



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1029OH-2 for Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga county

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The <i>Youth in the Middle</i> consortium, eight schools facing similar socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the Cleveland, Ohio urban core, have partnered with their Educational Service Center to create a vision of "real change" by designing a comprehensive system of personalized learning environments. In addition to the eight school districts and their ESC, the consortium has garnered support from 13 local, regional, and national organizations that will assist the consortium in realizing their vision.</p> <p>The consortium vision is ambitious yet achievable, and most importantly focuses on students in grades 4 -8 to prepare students for success in high school. The consortium has identified three specific goals: a). Use the NASSP framework of <i>Breaking Ranks</i> to design and implement a personalized learning environment. b). Provide educators with differentiated models of professional development by using the Technology, Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge model, and 3). Implementing shared accountability systems and policies to ensure that conditions for continuous improvement are in place. When successfully implemented these goals will provide students with accelerated achievement, deeper learning, and an increase in equitable opportunities.</p> <p>The consortium members are commended for including in their vision a model for the adults in the system with the same philosophy of individualized learning for their students, that is, consortium members will collaborate to implement a comprehensive network of professional learning communities that mirror the personalized learning environments that comprise the stated vision for students.</p> <p>Equally as important is the Consortium's intent to employ a strategic Cycle of Design - a framework that incorporates data acquisition, piloting, and research that focuses on continuous improvement and closes achievement gaps.</p> <p>This section is scored in the high range because the Consortium has articulated a very well articulated vision of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In assessing the Consortium's approach to implementation it is noted that a description of the process used to select participant schools was not included.</p> <p>A list of the schools that will participate in the grant activities is included, as is the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students, and participating educators.</p> <p>This section is scored in the low range because a description of the process used to select participant schools was not included.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This section is scored 0 because component (A)(3) - LEA-wide reform and change - was not found in the application.

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

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium has established goals that are ambitious and achievable in all required areas as evidence by:

- summative assessments with a goal of 100% proficient at the conclusion of the grant period
- decreasing achievement gaps for all sub-groups
- graduation rates of 100% at the conclusion of the grant period
- college enrollment of between 65% and 90% for all districts at the conclusion of the grant period.

This section was scored in the high range because the consortium has provided evidence to support their ambitious and achievable goals.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

To document their record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning the consortium districts acknowledge they are varied in their progress on (a) improving student learning outcomes and closing achievement gaps. Evidence in the application indicates there have been recognized generalized consistencies that exist across the Consortium including increases in OAA proficiency levels, though specific data to document the increases is not presented in this section. In addition, the Consortium also generalizes among all districts decreases in achievement gaps between African American students and white students in reading, though, again, specific data to convey this conclusion is not presented in the narrative. These two indicators are not sufficient to provide sufficient data to show improved student learning outcomes and the closing of achievement gaps to demonstrate a clear track record of success.

In order to (b) achieve ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools the Consortium surveyed the needs, achievements, and readiness the Consortium districts identified 1). strategies they are currently implementing, 2). strategies they are ready to explore, and 3). areas for growth. Using the *Breaking Ranks* Framework the Districts have identified the readiness of Districts to implement strategies, and also the Districts' readiness for development, if needed, for each strategy. The components of the *Breaking Ranks* Framework include: Collaborative Leadership, Personalized Learning Environments, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Family and Community Engagement. This data collection and analysis will serve the district well to provide ambitious and significant reforms in low achieving schools.

Lastly, there is insufficient documentation in this section to indicate how the consortium districts will make student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

The score for this section is in the mid range because of an inadequate description a record of academic success during the past four years, and insufficient evidence about how the districts will make student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services.

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

The Consortium Districts have provided sufficient evidence to indicate that transparency does exist by making public, by

school, actual school-level expenditures including actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, actual personnel salaries at the school. This transparency is evidenced by:

- Data posted on the HISC website includes Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, the complete annual HISD budget, information explaining bond proposals, and details explaining how fund are to be allotted and spent at each campus.
- The State of Texas gathers data through the Public Education Information Management System and publicizes it in a report called the Academic Excellence Indicator System.
- Non-personnel expenditures of \$10,000 or more must be made through competitive proposals after advertising in local newspapers.

