and timeline for each school slated for intervention, hired central office intervention staff, and identified potential vendors to support intervention work. A key goal in the 2012-2017 strategic plan is to invest in struggling schools.

Through these four assurance areas as implemented in this project, the applicant intends to meet the requirements of the grant for personalized learning through the use of effective data systems and academic non-academic student supports as well as decrease the achievement gaps across student groups as they prepare students for meeting college- and career- ready standards.

The applicant has met the requirements of Priority 1.

Total	210	167
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1321DC-3 for District of Columbia Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This is a very high quality response. The district, in specific detail, outlined their approach to targeting the 4 core assurances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through an already established IMPACT evaluation and professional development system 2. Adopting standards and assessments that prepare for college and the workplace (the DC Board of Education actively participating in the PARCC governing board, developing district English and Math assessments, and aligning curricula, video lessons, instructional coaching on the common core, etc.. 3. A data system has been implemented that provides summative information on the assessment system, district formative assessments in reading and literacy, and teachers and coaches use this data to make improvements 4. Turning around lowest-achieving schools: The district has begun to implement an intervention model for 20 of the lowest-achieving schools. The district provides a detailed intervention plan and timeline for each school, hired central office intervention staff, and identified potential vendors to support implementation work. <p>The district outlined a Comprehensive and Coherent Reform Vision (ASPIRE) to support literacy to 32 lowest performing elementary and middle schools. The district plans to develop a Student Success Plan (SSP) to target recent and relevant data (attendance, behavioral data, grades, formative assessment). Families will participate in the development of updating the SSP.</p> <p>The district will use the SSP to implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that integrates problem-solving framework with teachers working with personalize reading specialists in teams across classrooms.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a detailed list of the school's demographics of all participating schools. Participating schools were identified; raw data was provided with the number of participating students, educators, and students of high need and low income. The school demographics data also included percentages related to low income participating students. The district identified its plan to target 100% of the the lowest-performing 32 elementary and middle schools in the district. These schools have on average less than one-quarter of students on grade level for reading. It is unclear as to how many schools were not selected for participation in the project or the rationale as to why high schools were not a targeted population. High quality implementation can be achieved in this model due to the inclusion of 100% of the students within those schools.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The high quality plan presented described in detail the rationale, goals, and activities involved in scaling up the initiative. Core elements: personalized learning, student success plans, data dashboards, a multi-tiered system of supports, professional learning communities, extended day, community linkages, etc... Student data dashboards will be "scaled-up" to all student level dashboards. The PLC model and ASPIRE initiative will be replicated and adapted in non-participating schools after the effectiveness is evaluated. The district did not provide information pertaining to timelines or persons responsible. Sections A1</p>		

and A2 presented evidence of how these initiatives will result in meaningful support through the ASPIRE model (All Students Prepared and Inspired to Read and Excel).

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

Goals (performance measures) were identified for students on LEA benchmark (TRC), percentage proficient on DCCAS standardized assessment, on grade level for common core lexile ranges, changes in achievement levels, and achievement gap targets for black/white, hispanic/white, FARMS and overall students, SPED and overall students, ELL and overall students from 2011 baseline to 2017. High school graduation (2010 - 2017) and college enrollment targets were identified from 2009 (baseline) to 2017. The goals presented are ambitious and achievable (realistic). Growth is noted but not too aggressive to be unachievable. Focusing on standardized assessment growth, district benchmark assessment growth as well as literacy Lexile levels will result in increases in student achievement. The outlined vision directly correlates to the identified performance goals; therefore, it is reasonable that the vision will result in improved learning.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Evidence of improvement in learning outcomes, achievement gaps, and raising student achievement were provided. High school graduation rates - when utilizing the old rating system (66% in 2006 to 80% in 2011)- demonstrated growth as well. Since 2007 - 2011, a 13.5 percentage points growth increase occurred in math and an overall increase of 1.6% took place between 2011 and 2012 in math as well. The Hispanic population showed the most growth - and the achievement gap especially between Hispanics and Whites (14 percentage points) in reading while black and white students narrowed by 13 percentage points in secondary reading and 20 percentage points in math. In regard to rigor, the district increased by 25% in having students take AP exams at the high school level while there was an increase by 85% since 2007 in students passing at least one AP exam. These statistics are reflective of the district - including those schools from the lowest achieving schools. In addition, the teacher evaluation IMPACT model offers teachers \$25,000 of an annual bonus for teachers who earn a rating of highly effective in the 40 lowest performing schools.

