



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0450NC-1 for Duplin County 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>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant convincingly describes a vision that seeks to align its 5-year strategic plan with the state's readiness and RTTT initiatives in ways that embrace the four core educational assurances and implement innovations that foster equitable personalized learning environments for students and educators. <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> It is unclear how the vision is based on student academic interests. <p>The evidence merits a score in the upper point range because the vision is comprehensive, coherent and compelling.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant selects all students and all schools for participation in the project. Applicant clearly defines high needs students and provides a table with data that clearly reveals an exceptionally high percentage of student in all schools are from low-income families. <p>Weaknesses: None</p> <p>The evidence merits a score in the upper high point range because all students, parents/guardians, and LEA employees are participants, with a high percentage of students who live in low-income families potentially benefiting from a personalized learning environment.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant presents a theory of change that shows the interconnectedness of 7 domains for which the 9 project strategies can positively impact student learning outcomes. Applicant clearly provides details of how factors within the 7 domains are essential and linked to personalized learning environments for students and educators that can impact desired project outcomes. Applicant convincingly reveals how each project strategy aligns with the four core educational assurances, as well as the program's Theory of Change. <p>Weaknesses: None</p>		

The evidence merits a score in the upper high point range because of the well designed and illustrated theory of change, with innovative project strategies that clearly focus on influential factors for creating personalized learning environments and subsequent impact on student learning outcomes.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	9
---	----	---

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant sets ambitious yet achievable annual improvements in student performance assessments (i.e., decrease 50% over five years), in achievement gaps among subpopulations (i.e., 50 percent reduction from the baseline year to end of project), and in graduation rates (i.e, increase 50 percent in the next five years).
2. Applicant sets annual college enrollment gains that are particularly ambitious yet achievable for a population of students with considerable diversity (i.e., increase the number of students enrolling in college by reducing the number of students who do not enroll by 50 percent over the project period).

Weaknesses:

1. It is somewhat unclear in the table how an overall college enrollment rate for the baseline year could be 16%, given the individual subgroup percentages.

The evidence merits a score in the upper high point range because data tables reflect a vision of ambitious improvements and aggressiveness in closing achieving gaps on meaningful student outcomes for a population of students with considerable diversity.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant details a history of formally empowering a wide variety of education stakeholders (e.g., employees, students, and community members) for the purpose of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students.
2. Applicant presents information that substantiates LEA executed a highly successful turnaround of a low performing school and is applying lessons learned in other schools.
3. Applicant details graduation rates were on a three-year decline until the 2011-12 school year, when the rate increased to an all time high of 80.7% and exceeded the state graduation rate for the first time, and presents compelling reasons for the increase.
4. Applicant details a strong set of strategies the LEA implemented to raise college-going aspirations among the students in this highly impoverished rural area.
5. Applicants presents data that substantiates LEA has achieved notable improvements in closing achievements gaps among subgroup populations in reading and math for student in grades 3-8 and in Algebra I.

Weaknesses:

1. In the school turnaround description, it is unclear if student proficiency rates increased among subgroups and achieved progress in equity.
2. It is unclear if the reasons listed for the exceptional increase in the graduation rate are substantiated by an empirical third-party evaluation, formal internal study, or based on opinions and intuitive perceptions of LEA staff.

3. Insufficient details explain how the LEA made student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways other than the superintendent's advisory committees.

The evidence merits a score in the middle high point range because of the strong demonstrated achievement in turning around a low performing school, in closing reading and math achievement gaps among subgroup populations of middle school African American, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students, in closing the achievement gaps in Algebra I among African American, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students, and in implementing numerous strategies to raise the college-going aspirations for students in a high poverty rural area where college attainment has traditionally gone unrewarded in the local economy.

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

5

4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant details strong LEA capacity to aggregate and disaggregate data on personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures at the school level and individually.
2. Applicant highlights LEA policy requiring response to a request for information from the public within a 24-hour timeframe.
3. Applicant convincingly notes LEA's Five-Year Strategic Plan includes an objective for Finance Department to operate in a transparent manner utilizing input and data from all stakeholders, and strategies that ensure the Budget Committee includes representatives from the community to determine each year's budget.
4. Applicant details recent trail exercises by the LEA determined it would be relatively easily for the LEA to increase transparency of information to the public consistent with RTT-D expectations, and the LEA is in the process of publishing the information on the LEA's web site, in hard copy for dissemination with school and community members, at Board meetings, and at meetings of the superintendent's advisory committees.

Weaknesses:

1. Although the LEA regularly provides board members, County Commissioners, and all community members with reports regarding budgetary measures, it appears transparency of information on personnel salaries and school level expenditures is somewhat limited to availability upon request and is not routinely disseminated via venues that easily inform the public of such information.

The evidence merits a score in the lower high point range because the applicant presents strong examples of how the LEA executes transparency, has capacity to produce data consistent with RTT-D requirements, and successfully conducted trial exercises that resulted in the LEA redesigning release of information that increases public access to and knowledge of personnel salaries and school level expenditures.

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

10

9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant details numerous examples that clearly reveal how essential areas of authority or autonomy needed to implement the Duplin Promise program are under the control of the LEA.

Weaknesses:

1. Although the applicant's previous description of the LEA's school turnaround initiative may be an example, it is somewhat unclear if the LEA has customarily linked educator performance and student performance when making strategic staffing decisions for schools.

The evidence merits a score in the middle high point range because the LEA presents strong examples of a high degree of control over decisions regarding educational programs, student support services, community relations, personnel, fiscal management, and facilities necessary to implement critical project components that facilitate creating personalized learning environments for students and educators. The weakness merits a reduction in 1 point.

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

10

9

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant describes a compelling first-step planning effort involving representatives of the LEA, a community college, and the North Carolina Association of Educators that resulted in a plan to include the conduct of "town hall" meetings across the county to solicit broad community input.
2. The applicant clearly reveals when the town hall meetings were held, no. of participants, and the focus of the discussion during each meeting, as well as when project planning meetings were held with other key stakeholders and resultant discussions.
3. Applicant's planning process documented input of the superintendent's 5 advisory committees (i.e., business leaders, faith-based leaders, parents, teachers, and students).
4. Applicant clearly reveals each school principal met with their staff and viewed a DCS video about the Duplin Promise application, followed by staff members voting by ballot to support or not support the DCS RTTT-D proposal. Of 710 voting staff, 646 (91%) expressed support for the DCS proposal.
5. Applicant includes letters of support that substantiates the strong planning process and meaningful involvement of key stakeholder groups.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the applicant revised its proposal during the planning process to reflect feedback of participants in the numerous meetings, for example, the superintendent's 5 advisory committees and numerous town hall meetings.

The evidence merits a score in the middle high point range because the LEA convincingly details conduct of a comprehensive and systematically planning effort to solicit input from a broad representation of key stakeholders that resulted in acquiring strong support for the proposal from teachers and community leaders.

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

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant clearly describes how the 9 project strategies align with an analysis of needs, gaps, weaknesses, strengths and opportunities identified to exist in the school system.
2. Applicant specifies a comprehensive and systemic perspective was used to align and coordinate the collection of strategies with district-wide activities.

Weaknesses:

1. It is somewhat unclear how the analysis of needs and gaps was conducted to assess what elements of a personalized learning environment were operating in the schools. For example, it is unclear how the analysis revealed there was a need to personalize teaching, as is suggested in the section labeled Personalized Learning Environment for Students.