This section is scored in the high range because adequate evidence of transparency has been presented.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	0
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium has identified current initiatives that have exceeded federal and state requirements. For example, the AYP measure of 100% proficiency for reading and math has been replaced, changing the existing state rating of schools to an A-F letter-grade system that is easier for parents to understand, freeing schools from reporting requirements and giving them greater flexibility to use their federal funds, embracing the implementation of new federal and state rigorous content standards, assessments, and principal and teacher evaluations.

Not included in the application is specific evidence that the Consortium has sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalize learning environments.

This section is scored in the mid range because specific evidence that the Consortium has sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement personalized learning environments was not presented.

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

School districts that comprise the *Youth in the Middle* Consortium have a track record of stakeholder involvement. Nearly all districts have strategic plans that have included stakeholder input, all have a PTA which provides input and support for schools, and all districts have active citizen groups composed of parents, community members, faith-based organizations, students, and teachers. In 2009 all of the Consortium Districts participated in an ODE Family and Community Engagement Pilot project that developed five-year strategies with the support of the ESC, Family and Children First Council, and the State Support Team for Region 3. The Consortium application states that it was this teams development and the construct of a regional and district-embedded support that was the impetus for the design of this grant application.

The Consortium application does not describe the required components of how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of this proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their feedback. The pilot project conducted in 2009 that is identified as the impetus for this proposal is not sufficient to meet the stated requirements.

Letters of support from union representation, and other key stakeholders including parents and parent organizations, the business community, institutions of higher learning and advocacy groups have been presented in the appendix.

This section is scored in the low range because the applicant does not describe how students, families, teachers, and principals in participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback.

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

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium identified two achievement gaps their planned reforms will address; a). Reading and math for African-American when compared with reading and math scores of white students, and b). Students with disabilities. These gaps in the Consortium Districts are also compared to Suburban Districts and indicates the gaps are even

larger.

The application does not include an explanation of how the Consortium Districts proposed model how personalized learning communities will assist in closing the gaps. Moreover, there are no identified needs in this section.

This section is scored in the mid range because there is lack of a specificity in describing the current reality of the consortium districts in terms of personalized learning communities, and the vision for the new reality when the reforms are implemented.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium presents a strong argument for their focus on students in the middle grades. Evidence in the application identifies the middle grades as the most critical in order to better prepare students for the academic and behavioral skills necessary for graduation and college/career readiness, especially for at-risk students. This preparation for college/career readiness must begin before high school, especially for at-risk students. Evidence that supports this application focus includes:

- ACT indicates that level of academic achievement by 8th grade has larger impact on college and career readiness than anything that happens academically in high school.
- High-poverty 6th graders who failed English or math, and attendance fell below 80%, or who was suspended out of school only had a 10% to 20%% chance of graduating on time.
- NASSP indicates middle level improvement will lead to higher achievement levels in high school, lower drop out rates, higher graduation rates, and higher first-year college enrollment rates.

(a) The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium, with the support of parents and educators, will assists students to:

(i) Understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals as evidenced by:

- District level teams will be used to critically analyze needs within their districts and to support processes that will better inform about the effectiveness of resources allocated for change and improvement. These teams will conduct gap analysis, needs assessments, and initiate discussion among their stakeholders to create awareness and school transformational processes. It is assumed stakeholders includes students, however there is no specificity about how this important concept will be transferred from the district level teams to the students.

(ii) Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals as evidenced by:

- Strategy #2 - Consortium Districts will establish a goal-setting mechanism for progress toward graduation for each students when they enter the middle level and when they transition to high school, an use assessment data to provide on-going feedback to increase student ownership of the goals.