Evidence of making data available was evident in its realignment of the Central Office through the Office of School Turnaround. Educators had access to an online tool (mClass Beacon) that provided teachers with information pertaining to standardized testing information, district common core aligned benchmarks, DIBELS assessment data, attendance, behavioral information, etc... Parents are provided with the information through Paced Interim Assessments (PIA Assessments), digital grade books, and a pilot has been pursued with a computer based system that parents will have access to pull student individual and comparison standardized data as well as sample aligned questions for parents to use to support their child in their learning journey.

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

The district provided evidence in which the district provides transparency to staff and the community. On their website it states: "As a steward of public dollars, it is DCPS's responsibility to present financial data in a transparent, clear, and precise manner that is accessible and understandable to a wide audience." Each year the following is provided: Budget Development Guide, budget report showing how the budget is tied to the district strategic priorities, detailed set of frequently asked questions, explanation of how resource projections are made, formula for how funds are distributed to schools. The response does not specifically state that "salaries" are provided but it can be inferred from the following: "Detail on planned spending, down to the position level, including FTEs, for all staff both instructional and non-instruction." The district noted that they also include non-personnel expenses. As noted in the response, the personnel, instructional, and non-instructional expenditures are made available to parents, staff, and the community.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This response detailed the strong relationship between the district and mayor. Although the district reported that they have "sufficient autonomy under state, legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments," the district did not define or elaborate what is meant by sufficient autonomy. It was also noted that that close collaboration between the mayor, State Superintendent, Charter Schools, and district on teacher evaluation system, data systems, and school turnaround efforts. Furthermore, an outline of recent organizational changes were made to the DC's first state-level education agency which helped to depoliticize the oversight of the district.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Evidence was provided to demonstrate community support from ten community based organizations, agencies and groups. Approximately 8500 responses from students, teachers, and community members were provided through feedback during the Hopes and Dreams outreach effort that identified a strong focus on engaged learning and academic improvements at their lowest performing schools. However, the district did not identify how the specific feedback was used to revise the proposal. The Washington Teachers' Union also provided supported and acknowledged such support in the signature pages. This response provides a brief description of the group members who provided feedback as well as other initiatives that resulted in feedback such as: the ASPIRE initiative, Proving What Works grant initiative, and family and youth engagement. The district did not elaborate on "how" the engagement was organized or did not provide a detailed description as to how the feedback opportunities were provided. The district did not define "youth engagement or "family engagement" activities.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>One area of need identified is the need to create a systematic, strategic and coordinated approach to the personalized learning initiative. The district created a very explicitly chart of identified gaps in current practices and strategies for how ASPIRE will address that issue. Some strategies to address the gaps include: using the data system to make data more readily available; personalizing instruction through reading specialists, coordinating school and community services, develop protocols for targeted interventions and supports, and providing web supports for teachers to improve instruction. The plans for remediation of the gaps and services also align to the core assurances.</p> <p>Although goals were identified, timelines, rationale, and persons responsible were not identified within the plan.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district described how through literacy students will personalize learning through their personal areas of interest. Higher order thinking skills will be embedded in the focus on mastering 21st Century Learning competencies. A network of supports to provide personalized learning will be tailored and coordinated through SSPs (Student Success Plans). These plans will be developed in conjunction with student, parent, and teacher input. The district identified multi-tiered supports and referred to digital learning opportunities for students to assist with personalization (read 180, Wilson, Paced Interim Assessments). These strategies are of high quality; however, although it is noted that interventions are tailored and provided, the district does not define how those specific interventions. In additional the district identified the plan to utilize reading specialists who will co-teacher and model high impact personalized learning strategies. It was also noted that ongoing training would be provided to students, families, and staff in regard to student success plan training and its access/use online.</p> <p>This response outlined specific goals and strategies to linking college- and career-ready standards and identified important student characteristics (such as perseverance) necessary to support a structure for students to be involved and accountable for their own learning. It is noted that through professional development, coaching, and classroom observation high quality instructional strategies will be developed: high level questioning, metacognition, academic vocabulary, similarities and differences, graphic organizers, etc... The district referred to culturally appropriate resources but no definition or description was provided regarding how this goal would be accomplished.</p>		

While the district continually referred to ambitious personalized learning initiatives and strategies, the definition of pertaining to high quality materials and resources were not described. It is noted feedback loops will be provided through professional development, coaching, and "students and their families..have access to ongoing and regular feedback." However, the specific procedures for such feedback were not described.

This high quality plan provided specific goals, activities, and a rationale; however, timelines and persons responsible were not addressed.

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

20

17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

An extensive plan for teacher and administrator professional development and PLC implementation with data as the focus was described. (Example: Everyone will participate in annual data management training: how to access data, enter data, what data are important, how to analyze and use data to improve outcomes. Administrators will receive training on professional learning communities and performance review data of both teachers and students.) The training components are aggressive and aligned to the core assurances.