The evidence merits a score in the lower high point range because the applicant specifies how the 9 strategies for creating personalized learning environments for students and educators address the logic model theory of change for the Duplin Promise program. Point deductions occur because insufficient information reveals how a formal analysis process documented elements of personalized learning environments currently operating in each school.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant provides an appropriate matrix that clearly reveals how the 9 project strategies align to collectively provide individualized learning plans for students birth through grade 13 as preparation for college, career and life. Six project strategies appropriately address learning.
2. Applicant succinctly highlights the goal(s) of each strategy, describes how major activities will be conducted, and notes important deliverables.
3. Applicant provides extensive Information in the Appendix that reveals complete details of a high quality plan for each strategy, including the long-term goal, specific objectives, major activities and timelines, literature references upon which the best practices and activities are based, and the person(s) responsible for leading implementation of activities.
4. Applicant notes Early College project strategy activities are designed to deepen learning in the STEM curriculum from Pre-K through grade 13.
5. Applicant details the Personalized Learning Environment for Students strategy includes all students being trained and given the opportunity to monito their own leaning using the innovative online Future for Kids program. Applicant specifies a digital portfolio notebook for each student's individualized learning plan is a key deliverable.
6. Applicant clearly reveals specific roles of faith-based organizations and volunteers In the Critical Care System for Students strategy (i.e., provide weekly food supplement to needy students and their families and serve as volunteers in after-school tutoring roles).
7. Applicant focused Creating a College Going Culture (College Culture) strategy on helping students to understand learning is key to their success in accomplishing personal goals, in addition to preparing them for postsecondary career and college options.
8. Applicant specifies a key deliverable in the Global Awareness project strategy is the number of instructional units with embedded economic awareness in the Common Core State Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards.
9. Applicant convincingly notes Birth To 4 project strategy includes development of an Early Scholars Child Development Center as an innovative demonstration Pre-K program that showcases best practices for early childhood education which might serve as a model for other rural communities across the country.
10. Applicant specifies students will use the innovative Futures for Kids Program to track attainment of their goals, and educators provide the practice exercises as part of the academic instruction for students to manage their goals over time via choice of notebook or digital form.

Weaknesses: None

The evidence merits the highest score possible because the high quality plan contains exceptional details and supportive research for each of the six strategies, which collectively reveal an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, particularly high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. The strategies and their activities align strongly with the theory of change model for Duplin Promise program.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
---	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant provides a matrix that clearly reveals how the 9 project strategies align to collectively provide individualized learning plans for students birth through grade 13 as preparation for college, career and life. Three strategies appropriately

address teaching and leading.

2. Applicant succinctly highlights the goal(s) of each strategy, describes how major activities will be conducted, and notes important deliverables.

3. Applicant's presents in appendix an exceptional detail of a high quality plan for each strategy, including the long-term goal, specific objectives, major activities and timelines, literature references upon which the best practices and activities are based, and the person(s) responsible for leading implementation.

4. Applicant specifies Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing Highly Effective Staff Members(Highly Effective Staff) project strategy includes all educators participating in professional learning communities at least once weekly, and training videos produced by school district teachers and coaches are used to model district focus goals through Tuning Protocol and Instructional Rounds. Also specified is creation of an online digital library, containing both student and professional materials that are available to all stakeholders twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

5. Applicant specifies new recruitment incentives are incorporated into the Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing Highly Effective Staff Members project strategy (i.e., extended employment opportunities, day care subsidies, and tuition assistance for advanced degree and National Board certification opportunities).

6. Applicant specifies the Technology and Data Infrastructures (Infrastructures) project strategy includes SAS creates and donates a three hundred thousand dollar customized SAS® OnDemand for K-12 data dashboard that will provide educators, as well as the community, with status updates on key performance variables including student achievement, teacher and principal performance, and district-wide metrics.

7. Applicant details how the project uses new state evaluation systems, which the LEA has implemented, to increase educator (i.e., teachers, principals/assistant principals, superintendent) effectiveness and improve school culture and climate for meeting student personalized achievement needs.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas.

2. It is unclear how the project will train administrators to use the data tools.

3. It is unclear how training adequately addresses the adapting of learning content consistent with project implementation strategies.

The evidence merits a score at the upper level of the medium point range because of the strengths noted. Point deductions are because information presented inadequately explains how the applicant has a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas; and unclear training issues..

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant specifics the person(s) who are to lead each of the 9 project strategies, provides a resume for each, and strategically links the staffing to current central office functions that support all schools.

2. Applicant specifies creation of an advisory committee charged solely with responsibilities of developing recommendations for implementing continuous improvements in Duplin Promise (RTT-D program) operations.

3. Applicant details a clear connection between developments in the RTT-D grant program and annual updates of district-wide plans (e.g., district improvement plan, professional development plan, school improvement plans).

4. Applicant provides details (e.g., school improvement teams, student success teams, hiring practices, scheduling, curriculum design, usage of instructional time) that convincingly reveal sufficient flexibility and autonomy exists at the school level for

implementing personalized learning environments for students and educators.

5. Applicant provides numerous examples of how students have innovative opportunities to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic, including nontraditional scheduling, project-based learning, and earning college credit while in high school.

6. Applicant details how learning resources are available to all students in exceptionally appropriate ways. For example, the LEA produces print instructional and administrative materials in Spanish for the English second language (ESL) population, and communications that are sent home are sent in the native language. School district handbooks are written in Spanish. Numerous examples thoroughly illustrate how the LEA accommodates learning resource needs of students with disabilities.

Weaknesses: None

The evidence merits a score of all points possible because of the clear, compelling, and comprehensive detail of specific examples that illustrate how current practices and policies would facilitate implementing personalized learning environments.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
--	----	---

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant provides numerous examples of how LEA provides parents and students access to school content and learning resources (e.g., transportations for parents, laptop checkout, costs assistance by partners, parent resource centers).
2. Applicant specifies targeted technical supports for ESL populations and professional development supports for principals, teachers and staff.
3. Applicant details new instructional technology systems under development by North Carolina's RTTT program that will be uses in the LEA RTT-D program.

Weaknesses:

1. Given the percentage of participating students from low-income families is exceptionally high in some schools compared to other schools, it is somewhat unclear how the project ensures lowest-income or isolated families are to receive services that give them equal capacity to participate in the project (e.g., training for technology challenged parents, computer availability in home, and or home Internet access in remote rural areas to access learning resources for managing student's personalized education plan, for receiving online support, or for accessing data and information from the program's website).
2. Insufficient information is provided to know when and how the LEA will integrate viable interoperable data systems into the RTT-D program.

The evidence merits a score in the lower high point range because information is inadequate to know how lowest-income families in the most isolated rural areas are to receive services that give them equal capacity to participate fully in the program and when interoperable data systems will be implemented.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant specifies the section of the LEA's strategic five-year plan that reinforces the continued use of a rigorous continuous improvement process and details components of the model in use, including the six key steps that the model emulates for creating a culture of continuous improvement.

2. Applicant outlines a comprehensive and strategically focused set of innovative initiatives that illustrate high commitment to continuous improvement. before and after the grant.

3. Applicant specifies that formative and summative evaluation measures will be used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the RTTT-D program, with the LEA's public relations specialists to lead sharing of the information with the public.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the plan addresses parents' use of technology.

2. Applicant's professional development effort is limited in scope, with a focus primarily on the media coordinator and inadequate focus on teachers or other staff.

3. It is somewhat confusing that most of the applicant's comments address intended action on key implementation activities and limited focus on specific elements of a continuous improvement process.

The evidence merits a score at the high level of the medium point range because the applicant provides inadequate information on how the plan addresses parents' use of technology, or how project will train essential school personnel in addition to media coordinator, or specifies the continuous improvement process elements.