(iii) Are able to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interests evidenced by:

- The Next Generation Learning (NxGL) model which will drive the Consortiums philosophy of deeper learning for students with demonstration of mastery, student-centered approaches to instruction and assessment.
- Deeper Learning Skill and Four Keys to College and Career Readiness are located in the appendix.

(iv) Have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning as evidenced by:

- Evidence to support this criteria was not found

(v) Master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving as evidenced by:

- Strategy #2 - Consortium Districts will establish a goal-setting mechanism for progress toward graduation for each students when they enter the middle level and when they transition to high school, an use assessment data to provide on-going feedback to increase student ownership of the goals.
- Creation of personal learning plans for all students

(b) The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium with the support of parents and educators identifies a strategy to ensure that each student has access to:

(i) A personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready as evidenced by:

- Strategy #1 - Align the core curriculum across grades and schools and offer competency-based or flexible options through extended learning for demonstrating mastery.

(ii) A variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments as evidenced by:

- The *Moving Your Numbers* imitative employed by the Consortium districts uses a District Self-Assessment Guide for use by district and school-level leadership teams to determine implementation and scale of instructional practices. Equitable access and challenging instruction aligned with the Common Core State Standards will be used to meet the unique learning needs of students through district-identified strategies for creating personalized learning environments.

(iii) High-quality content, including digital learning content aligned with college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements as evidenced by:

(iv) Ongoing and regular feedback as evidenced by:

- Frequent formative assessments
- The use of technology so students can utilize interactive, innovating teaching ineerfaces via software and applications to learn materials at their own pace.
- Technology to help students engage in learning content, and access new resources.

(v) Accommodations and high-quality strategies for high-need students to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards as evidenced by:

- The Consortium districts will use "Developmental Assessts" to build school and community capacity for increasing youth protective factors for all students.
- In cooperation with NCEO and UD SEOAP Grant Center Consortium districts will implement *Moving Your Numbers* which is a national technical assistance initiative to support districts to move isolated efforts at school improvement to strategic action for improving instructional practice and student learning. High quality instruction to meet each student's individual needs, including students with disabilities, students who are ELL, and other high-need students.

(c) The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium assures that mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning as evidenced by:

- Working with district-embedded State Support Team Consultants will ensure educators have the capacity to:
 - Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement
 - Teach students to exam their own data and set of learning goals
 - Establish a clear vision for school-wide data us
 - Provide supports that foster a data driven culture within schools
 - Develop and maintain a district-wide data system.

This section was scored in the high range because the Consortium crafted ambitious yet achievable plan to engage and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students. Points were deducted because supporting evidence could not be found for the exposure of students to differing cultures and contexts.

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

The Youth in the Middle Consortium districts detail an excellent approach to teaching and leading by providing the mechanisms and tools to build the capacity of teachers and administrators which will support student progress in meeting college and career ready standards. The application focus is on curriculum, instruction, and assessments for college and career readiness, teacher and principal development, data systems for personalized learning, and accessing high-quality learning resources, and policies tools, and data to improve teacher effectiveness. This is a high-quality plan that establishes goals, the activities to accomplish those goals, and a rationale for the activities.

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium has identified that all participating educators will engage in training, and in professional teams or communities that

(i) Support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs as evidenced by:

- Project partners providing support to Consortium districts include Cleveland State University's First-Ring PreService Teacher Academy
- Support at the consortium level will be provided by the ESC to coordinate the overall strategic plan
- At the District level District Design Teams will led Youth in the Middle initiatives to include strategies for instructional and personalized learning, assessments, and instructional technology strategies.

(ii) Adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approach as evidenced by:

- The state of Ohio's new learning standards will generate three common instructional shifts to improve students outcomes, 1). build a deep understanding of content and effectively apply learning with and across disciplines, 2). craft responses based on evidence to include demonstrate understanding, explain reasoning or justify a position. 3). use technology appropriately, strategically, and ethically.
- Professional development for Consortium schools will be designed by educators for diverse learners.