The teacher evaluation system is in place and teachers are evaluated with feedback (written and oral) 4 to 6 times per year based upon their previous year ratings. Bonuses are provided to highly effective teachers in the lowest performing schools. These are ambitious ways to integrate teacher evaluation to assure high quality teachers while providing a channel for continuous school improvement. This is also evidence of one feedback loop.

Through the data dashboard and SSPs, data will be readily available and timely. A web portal will be developed on their Website and will identify how all of the "players and pieces fit together to connect to our strategic plan and goals". This is an effective strategy for making data timely so that teachers can make personalized modifications and adaptations.

The definition of a high quality resources were defined as: CCSS ELA standards, aligned curricula, scope and sequence, sample unit lessons, aligned assessments, professional development and shared resources through an Educator Portal Plus, and paper based and online digital resources. Online digital resources were undefined. Although an outline is provided, the manner in which, when, and a detailed plan of "how" all of these aggressive goals and activities will be integrated was not provided.

The identified activities, goals, and district rationale are of high quality and very thoroughly outlined, timelines and persons responsible were not identified.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district provided an organizational chart outlining the central office organization. A dedicated team will oversee and support. The Project Director's responsibilities were outlined in the proposal. In addition, a summary of responsibilities for other administrative staff were provided: operations specialist, technology director, the performance management director, student success director, etc.... The management approach is referred "Tight - Loose" autonomy: tight to accountability and loose to budgeting and planning. It is unclear if administrators may make their own personnel and staffing decisions. Multiple ways to demonstrate mastery will be provided through on-going data point assessments. There will also be a personalized protocol from which schools will select resources from a pre-screened list provided by district staff and fully accessible to all students. It is unclear as to the process that will ensure the resources are of high quality.

Elements of a high quality plan were addressed through the identification of responsibilities for each LEA central office staff member. Thorough descriptions were provided. Goals, activities, and deliverables such as (using personalization protocols, training teachers in the use of high-impact instructional and formative assessments aligned to the CCSS, and schools selecting tools and resources), are defined. However, timelines have not been provided for the scope of the 4 year grant.

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

10

8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district identified a plan to make all materials accessible to all persons by making it available in multiple formats; online,

exportable and printable data in student success plans and data dashboards. District text messaging systems will also been employed. The district identified stakeholder partnerships to provide understanding of how the model will support low performing schools and how they work together to personalize learning. A district technology director will be hired to support the technological systems and data dashboard. The Student Success Plan and Data Dashboard "will be designed so that information can be easily exported in open data formats and used in other electronic learning systems." The district reported that protocols will be established to ensure that data and support systems can be linked to support student learning across multiple platforms.