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

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant notes specific ways the LEA's public relations specialists will facilitate ongoing communication and engagement with key stakeholders, such as Town Hall meetings, conference presentations, webinars, websites, resources to support local presentations, public service announcements, and social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

Weaknesses: None

The evidence merits a score of all points possible because the applicant describes a comprehensive list of ways the public will be informed and by whom. Numerous venues, previously described in the application such as the superintendents 5 advisory committees, provide extensive opportunities for engaging the key stakeholders with the information provided.

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

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant selects highly appropriate performance measures aligned with the Theory of Change and the 9 project strategies for Duplin Promise, provides a sound rationale for their selection, and notes timelines.

2. High quality plans in the appendix for each of the 9 project strategies credibly substantiate how the performance measures aid in gauging progress of overall program implementation.

3. Applicant specifies a credible process for reviewing and improving the performance measures on a timely basis. Highest officials in the LEA (i.e., superintendent) and RTT-D program (i.e., executive director, project leads) and the program advisory committee will examine measures quarterly and make decisions regarding changes needed.

Weaknesses: None

The evidence merits a score of all points possible because performance measures selected are documented in tables as ambitious and achievable, based on strong rationale, aligned with the theory of change model, supportive of the 9 project strategies, and reviewed by an appropriate process for making changes in a timely manner that facilitates program

implementation and achievement of intended outcomes.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant specifies compelling and reasonable ways the Duplin Promise program, if implemented effectively, will yield an overall increase in the livability and the quality of education for citizens of Duplin County over the long-term. The investment is expected to reduce costs due to staff turnover, increase graduation rates and subsequent income generation and return to the local economy and tax base, and attract productive individuals who move to the county because of its quality schools which, thus creating an increase in demand for services and a generally associated increase of investment in the community.
2. Applicant specifies an in-depth examination of cost-effectiveness and prospective savings will be conducted in the Duplin Promise program evaluation and policy analysis.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant provides insufficient information to explain details of how the plan provides sufficient monitoring of project implementation activities, with focus primarily on outcomes of project.

The evidence merits a score at the low level of the high point range because it is unclear how project monitoring is addressed in the plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Strengths: 1. Applicant provides a detailed budget and budget narrative that is strongly aligned with major activities and timelines for each of the 9 project strategies. Calculations show how costs were determined. Bidding procedures are noted where such expenditures must be followed to acquire the necessary contractual services. Documentation is provided to justify the unrestricted indirect rate applied in the budget calculations. Weaknesses: None The evidence merits a score of all points possible because the budget is reasonable and justified given the scope of the program and participants served, completely aligned with the major activities to be performed in implementing the 9 project strategies of the program, explained with detailed calculations shown for all costs, and documentation provided to justify the unrestricted indirect cost rate applied to the budget.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Strengths: 1. Applicant appropriately uses the research literature to present reasonable ways the program's theory of change will facilitate sustainability without the same level of funding expended during the grant period. 2. A result of planning for sustainability during the planning phase for the RTT-D program proposal, the applicant clearly describes the funding that will be required to sustain the goal and critical elements of the 9 project strategies for three years.		

3. Applicant specifies it will bank half of the federal indirect funds from the grant for use in sustaining the program after federal funds end, and reallocate LEA funds.
4. Applicant describes a highly reasonable strategy of organizing the project leads into a sustainability committee, with responsibility to produce the first sustainability plan by July 2012 and address seven key elements. Plan updates will occur every six months.
5. Applicant details partners and funding sources it already is pursuing to acquire funding for sustaining the RTT-D funded program.

Weaknesses:

1. It is unclear how the \$5,790,000 calculated to be needed for a 3-year sustainability period was determined to be roughly equivalent to the funds that DCS expects to realize by banking one-half of the federal indirect funds received over the four year performance period.

The evidence merits a score in the upper high point range because of the strengths noted, particularly the exceptional effort to start sustainability planning during the RTT-D planning phase, documentation of funds needed to sustain the program goals and critical elements for three years after grant funding ends, development of a strategy with timelines for committee action, timeline for sustainability plan updates, and early pursuit of specified additional funding sources with partners.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

1. Applicant strongly leverages the research literature to describe characteristics of numerous previously successful partnerships in which the LEA had been involved, and creatively weaves a vision for the Dublin Promise becoming a web of resources, with DCS at its center, for monitoring and connecting needs and assets to benefit participating students, their families, and the population of birth-21.
2. Applicant describes specific examples of how existing and new partnering organizations will provide services that uniquely benefit students in the personalized learning environment created by the Dublin Promise program.
3. Applicant presents compelling data to substantiate that the vast majority of childcare centers and family childcare homes need to improve their ratings of childcare quality, as only 53% of children enter Kindergarten with the necessary skills to succeed academically, as assessed by DIBELS.
4. Applicant presents strong data to substantiate that health issues, limited access to affordable and nutritious foods, student behavior, student achievement, postsecondary enrollment, and adult education are critical population concerns for which a comprehensive partnership effort linked to the Dublin Promise program can address successfully county-wide.
5. Applicant specifies how the web-based Duplin Data Dashboard will track population-level performance measures, how the results will support realignment of resources and services, and how it enables the targeting services offered by partners in the Duplin Promise Network to personalize services for participating students and meet critical needs of families.
6. Applicant presents a strong willingness to scale the model to other LEAs in the state.
7. Applicant describes a highly credible formative and summative evaluation effort, using both an internal evaluator and an external evaluator to produce results that will be used to adjust strategies, activities, and resources over time.
8. Applicant details how it will serve high need students first by expanding the LEA's model of integrating education and other services (i.e., Child Family Service Teams) from 4 to all 16 schools and complementing it with the System of Care model, which emphasizes providing comprehensive services, coordinated across multiple agencies by a case manager to serve the needs of individual children.
9. Applicant details an exceptionally strong set of surveys conducted by the state, the LEA, and partnering organizations that

document how well the school system is helping to improve educators' capacity to provide better instruction and support for students and identify, and to inventory the needs and assets of the schools and communities.

10. Applicant presents a thorough description of how the school system and partners will engage parents, and how The Duplin Data Dashboard enables school staff to assess the progress and activities of the project.

11. Applicant specifies clearly in a table the ambitious yet achievable annual performance measures, most of which will be integrated into the Duplin Data Dashboard, with others maintained and available locally.

Weaknesses:

1. It is somewhat unclear how information that is "sent up the line" from schools results in an efficient and effective decision-making process for solving problems or improving results in a timely manner to best address student, family, and school needs.

The evidence, as profiled in the long list of strengths, merits a score in the upper high point range. A 1-point deduction is merited by the weakness noted in the decision-making process, which could substantially reduce project improvement and impact.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant convincingly describes a vision that seeks to align its 5-year strategic plan with the state's readiness and RTTT initiatives in ways that embrace the four core educational assurances and implement innovations that foster equitable personalized learning environments for students and educators. Applicant clearly provides details of how factors within the 7 domains are essential and linked to personalized learning environments for students and educators that can impact desired project outcomes.

Total	210	188
--------------	------------	------------

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

OBS#1

Strengths:

1. Applicant describes a student population living in exceptional poverty, with many challenges to school success in a low performing school.
2. Applicant provides a budget and narrative that is detailed, adequate to support the development and implementation of activities, and reasonable.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant presents an inadequate rationale with no empirical research cited to substantiate a technology enabled learning

environment will address critical student learning needs/issues in the low performing school.