(iii) Frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress and the improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators as evidenced by:

- Ohio's College and Career Ready Standards set the expectations for achievement of Ohio students.
- Districts will align the standards to instruction and assessment.
- Districts will implement system-level support for teaching and assessments, and teachers and administrators will develop personalized instructional plans for all students to be successful.
- Assessments will be used to determine effectiveness, identify needs and gaps, and interventions/revisions to differentiate instruction.

(iv) Improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback provided by the LEA's teacher and principal evaluation systems including frequent feedback on individual and collective effectiveness, as well as by providing recommendations, supports, and interventions as needed for improvement as evidenced by:

- Ohio Teacher Evaluation System is designed to guide school districts in implementing a high quality system to meet state and federal criteria for effective teaching. This system has two evaluation components: 1). a rating of teacher performance based on classroom observations, and 2). a rating of student academic achievement growth through implementation of targeted student learning objectives.
- Ohio Principal Evaluation System is a standards-based model design to foster professional growth of principals in knowledge, skills, and practice. The system has four components: 1). goal-setting, 2). communication and professionalism, 3). skills and knowledge, and 4). measures of student academic

growth.

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium has identified all participating educators have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements that include:

(i) Actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests as evidenced by:

- Ohio's Instructional Improvement System provides educators with tools and activities for instructional planning, information gathering, and interim assessments.
- The application indicates that "training in these data sources and systems" will be provided, but does not specify who will be trained or how the training will be delivered.

(ii) High-quality learning resources including digital resources, and the tools to create and share new resources as evidenced by:

- The application indicates that Consortium Districts will provide the resources required for changes in the curriculum, and that teachers must have resources available to support learning.
- Resources to support personalized learning include student eportfolios, project based learning, learning oriented social networking, and digital tool such as DropBox and GoogleDocs allow for collaborative sharing of knowledge and resources.
- INFOhio is an online resource for students and educators that contains educational resources such as videos, newspapers, scholarly journals, e-books, etc.

(iii) Processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches to provide continuously improving feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs as evidenced by:

- District design teams will conduct gap analysis and needs assessments to create school transformational processes.
- Districts will find resources to provide common time for teachers to work together, individualized attention for students to meet academic needs, and more academic time for students in longer blocks
- Districts will use Web 2.0 tools for websites, wikis, blogs, and mobile applications for teaching and learning.
- Districts will use project based learning, formative instruction, and short cycle assessments to support intentional learning for student improvement

The Youth in the Middle Consortium Districts have clearly articulated that all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks. The training, policies, tools, data, and resources must include:

(i) Information, from such sources as the district's teacher evaluation system, that helps school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate, for the purpose of continuous school improvement as evidenced by:

- Ohio will be implementing a new evaluation system for educators beginning in 2014-2015
- New Student Learning Objectives aligned to College and Career Ready Standard will provide 50% of data to measure educators growth, while the other 50% of evaluation comes from state approved vendor assessments, value added, or LEA - designed evaluation.

(ii) Training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps as evidenced by:

- Consortium districts will use a three year Cycle of Design both consortium-wide and district-wide to improve school progress.
- Consortium-wide focus will be on collaborative leadership
- District-wide focus will be on personalized environments, curriculum, instruction, and assessments
- Unique teaching and learning opportunities will be offered through Cleveland State University's Pre-service Teacher Academy and the ESC's Regional Summer Academy.

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium has crafted 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 (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education) as evidenced by:

- Districts will participate in professional learning and development during the project period to refine and improve instructional skills.
- Professional Learning Communities will improve content, instructional methods, affective skills, and leadership required for improving teacher and principal knowledge that directly impacts personalized learning and preparation for students for college and careers.
- TeachOhio is a support program offered through local universities that will particularly assist low-performing schools and/or districts.