The district did not provide an outline as to how parent training will be specifically organized. This response does not meet the full criteria of a high quality plan. The descriptions or activities, goals, and the rational are thorough. No identification of timelines for implementation or management over the 4 years were noted. However, the district did identify the person ersponsible - district technology director.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district describes a continuous feedback loop. The specific deliverables are outline with a detailed description. Specific assessments and tolls were provided with a timeline of implementation and a description. However, the central focus is the Student Success Plan (SSP) that will be created for every child in all 32 schools. A non-core academic target was identified through student success facilitators who will ensure that students are receiving high quality social emotional health interventions. However, it is unclear as to what those interventions will be. A thorough implementation was outlined and a graphic flowchart was provided to clearly defined the continuous feedback loop. The district will provide strategies such as: SSPs, data dashboards. The district did not outline the process it will publically share information pertaining to the quality use of the funds received from the grant.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Staff monthly meetings and principal quarterly meetings with district leadership in a PLC setting will be one way to maintain ongoing communication and engagement. The SSP and data dashboard will serve as an ongoing communication resource. Project information will be shared through DCPS web portals. The Chancellor will communicate challenges and success with the mayor, Office of the State Superintendent, and "other key partners." It is unclear as to who the other key partners are in this section. A process for which revisions and adjustments will be made following the receipt of feedback was not provided.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>15 performance measures were identified in this proposal. The measures are identified for all students, P - 3, 4 - 8, and 9 - 12. All students will be measured by in-seat attendance by subgroup and suspensions which are non core academic area that focuses on a health or social-emotional indicator. Academic benchmarks aligned to college and career readiness is measured with standardized testing performance indicators. The identified performance targets are identified by year and reflect a growth model between 2011 - 2017. Achievement gaps between black/white, Hispanic/white, FARMS and Non-FARMS students, SPED, and ELL student subgroups. Goals are ambitious but realistic. Descriptors for each performance measure was provided. References to correlations between the IMPACT teacher evaluation system and performance measures were documented in the highly effective teachers and principals by subgroup measure. The theory of action was contained within the rational chart: however, the district did not specifically identify all of the sources for the non-core academic data collection.</p> <p>A rationale for each measure was provided for each as was how the district will review and improve the identified performance measure. Although this description was provided, a detailed scope and sequence was not provided for each measure to identify how it will go about revising the specific implementation if gaps were noted. The timeliness of each measure was not discussed within its proposal plan.</p>		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Persons responsible were identified as the project director, performance management director, and external evaluators. Six research questions and sources of data collection were provided for each of the questions. These data collections sources were not expanded upon to identify the manner in which they will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant. The "what" was provided; however, the "how" was lacking. The researcher will be responsible for overseeing the analysis of all questions. The district was limited in its responses pertaining to technology, community partnerships, modifications of schedules and structures, and decision making structures. These elements were either briefly mentioned or completely eliminated from the total response. Timelines and rationale were not sufficiently included within this response.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The outlined budget was reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation. The district provided a rationale, description of external, LEA, state, and federal funds. One time and ongoing operational costs were identified throughout the budget. The district's sustainability strategy was discussed in detail from serving as a bridge from where they are now to where they want to be to better meet the needs of individual students.</p> <p>Long term planning was described from the initiative start ups costs which included: salaries and benefits, data system integration and development, training, recruiting, etc... On-going costs were identified and a rational was provided for key staff (student success facilitators, personalized reading specialists, and supervisory staff. In addition on-going PD and technology ongoing costs were referenced in detail. The district provided an overview of the process and an account of past history for soliciting private resources.</p> <p>No funds were provided for PD stipends; however, a significant amount of PD training is described. The district did not provide information in the proposal to support the need/ability to exclude PD funding for teacher participation. It is unclear how this initiative will be supported.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This response is limited in that it does not include the elements of a high quality plan: timelines, persons responsible, and deliverables were not addressed. Presented goals, activities, and rationales were well documented. This section does not include an itemized budget by year over the scope of the grant; however, a description of closing smaller schools, scaling up initiatives, seeking private funding, etc... was used to outline next steps to support sustainability of the grant. However, without a detailed, outlined plan, the overview provided is value in regard to the sustainability of the project. The district created a long term financing plan; however, it is unclear as to how funds will be allocated over the extended time. The summaries provided were too generalized.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district will establish a Partnership Coordinating Group (PCG) which will be made up from staff from the Office of Youth Engagement, Office of Family and Public Engagements, and the Office of Special Education. The grant will also provide the district with the opportunity to expand three existing partnerships: Turnaround for Children, The Family Engagement Partnership, and the Literacy Lab. A coherent description was provided for each of these community based initiatives.</p>		

Educational and social / emotional supports were outlined.

The Family Engagement Partnership involves home visits, a new model of parent-teacher conferences, and coaching. The district did not describe the new model for parent-teacher conferences.

The population group and desired results are identified. A timeline for implementation was not identified; however, performance targets at the macro and micro level (percent of students receiving services, student, teacher, and parent satisfaction, were identified between 2010 - 2017.

The data tracking system was thoroughly described an outline the implementation of satisfaction surveys, parent/family surveys that support the Student Success Plans (SSPs), and regular surveys to assess collaboration, service provision satisfaction, and gaps in services. The system for sharing and communicating about the collective data was described between the PCG and ASPIRE management team. Incorporating ASPIRE and SSPs helps to align the competitive priority to the proposal. Data dashboards will warehouse the data so that it can be timely and easily accessible.

The specific and detailed steps for implementation were lacking; however, the initiative goals and rationale were thoroughly presented. Building capacity, specific steps to integrate services into the educational environment, and a detailed plan for how the tracked data will be used are not well presented in this portion of the proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The district provided high quality responses to support the personalized learning initiative. The implementation plan targets the core assurances: aligning to the common core state standards, using multiple benchmark and standardized assessments aligned to the common core college and career readiness expectations. In addition, student achievement through targeting subgroup gaps was described and supported through thorough activity descriptions. The planned initiatives aligned to promoting success graduation rates. Even though the initiative was targeting 32 K - 8 schools, this was done through the projected growth targets of graduation and post-secondary enrollment rates. The teacher evaluation system is outlined in way to support and develop highly effective educators through 4 to 6 observations with feedback. To encourage those teachers to work in the lowest performing schools, the district has offered large performance based bonuses through the IMPACT model. Effective instructional strategies and teacher effectiveness were defined throughout the proposed plan - such as - higher order thinking skills, aligned common core curriculum, formative assessments, etc.... Personalized learning supports for teachers were provided through professional development, evaluative feedback, immediate and timely data, coaching, personalized reading specialist support. The district met the absolute priority clearly with detailed descriptions, strong understandings, and with the outline of high quality supports.

Total	210	163
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