2. Applicant does not provide a high quality plan for how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because insufficient information is presented to substantiate how the technology enabled learning environment will successfully address significant issues in a low performing school with an impoverished student population. Additionally, no plan is presented that reveals how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
--	----	---

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

OBS#2

Strengths:

1. Applicant notes both schools need to improve instructional practices and strategies, as student test proficiency results are low and one school has an exceptionally low graduation rate.
2. Applicant provides a budget and narrative that is detailed, adequate to support the development and implementation of activities, and reasonable.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant cites no empirical research as rational to substantiate test scores and graduation rates will improve in a technology enabled learning environment.
2. Applicant does not provide a high quality plan for how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because insufficient information is presented to explain adequately how the technology enabled learning environment will successfully improve student achievement and graduation rates. Additionally, no plan is presented that reveals how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
--	----	---

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

OBS#3

Strengths:

1. Applicant clearly describes the school serves a student population living in exceptional poverty.
2. Applicant provides a budget and narrative that is detailed, adequate to support the development and implementation of activities, and reasonable.

Weaknesses:

1. Applicant provides an inadequate rationale, with empirical research cited, to explain why a top performing high school has a high need to create a technology enabled learning environment.
2. Applicant does not provide a high quality plan for how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs.

The evidence merits a score in the low middle point range because insufficient information presents a compelling need for creating a technology enabled learning environment in the high performing school. Additionally, no plan is presented that reveals how the applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0450NC-2 for Duplin County 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant's vision is to develop a continuum of learning opportunities, beginning at birth and touching children through grade 13 and beyond, that assures a seamless educational journey for all students in the school system. This is a commendable, comprehensive vision which articulates a vision to develop the whole child. - learning is likened to a "train ride," begun at birth, with career opportunities and entering the workforce as its destination. The "train" will be personalized for each student presenting learning opportunities that become increasingly multi-faceted and self-directed as the "ride" progresses. Use of such a metaphor is helpful in communicating a vision to the public that they are readily able to understand. - the section adequately addresses for visionary purposes each of the four core educational areas identified in the ARRA. - a strength verbalized in the vision is the parallel personalized learning concept for both students and staff. In essence, educators are learners at their craft as students are toward their future craft. Identifying teachers as learners is a strength in the proposal because it provides everyone with a similar goal. - the core area relative to staff recognition indicates incentives for accomplishments in areas not related to student success which is seen as a weakness. Staff are being incentivized for acquiring more education and coming to work; however, recognition for superior performance with students is not identified for recognition. - the overall evaluation of this section is at the high range. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant meets the criteria by providing a list of the schools as well as the total numbers of students (low-income and high-needs) and educators. - the process used by the applicant in selecting schools matches criterion for participants coming from low-income families with an overall average of 71%. - after consultation within the LEA it was decided that all schools and all students should be participants in the grant because of the importance of vertically aligning projects across the Pre-K-13 curriculum so as to provide coordinated services for all staff, students and families, creating a seamless progression of career- and college-ready projects, and the necessity to develop personalized learning environments for all students Pre-K-13. This rationale is logical in the context of equity. - overall the evaluation for this section is in the high range. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the potential for a high-quality plan is comprehensive in its identification of a convincing theory of change. This theory is founded on the principle of collaboration between many agencies involved in education. From this, leadership practices and policies with staff engagement in delivering instruction that is supported by family and community factors as well as student 		

engagement eventually leads to an effective and efficient learning process. This environment is supported by data systems feeding everyone with timely data as well as a culture of accountability and transparency for results. This is a sound model upon which to develop a proposal.

- the applicant provides a meaningful matrix regarding how their 9 projects currently identified in the LEA relate to the theory of change as well as the RTTT core assurances. The conceptualization of these relationships provides considerable insight into their vision and how their outcome goals might be improved.

- evidence of a high quality plan are exhibited within project plans of the Duplin Promise by identifying persons responsible as well as detailed timelines, activities and deliverables. Lacking is identification of reasonable goals.

- the overall evaluation for this section is in the high range.

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

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- goals expressed as proficiency outcomes demonstrate incremental improvements during the course of the grant and are assessed as being ambitious and achievable. Ambitious yet attainable goals for all summative assessments is to reduce the number of non-proficient students by 50 percent over the next five years, which aligns with North Carolina and Federal expectations with No Child Left Behind waivers.

- for each test and for each sub-group goals for decreasing achievement gaps compared with white students as the highest achievers are assessed as being sufficiently ambitious and achievable. Projected targets are designed to decrease the gap for each subgroup by 50 percent from the baseline year.

- goals for graduation rates are identified for all as well as each sub-group which are assessed as ambitious and achievable. The goal is to increase the graduation rate by reducing the number of non-graduates in each subgroup by 50 percent in the next five years.

- college enrollment goals are established for all students as well as each sub-group, and these are assessed as being ambitious and achievable. The goal is to increase the number of students enrolling in college by reducing the number of students who do not enroll by 50 percent, in the next five years.

- the overall rating for this section reflects that improved learning and increased equity are projected in a manner consistent with the selection criteria. The rating is in the high range.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

- evidence supports the applicants record of improving student learning with 11 of the 16 schools meeting "expected growth" and with three of those earning "high growth."

- respectable progress in meeting equity goals were evident with each sub-group.

- graduation rates were relatively consistent over several years but gained a phenomenal rate of approximately 10% in 2011/12. This rate exceeded the state rate for the first time.

- evidence is provided which demonstrates overwhelming success in reforming a low-achieving school. Within 3 years, student proficiency rates increased from 38.5% to 75.1%. In 2010-2011, the school earned an exceptionally high student academic growth ratio of 5.937, meaning 85.5% of the student population met their individual growth expectations, surpassing most high schools in North Carolina. The school was subsequently recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best high schools in the nation for 2012. Reform strategies for achieving these significant gains are identified which is important because knowing why allows for repetition in other settings.

- the applicant does not provide evidence of student performance data being made available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction and services.

- overall the rating for this section is at the medium range and at the high end of the range.

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

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant indicates that complying with the monetary (salary) requirements for transparency will be appropriately handled, in part, because it has already been occurring for at least 5 years. The commitment to fiscal transparency exceeds selection criteria by including central office administration.
- the applicant has failed to address transparency regarding LEA processes and practices.
- the overall rating for this section is in the high range and recognizes that the minimum requirement has been met.

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

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

- schools have sufficient autonomy regarding curriculum content in support of the core standards, selection of resources, pace of learning, and selection of formative assessments to inform teaching, all of which are necessary to implement personalized learning.
- the school district has the authority to determine its grading policy for students and school principals have the authority to promote or retain students.
- Prior to their freshman year in high school, DCS students from all middle schools have the option to apply for admittance into Duplin Early College High School, which presents students with an excellent opportunity for exercising choice in their personalized learning plan.
- DCS has significant flexibility and autonomy in dealing with staff. It has the authority to hire, fire, evaluate, and assign staff so that students can be engaged with high performing teachers. Principals and central office program directors do not have tenure, and work under contract at the discretion of the Board of Education and Superintendent, creating opportunities for the district to reward performance. There is even flexibility to supplement salaries. These conditions mesh very well with the core educational assurance areas.
- the potential to enhance personalized learning is facilitated by the state's RTTT Instructional Improvement System for differentiating instruction.
- the LEA has access to technologies which provide a student identifier for centralized data which is cloud-based. Therefore individualized aspects of performance can be readily monitored in a timely fashion.
- the conditions for personalized learning for both students and staff are extensive in this LEA and the overall rating for this section is in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8
---	----	---

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant provides a thorough review of the consultation process in developing the proposal. A series of "town hall" meetings across the County were conducted prior to developing the proposal to share information about the proposal and collect ideas for its development. Engagement occurred at the front-end increasing the potential for community support. From the energetic list of meetings undertaken, all essential groups with the exception of students had opportunity for engagement.
- political entities requiring 10 days notice of the proposal had this condition met.
- all schools held staff consultations resulting in 91% endorsement from teachers.
- Consultation with SAS resulted in support to the extent that the LEA was gifted with a data dashboard.
- while it is stated that feedback on the initial proposal was revised based on the feedback, there is no evidence provided which substantiates how modifications to the proposal were made.
- the applicant provides many letters of support from political agencies served by the LEA.