This section is scored in the high range because all required components have been extensively addressed except, "training in data sources and systems" does not specify who will be trained or how the training will be delivered.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium, as indicated by the evidence below, has not provided a comprehensive approach to LEA practices, policies, and rules to facilitate personalized learning:

(a) Organizing the LEA central office, or the consortium governance structure, to provide support and services to all participating schools as evidenced by:

- The consortium decision making process includes: Consortium-wide policies will be determined by consensus, consortium-wide projects will be determined by a majority, except for those included in the Consortium MOU, and district-level policies and operations will be determined by the individual districts.
- The decision making process above is not a comprehensive governance structure. The applicant has reference a MOU, but not in this section. Moreover, the MOU is not in the appendix.

(b) Providing school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets

- A *Potential District Strategies for Personalized Learning Survey* was conducted in all Consortium districts. The survey included 93 different strategies toward personalized learning and districts indicated whether they were ready for implementation or they were ready for development.
- Specific information should have been provided in the narrative about how districts planned to provide the flexibility and autonomy required to be considered a high-quality plan.

(c) Giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic as evidenced by:

- The Ohio Credit Flex Plan allows students to show mastery of course content to receive credit, and propose additional credit-worthy and personalized courses.

(d) Giving students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways as evidenced by:

- Ohio Credit Flex gives students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and ELL students

- Credit Flex gives students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple

comparable ways and is fully accessible to all students, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners.

This section is scored in the mid range because of the lack of specificity reference in items a and b above. Moreover, additional explanation should have been included in items c,d,and e as to how school districts coach, support, and train students to access the Ohio Flex Plan system.

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

10

0

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This section is scored 0 because there was no information found in the application.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Youth in the Middle Consortium presents a credible plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements. Evidence offered in support of their continuous improvement process include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Level continuous improvement processes will be driven and monitored by the District Design Team and District Leadership Team. • The Consortium has chosen to use a six step continuous improvement model that contains the following: a). Gather and Analyze Data to Determine Priorities, b). Explore Possible Solutions, c). Asses Readiness and Build Capacity, d). Create and Communicate Improvement Plan, d). Implement the Plan, e). Monitor and Adjust • Hanover Research will serve as a third party evaluator • Districts will meet monthly to provide updates on plan development, progress measures, challenges, and resources needed. • Twice a year the consortium will meet with national, state, and local Advisory Board members. <p>This section is scored in the high range because the application provides an excellent plan to monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of RRT-D funded investments.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section is scored 0 because there was no information found in the application.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The <i>Youth in the Middle</i> Consortium has established the required ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required measures. However, rationale for all measures is not included, how each measure will provide rigorous, timely and formative leading information is not included, and how the Consortium will review and improve the measure is not included in the application.</p> <p>The Consortium failed to provide all of the required information for:</p>		

(a) Its rationale for selecting that measure as evidenced by:

- State of Ohio legislation requires all district to have a teacher and principal evaluation system that can identify effective and highly effective teachers and principals based on growth by 2014-2015.
- Rationale for the other measures selected is not provided.

(b) How the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern as evidenced by:

- Specific information about how each measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern is not provided in the application.

(c) How it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress as evidenced by:

- Specific information about how the Consortium will review and improve each measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress is not included in the application.

This section is scored 0 because the application narrative did not include all of the required information as detailed above.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: This section is scored 0 because there was no information found in the application.		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: <i>The Youth in the Middle</i> application Identified that the Consortium will only use grant funds for the implementation of the proposal as no other funding sources were included in the budget tables. The budget, as presented, is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the stated vision. There is no written budget narrative other than what is stated within the budget tables and there is insufficient information contained within the budget tables to sufficiently provide the required rationale. This is evidenced by:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 4-4 -1. Personnel: The importance of each position to the success of the project and connections to specific project plans was not identified. 2. Fringe Benefits: The nature of the fringe benefits was not stated, 5. Supplies: An explanation of why the supplies are necessary to meet program goals was not included 6. Contractual - The purpose of the acquired goods/services to meet program goals was not articulated. • 		
This section is scored in the mid range because the application does not clearly provide a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities, nor are their strategies to ensure long-term sustainability.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: This section is scored 0 because there is not information in the application that describes the sustainability of project goals.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium has proposed a credible, though not succinct, plan of Comprehensive Systems of Support to integrate public or private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources by providing additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of students in the Consortium.