- the overall evaluation of this section is at the high range and at the low end of the range.

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

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

- an analysis of needs and gaps had been undertaken prior to this application, and provided the basis for nine project strategies already operative within the LEA. These project strategies are designed with sustainability in mind—being able to continue beyond RTTT-D funding. The intention of this application is to supplement all of these existing projects which are being applied across the entire LEA. The 9 projects originally identified were based on needs and gaps of a population which included the target population.

- the goals of the 9 projects already operative are identified and align with the core educational assurance areas. Timelines, deliverables and responsible parties for providing monitoring and accountabilities of this specific grant are identified, however, the goals or targets are not identified which would indicate the extent to which the projects have achieved.

- overall the evaluation of this section is at the high range.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's 9 projects already identified and operating in the LEA align with the grant's core educational assurance areas. The applicant provides a comprehensive description of how each of the projects relate to the learning aspect that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-needs students, in an age-appropriate manner. Indeed, the applicant provides a matrix summarizing how the projects relate to each one of the selection criteria. The appendix lists each project and provides thorough details regarding project objectives, description, best practices being employed, resources and the major activities underway. Detailed timelines for the next 5 years are included as well as personnel responsible for leading each project. This documentation is so extensive and thorough that it makes this ambitious plan very achievable. The narrative provided in the application pulls from the projects how each selection criteria for both sections (a) and (b) is specifically addressed.

- Mechanisms to train students will be available. Students will use Futures for Kids Program to initiate and update goals, goal progress and attainment of goals. If digital tracking of progress is not the environment for some learners to experience success, students will be offered training in a data notebook system with graphs to plot progress in reaching a goal including baseline, dates and a description of the goal.

- teachers will teach students research-based self-regulating strategies to enhance motivation and attentiveness for academic success.

- all schools, teachers and staff will use a three-tiered "Responsiveness to Instruction" framework disseminated by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction that promotes school improvement through the provision of high-quality instruction.

The documentation in this section is so thorough - partly because the projects were already in the development stages prior to RTTT-D - that this section is evaluated in the high range and at the high end of the range.

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

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

- a foundational principle to this section is already addressed in the vision section. Simply stated, just as the applicant plans to individualize the learning environment for students, they also plan to individualize the teaching and leading environment for all staff.

- all educators will engage in training that supports their capacity to implement personalized learning environments; adapt content and instruction in response to academic needs and interests; frequently measure student progress to inform the acceleration of student progress; and improve teacher and principal effectiveness through the evaluation systems.

- a three hundred thousand dollar customized SAS® OnDemand for K-12 data dashboard will provide educators, as well as the community, with status updates on key performance variables including student achievement, teacher and principal performance, and district-wide metrics.

- through a user-friendly and secure Web portal, district personnel can easily view trends and outliers in their data to pinpoint problems as they occur.
- educators have access to and knowledge about digital resources for tracking student progress as well as learning resources.
- structures are in place for DCS staff to individualize the learning environment for every student and to support students needing assistance. School-based student support teams, curriculum teams, and professional learning communities are examples of structural practices that help DCS staff respond to the needs of every student.
- Plans are in place for struggling students, average students, and those “high flyers” whose need is not to catch up, but to continue to accelerate to reach their full potential. For instance, in addition to differentiating instruction throughout the school day, time is allotted daily for students at all schools K – 13 to provide enrichment and intervention for each student regardless of his needs
- recognizing that this application is based on supporting an existing plan, the applicant presents evidence on how the RTTT-D funds will be used to expand what is currently in place. The plan includes collaborating with partnering organizations and the organization of data driven decision making processes to support continuous improvement efforts.
- job descriptions for the Executive Director and an assistant to the Executive Director are provided and are the ultimate responsible parties contributing to the potential of the plan being high quality.
-
- the detail in this section is so thorough and the examples provided so informative that the overall evaluation of this section is in the high range.

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>The evidence provided in this section's narrative demonstrates the degree to which the applicant has an environment to facilitate personalized learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the LEA central office already has a structure in place to provide support and services with each project having a team lead. CVs for each leader are provided. The applicant further details to a sufficient degree how the grant will utilize an overall project leader and add breadth to each of the projects. - flexibility and autonomy over factors important in meeting student's varying needs are at a very high level in this LEA. Indeed, there are no restrictions evident that would prohibit schools from ensuring that effective educators work in a flexibility environment to respond to student needs. - credit in learning is based on mastery rather than time. A variety of scheduling concepts as well as challenging programs facilitate this notion at the high school level. In elementary, pacing decisions are made at the school and individualized learning plans ensure content and pacing for each student. These are proven strategies for facilitating personalized learning. The LEA has a signature program which allows students to acquire college credit while still in the high school. - information regarding mastery demonstrations is sparse and confusing because the narrative tends toward curriculum delivery rather than demonstrations of learning. - evidence is provided that resources and practices are provided to accommodate personal learning. Translations for English learners are provided in Spanish and appropriate accommodations are provided for students with disabilities. <p>Overall, this section is thoroughly documented and is evaluated in the high range but at the low end of the range.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sufficient and appropriate opportunities for accessing personalized learning opportunities are provided to students and parents regardless of income through various technologies that can be signed-out to take home or accessed through the school media services. Further, high poverty schools have community partners that help with extra costs associated 		

with parent resource centers with computers and Internet access in low-income areas.

- teachers, principals and staff are well-serviced with professional development in technology in varied formats including online forms. Further, ESL teachers will conduct technology workshops with parents. The evidence is rather sparse that technical support to other parents will be made available.

- the applicant indicates that technology is going through several upgrades but that capacity for educators, parents and students to use technology to support learning will be in place. Sophisticated technology is being put into place to provide summative assessments for students; store teacher evaluation components; facilitate students' capacity to store their own work; and develop parents' capacity to track their student's performance, access at-home enrichment activities, and communicate with teachers. Further, the 'cloud' approach is being developed for ease of access for all participants as well as providing secure access.

- the applicant indicates that it does not have capacity to meet requirements for interoperable data systems.

- overall, this section is evaluated at the medium range and at the high end of the range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: - the narrative is mostly focused on continuous improvement of the teaching/learning situation rather than on the ongoing improvement of the plan. - DCS indicates that it will evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the RTTT-D program by using both formative and summative evaluation procedures. Some of the instrumentation that DCS will use within the formative evaluation will include the use of focus groups, qualitative observations, interviews and qualitative surveys. Instrumentation utilized as part of the summative evaluation will include the measurement of all performance objectives, population-level variables, and ontrack indicators. DCS will publicly share information pertinent to the RTTT-D program by using a variety of communication vehicles, both traditional and innovative, and will utilize its public relations specialists to do so. - information here is a broad overview of intended actions and is too sparse and does not indicate important actions such as target audiences for gathering input as well as timelines. Further, specific strategies for how and to whom the information will be shared is not provided. - overall, this section is evaluated in the medium range but at the low end.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: - sufficient and appropriate methods for communicating and engaging will be pursued including the use of social media as well as the more traditional on-line techniques. - the overall evaluation of this section is in the high range.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: - the applicant has provided the requisite number of measures with annual targets deemed to be ambitious and achievable. - the applicant-proposed performance measure - attendance in grade 9 - is accompanied with a detailed rationale based on research findings justifying the importance of this measure as well as how it contributes formative value to the other measures. The plan also provides evidence how the measure will be reviewed and refined, if necessary. - overall this section is evaluated at the high range.		

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant supplies information that is insufficient with conditions outlined for this selection criterion. The narrative outlines a longer-term evaluation regarding the potential impact on the community rather than committing to conducting evaluations during the term of this grant. There is reference to monitoring the graduation rate as a measure for program effectiveness. - missing is any indication of a process that will be used to make adjustments and revisions during implementation of this proposal. There are no timelines provided or activities specifically describing how the implementation of this plan will be monitored during the implementation phase. Further there is no indication of the deliverables or party responsible for conducting the evaluation. With these elements not addressed it is difficult to know how the original plan presented in this proposal will be reviewed and altered during implementation. - Most of the evidence in this section is irrelevant to the requirement and, therefore, the section is evaluated in the low range. 		

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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant does not include a narrative but a search through the documents appropriately identifies all funds that will support the project. -the budget will be sufficient to support the project, in part, because the RTTT-D funding is being used to ramp-up an existing project in the LEA. - funding from additional sources is appropriately identified and allocated throughout the proposed budget. - explanations within the budget documents provide indication of where one-time investments will be incurred as well as ongoing operational costs during the 4 year period. It is unclear in the budget documents what costs will be incurred after the grant period. - the overall evaluation of this section is in the high range but at the low end of the range. 		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicant acknowledges that funding to sustain the project at the same level is not feasible. However, the nature of this request to use RTTT-D to ramp-up an existing project means that it can also be ramp-down and continue with less vigor. The applicant indicates the degrees to which areas of the project can be maintained. It also provides appropriate examples of how sustainability can be achieved by means such as reallocation of the existing district budget, new funding requests from identified sources as well as charging its unrestricted Indirect Cost rate to the grant (15.67% in 2012-13) and banking half of these funds for the purpose of sustaining Duplin Promise initiatives after the grant. The logic in this approach is sensible because the project is operating currently without the grant and will be able to continue in a less-vigorous form thereafter. - the plan includes a relatively detailed budget for 3 years following the RTTT-D project, and provides the assumptions and uses for this post-grant budget. The review of this budget demonstrates a priority in their program on student achievement through effective and efficient staff processes. - the evaluation of this section is at the high range and at the low end of the range. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p>		

- the applicant already has an extensive list of private and public partnership supporting the current project both with funding as well as services designed to meet the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students.
- the partnerships include impressive and strong alliances with post-secondary to provide district-wide early college programming as well as support for STEM.
- partnerships exist with a host of community services which enhance student health, out-of-school care, nutrition and career readiness which includes a career fair.
- the potential for the applicant to create a continuum of seamless, personalized learning opportunities for students is already well-enshrined.
- 9 population level results for education, and family and community have variables chosen to align with DCS' broader RTTT-D proposal and will address known needs of Duplin County students and their families, and address issues that affect student learning. This set meets the requirements outlined.
- the sophistication of this aspect of the proposal is evident by the detail provided in the baseline data for these variables as well as the targets provided. Transparency is then enhanced by the use of dashboard technology donated by one of the partners. This aspect of the proposal is very impressive. The only component not addressed is the potential to scale-up. Previously it has been indicated that scale-up activity is difficult in this proposal because the proposal is for all schools and their students. The applicant has committed to scaling-up by sharing beyond their LEA borders.
- the applicant already has in place several longitudinal tools to assess perceptions for identifying school and community needs for the purpose of integrating school and community needs. Their head-start on their Duplin Promise provides a great deal of sophistication and credibility for this aspect of the proposal.
- contained within this application is a thoroughly, detailed chart providing all of the measures as well as baseline data and targets for the next 3 years.
- an appropriate process to monitor results which is transparent to everyone, and then make necessary modifications is identified.
- overall, this section is evaluated in the high range.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

- the applicant has coherently and comprehensively proposed how learning environments can be improved to build on the core educational assurance areas. Within the proposal are strategies, tools and supports necessary for personalization for both the learner and service providers (educators). The focus is on each student as well as each educator, and there are policies, rules and flexibilities in place to facilitate processes necessary to achieve specific targets in related measures. The proposal is unique because it has the necessary infrastructure in place as a result of the LEA's current needs and, then, has the capacity to carry-on when the grant funding is removed. This is a thoughtful and achievable program.

Total	210	173
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	6

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

- optional budget supplemental proposal #1 for 1:1 laptop for students contains elements which should be addressed in the RTTT-D proposal. Specifically there are intentions related to assisting secondary school teachers in personalizing learning for their students. This proposal intends to, "Provide teachers with extensive professional development to enable them to transform the traditional learning environment, so that an emphasis is placed on personalized student-based learning. This will allow teachers to become facilitators of learning and students to drive their education."
- the element of the proposal which qualifies for supplemental funding is an intention to equip all high school students and in turn their families with a personal laptop to extend learning beyond the traditional school day or building through online or blended learning. The rationale for this proposal is supported with data demonstrating financial need by the population of students and parents.
- the project is not innovative as 1:1 laptop programs are very common. Certainly the research evidence presented in the proposal justifies the rationale in achieving enhanced student outcomes.
- the budget outlined for all elements including the staff development component are reasonable expenditures to implement and support the concept.
- there is no consideration for teaming with other LEA's.
- Overall this section is rated in the medium range and at the low end of the range.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	6
--	----	---

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

- optional budget supplemental proposal #2 for 1:1 laptop for students contains elements which should be addressed in the RTTT-D proposal. Specifically there are intentions related to assisting secondary school teachers in personalizing learning for their students. This proposal intends to, "Provide teachers with extensive professional development to enable them to transform the traditional learning environment, so that an emphasis is placed on personalized student-based learning. This will allow teachers to become facilitators of learning and students to drive their education."
- the element of the proposal which qualifies for supplemental funding is an intention to equip all high school students and in turn their families with a personal laptop to extend learning beyond the traditional school day or building through online or blended learning. The rationale for this proposal is supported with data demonstrating financial need by the population of students and parents.
- the project is not innovative as 1:1 laptop programs are very common. Certainly the research evidence presented in the proposal justifies the rationale in achieving enhanced student outcomes.
- the budget outlined for all elements including the staff development component are reasonable expenditures to implement and support the concept.
- there is no consideration for teaming with other LEA's.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	6
--	----	---

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

- optional budget supplemental proposal #3 for 1:1 laptop for students contains elements which should be addressed in the RTTT-D proposal. Specifically there are intentions related to assisting secondary school teachers in personalizing learning for their students. This proposal intends to, "Provide teachers with extensive professional development to enable them to transform the traditional learning environment, so that an emphasis is placed on personalized student-based learning. This will allow teachers to become facilitators of learning and students to drive their education."
- the element of the proposal which qualifies for supplemental funding is an intention to equip all high school students and in turn their families with a personal laptop to extend learning beyond the traditional school day or building through online or blended learning. The rationale for this proposal is supported with data demonstrating financial need by the population of students and parents.
- the project is not innovative as 1:1 laptop programs are very common. Certainly the research evidence presented in the proposal justifies the rationale in achieving enhanced student outcomes.
- the budget outlined for all elements including the staff development component are reasonable expenditures to implement

and support the concept.

- there is no consideration for teaming with other LEA's.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0450NC-3 for Duplin County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Duplin County has a clear and concise vision. Having read the abstract and then the vision, the proposal showed a compelling vision. The multiple strategies described begin to articulate the core assurances. The district has adopted the Common Core State Standards and will be implementing them this year. A longitudinal data system will create personalized learning systems for teacher and students. Also, SAS will create a data "Dash board" that will enable teachers, administrator, and community with data to indicate student progress. The district has already transformed of one of the lowest achieving schools in the state. The model now will be used in other schools. A few examples of rewarding and retaining effective teachers and principals were given; for example, financial incentives to encourage staff to achieve higher education degrees or National Board Certification.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal thoroughly describes how the schools were chosen. A listing of each school in the district is available with all participants. The chart includes high need students as well as low income families, participating educators, subgroups, and student numbers. The proposal also states that all employees of the school district will participate in varied project strategies and activities indicating complete support of the district.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal provides a high quality plan in their Theory of Change. The plan has identified seven domains that represent strategies/activities in the logic model of the Theory of Change. The domains are: Collaboration for Capacity Building; Leadership, Instructional Policies, and Practices; Family and Community Engagement; Student Engagement; Principal, Teacher, and Staff Engagement; Communication, Accountability, and Continuous Improvement; and Data Systems to Guide Learning and Teaching. The domains are essential to personalizing the learning environment for students. The domains are organized as a logic model. The Personalized Administrator, Teacher and Student Learning Environments are outputs and the Improving Student Outcomes are outcomes. A crosswalk of assurances, strategies, and Theory of Change is provided as an example of change theories. The proposal is for the entire district and did not specify any plan to go beyond the district.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal's vision for student outcomes certainly is ambitious and may be attainable if all factors of the Theory of Change work. Reducing the number of non-proficient students by 50% in 5 years is very ambitious, but is what NCLB would like for the Nation at Large to do. Decreasing the achievement gap for each subgroup by 50% is a goal that will be difficult goal. Reducing the number of non-graduates by 50% in each subgroup again is number that may another difficult goal. Finally,</p>		

reducing the number students who do not enroll in college in the next five years by 50% should be a number that Duplin's Promise should attain with hard work.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal begins with describing a sound advisory committee that represents a partnership with the various members of the community, teachers, students, and parents. It is undocumented if the committee discusses student performance data and ways to improve participation, instruction, and services.</p> <p>The proposal demonstrates a clear record of success with enrolling students in community college with their Early College High school, Career and College Promise program, Career and Technical Education Academies. The plan reveals clear evidence of turning around low student achievement in a high school from a proficiency rate of 38.5% to 75.1% in three years. The model will be used at the other low performing schools in the district. The district had its highest graduation rate, surpassing the state average, this past year. Their average went from 70.3% in 2007-2008 to 80.7% 2011-2012. This increase demonstrates significant reform in the past few years. Since 2007-2008 the achievement gaps of the subgroups has closed significantly.</p> <p>The proposal is lacking evidence of making student performance data available to students and parent in ways to finform and improve participation, instruction and services.</p> <p>The proposal however does indicate the hiring of a dropout prevention coordinator to reate lesson plans for success and achievement coaches to implement currivula and utilize data to drive instructional decisions.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal describes a high level of transparency. All information, budget and salary, can made available within 24 hours, but this data too will be published on-line each year during the course of the grant period. School personnel salaries can be found online each year. Budget for the county uses a committe comprised of representatives form the community, school-level administratin, and central office-leve. The county regularly provid board members, County Commissioner, and al community members with reports regarding budgetary measures.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Duplin County's proposal provides a myriad of ways in which its Board of Education has sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements. The proposal describes, in each realm the policies that may be affected, the successful conditions in which the district implements the desired outcome. The specific policy area that may be affected re Educational Programs, Students and Support Services, Personnel, Fiscal Management, and Facilities; all of which were adequately addressed.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal had a detailed description of meetings held and participants which included many of the stakeholders and organizations, programs, individuals, and businesses required of the notice. It is unclear if all of the above had time to engage in the development of the proposal because of the date of their meeting and the due date of the proposal. Having 91% of the teachers in the district in support of the proposal is evidence of great support. The letters of support revealed strong support from the mayors, colleges, work-force and economic development, and businesses. Unfortunately, there was a lack of support from parents, parent organization, and student organization.</p>		

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal analyzed the needs based on the nine strategies of the plan of the district. Each strategy identified the need or gap the strategy would address and how. Personalized learning environments for all students appear to be a strategy for all students which will closely be related to the Technology and Data Infrastructure project strategy which is very feasible. Timelines, deliverable and who is responsible for the plan is lacking in some of the project strategies.</p>		

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Duplin Promise plan’s approach to learning is comprehensive. Again, it is based on its strategies designed to enhance student success at the individual level, as well as preparing the student to be college- and career-ready from birth to grade 13. District-wide STEM Early College focused on enabling students to receive high quality instructional approaches in a variety of environments, while also allowing for students to practice goal setting, teamwork, perseverance, communication, creativity and problem solving. The Critical Care System strategy focused on the whole person which brought in many community support personnel. Creating a College Going Culture strategy was a approach not only for students in grades Prekindergarten-grade 13, but for families as well. The plan described a rural community in need of lifelong learners, not just to get their students to be college- and career-ready. Therefore, the goal is for the community at large. Global Awareness focused on exposing all students to different cultures and perspectives. Many projects were discussed, but most important was the fact that World View was embedded into the curriculum. Birth to 4 was the final strategy which was to serve the educational, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of these students so that they will enter Kindergarten prepared. One unique outcome from RTTT Early Learning Challenge would be a single database system for birth to 4 years old. Duplin County could use this to help reach children in rural areas.

“Futures for Kids” is a digital goals tracking device for students to monitor their own learning. Training will be provided for the students on the use of the program. For students unable to use it, students will be taught other methods. Response to Instruction is the North Carolina framework that the district will use to support school improvement also.

Parental support was limited in the plan. In the birth to four project is to develop and infrastructure of community resources so that when students enter kindergarten prepared to be successful there will be increased prental involvement. Parents were named as a collaborating partner in Personalized Learning Environments for Students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15
---	----	----

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal provides for a strategy to include Prekindergarten and elementary school teachers in training of career- and college-readiness strategies. Live Binders on line is an innovative way to get all educators to use Curriculum and Pacing Guides. Online digital libraries for students and teachers are innovative also. Innovative strategies that help with recruitment and retention include extended employment opportunities, day care subsidies and tuition assistance for advanced degrees. An innovative tool that will provide educators, parents and the community updates on student achievement, educator and administrator performance and district-wide information is a SAS OnDemand for K-12 dashboard. North Carolina DOE RTTT is using their funds to develop a system that is being piloted this year and will be used by all districts in 2013-2014. It is a digital Instructional Improvement System (IIS) that ultimately leads to a digitized individualized learning plan accessible to the student, parent, educator and administrator. The IIS includes data such as summative end-of-grade assessment; summative end-of-course assessment; formative assessments; teaches evaluations; individual breakdown of skill knowledge; individual student work; access to student assignment; access to student progress; communication site for teachers and parents; aggregation of data site; etc. The schools have access to EVAAS which enables the teachers to provide precise measurement of progress over time to parents. This is also a tool which enables administrator to measure student progress in a teacher’s classroom over time. The evaluation of the teachers in Duplin has areas that promote student performance. The administrator’s evaluation lacked specifics.

There was no clear plan for training of educators or administrators in using the data, tools, and resources or adapting content and instruction in the proposals in hard t staff schools.

There was no high quality plan for increasing the number of students who received instruction from effective or highly effective

teachers and principals.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant's central office has a feasible organizational structure to support all participating schools and provides the schools with the autonomy to make scheduling decisions, personnel decisions, staffing models, educator and non-educator decisions and school-level budget decisions. The plan indicates many opportunities for students such as dual enrollment, elementary students advancing grades based on knowledge of competencies, taking AP courses, and taking extra credit courses outside of the school day through online or virtual high school coursework. This last idea is the only one where the student can progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. Unfortunately, it may not be open to all students. Low income students may not be able to come back to school or arrive early if they are dependent on the bus or have jobs or take care of sibling. Internet based offerings may not be feasible if no connection is in the home. The proposal is clear that students will be able to show mastery of the standard at multiple ways, but unclear as to multiple times so that the student may proceed with his/her personalized learning plan. The applicant has practices in place that are adaptable and accessible to all.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal has a numerous and innovative ways of ensuring students, parents and teachers have access content regarding student learning regardless of income such as: bus transportation to parent workshops; Back Pack Buddies for good for high needs families; technology available at school for use; laptops available for checkout by all; two parent resource centers in the community with computers and internet access; and high poverty schools have business partners to help with high costs. Technical support is to be provided to teachers, principals, and staff by the Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing Highly Effective Staff Member project strategy. The proposal was lacking specifics in this area. Some details regarding parents were given. ESL parents would receive technology training. Parent sessions would also be given for enrolling in high school and information about career- and college-ready preparations. All school would receive technical support including college night, completing the FAFSA. The proposal also gave evidence of North Carolina's data systems which are being overhauled at the state level through their participation in the RTTT program. The systems do not currently allow parents and students to export their data or the plan did not specifically state that this could be accomplished.. The current data system is not interoperable, but school officials plan for the system to be so within the next four years.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	10
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal has built its continuous improvement model on the following tasks: ensuring that there is a shared vision and building readiness to achieve that vision; collecting and analyzing data; establishing common goals based upon the data collected and analyzed; investigating research-based practices; creating an action plan; implementing ongoing monitoring of action plans; evaluating the effectiveness of the plans; and devising sustainability strategies. The plan has outlined core beliefs of all of its schools including, Equity, Teacher Excellence, Transparency, and Creating a College Going Culture. The plan addresses using the various databases at the state and district level, the district will be able to identify and analyzed data to determine gaps and weaknesses needed to be addressed to bring about educational reform. The plan provides evidence of monitoring by the SAS Data Dashboard that will keep interim benchmark showing stakeholders progress toward achieving annual performance targets and closing achievement gaps. The examples of investment in the areas of professional development were inadequate in the plan for parents, students, and staff in the use of technology and the understanding of standards and curriculum. The few examples in the areas of curriculum or standards did not include professional development except for media coordinators. "Instructional Rounds" and "Tuning Protocol" are innovative ways in which to fine tune lessons and to improve student achievement by focusing in on student work and student lessons for educators. The plan states that</p>		

the district will share information, "by using a variety of communication vehicles, both traditional and innovative, and will use its public relations specialist to do so." This statement is unclear as to what kind of strategies the district is using to publically share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the top-District to its stakeholders.

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

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal listed several methods of communicating with stakeholders, two of which were expanded upon (Twitter and Facebook). The other methods of communication were Town Hall meetings, Conference presentations, webinars, websites,resources to support local presentations, and public service announcements.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has approximately 12 measures, but is missing the first performance measure because of unavailable data. The rational for selecting the measure is sound. The measure are rigorous, if not much too ambitious. There is a plan in place to review and improve the implementation of the process if the goals are found to be too ambitious or project strategies need to be improved.

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

5

3

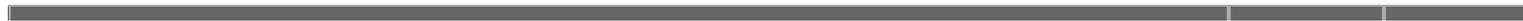
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

If the applicant implements the project correctly, the quality of life of the community will be improved. The applicant analyzed the cost effectiveness of the term of the grant. The applicant addressed the end result not how the investment would be evaluated as it went along so adjustments could be made.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The proposal includes all budget tables and narratives. The budget tables identify all funds that are requested from the RTTT-D and those that are from other sources. The budget tables also clearly identify funding that is needed from one year or up to four years. The budget narrative appropriately and concisely describes the rationale for the funding. Sustainability of the personalized learning environments was sporadically addressed. The sustainability may have been addressed in the goal, but not in the investment. For example, in Birth to 4 the goal is to build infrastructure in the community resources..., but in the acquisition of purchasing equipment of a playground center, the narrative was strictly to build socialization skills and physical skills. The narrative should have related back to the goal of sustaining the infrastructure of the Child Development Centers in the Community.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The proposal starts with a plan of sustainability by banking half of the unrestricted Indirect Cost Rate to the Federal budget funds which will be approximately one point six million dollars to use over the next three years. This would not sustain the nine programs they wish to continue, it would be a starting point. The county has a team already working on a sustainability plan. At this time they are working on two grants, the Math and Science Partnership Federal Grant and the North Carolina's Golden Leaf Foundation Grant. The team has devised a budget included in the proposal for the next three years. The proposal includes letters of supports from stakeholder and partnerships which will help in the future. Gathering data and making a case for support of their efforts will be essential. The new SAS Data Dashboard would support this effort to share the information with parents, community, and stakeholders.		

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 has a feasible proposal which will use the data based that SAS will be donating to track many variables about students using different agencies in the district. The “train” ride begins with Prekindergarten students and building partners with the Health Department. The Health department helps students in all grades from obesity awareness to fitness to nutrition to asthma. The Community Supported Agriculture farms help with nutritious food. The districts offer appropriate educational resources and materials to daycares and home daycares to improve education- and child development appropriate services to get Prekindergarten students ready to succeed in school. As these students board the educational “train,” they are now better prepared. The tracking of all the data on the dashboard will continue. The dashboard can monitor population influx and limitation of ELS parenting resources and send appropriate services.</p> <p>The way that services work with the database could be scaled up to the other districts in the state if the database is shown to be effective.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The proposal will meet Priority one through creating personalized learning environments for students, teachers, and administrators with the Duplin Data Dashboard and online Future for Kids. These tools and strategies will help support, monitor, and improve teaching enable students to be college- and career-ready. Through the Early College initiative Duplin County proposes to see an increase in high school graduates prepares for college and careers. Duplin educators created LiveBinder or online Curriculum Guides for the recent change to the Common Core Standards. Profession development is centered on instructional practices to go into the binders, Technology will enhance the information to be used by all teachers within the district to increase the effectiveness of other educators.</p>		

Total	210	162
-------	-----	-----

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Optional Budget Request 1</p> <p>The request is made for a high school within the district for 1:1 computer for teachers and students, equipping classrooms with technology, technician, and professional development. The rationale is sound because it is covered in the original proposal. Sustainability may be unrealistic after the life of the grant or technology. The number of students and teachers served were not specifically iterated.</p> <p>All three requests were practically the same but different schools in the district.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Optional Budget Request 2

The request is made for a high school within the district for 1:1 computer for teachers and students, equipping classrooms with technology, technician, and professional development. The rationale is sound because it is covered in the original proposal. Sustainability may be unrealistic after the life of the grant or technology. The number of students and teachers served were not specifically iterated.

All three requests were practically the same but different schools in the district.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	5
--	----	---

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Optional Budget Request 3

The request is made for a high school within the district for 1:1 computer for teachers and students, equipping classrooms with technology, technician, and professional development. The rationale is sound because it is covered in the original proposal. Sustainability may be unrealistic after the life of the grant or technology. The number of students and teachers served were not specifically iterated.

All three requests were practically the same but different schools in the district.