(1) The Consortium Districts have provided a description of the coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organizations as evidenced by:

- Crafting a Comprehensive System of Supports to collaborate with agencies in Cuyahoga County with a history of addressing educational and social service to create a continuum of supports to address identified needs. Agencies include the Family and Children First Council, the ESC Consortium of School Mental Health Liaisons, Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Board, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Center for Urban Education at Cleveland State.

(2) The Consortium Districts have identified not more than 10 population-level desired results for students in the LEA or consortium of LEAs that align with and support the applicant's broader Race to the Top – District proposal. These results include both educational results and other education outcomes as evidenced by:

- Six Population Desired Results have been identified by the Consortium. All of the results listed focus on other education outcomes and none focus on educational results.

(3) The Consortium Districts have described how the partnership will

(a) Track the selected indicators that measure each result at the aggregate level for all children within the LEA or consortium and at the student level for the participating students as evidenced by:

- The percentage of students with average number of Developmental Assets (internal and external) equal or greater than 20
- The FCFC Systems Coordination Committee will develop a results-based accountability system to review and analyze data.
- Center for Urban Education will lead the administration and reporting on Developmental Assets.

(b) Use the data to target its resources in order to improve results for participating students with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students affected by poverty (including highly mobile students), family instability, or other child welfare issues as evidenced by:

- No specific information on how resources will be targeted is presented

(c) Develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and communities in the LEA or consortium over time as evidenced by:

- A portfolio of Extended Learning Opportunities will be scaled across all consortium districts.

(d) Improve results over time as evidenced by:

- Positive developmental impacts on youth in gpa, stronger sense of belonging, self-confidence and self-efficacy
- Decreases in alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Decreases in academic failure
- Increased commitment to school - improved attendance

4) Describe how the partnership would, within participating schools integrate education and other services

- Comprehensive System of Supports will provide educational opportunities to enable families to be actively

involved in their student's academic life; provide students with academic, emotional and social skills; provide professional development and support for teachers to meet the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of children.

(5) The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium describes how the partnership and LEA or consortium would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing them with tools and supports to:

(a) Assess the needs and assets of participating students that are aligned with the partnership's goals for improving the education and family and community supports identified by the partnership as evidenced by:

- The Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets will be used to assess needs and the assesment will be conducted by District Design Teams, the ESC, and Family and Children First Council

(b) Identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community that are aligned with those goals for improving the education and family and community supports as evidenced by:

- A mechanism to identify and inventory the needs and assets of the school and community is not identified.

(c) Create a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports that address the individual needs of participating students as evidenced by:

- The agencies involved in the Comprehensive Systems of Supports will select, implement, and evaluate the individual needs of participating students.
- The FCFC Executive Council will conduct ongoing needs assessments and evaluations.

(d) Engage parents and families of participating students in both decision-making about solutions to improve results over time and in addressing student, family, and school needs as evidenced by:

- the County Youth Education and Development Dashboard will build upon the academic "early warning" system to include social indicators for a comprehensive early warning system that will provide outcomes and inform all stakeholders.

(e) Routinely assess the applicant's progress in implementing its plan to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems as evidenced by:

- The FCFC Systems Coordination Committee will develop a results-based accountability system to review and analyze data, identify the contributions each agency can make to the population outcomes.

(6) Identify its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students as evidenced by:

- Annual/achievable performjance measures have not been identified.

The score for this section falls within the mid range because required components of 3 - b, 5-b, and 6.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The *Youth in the Middle* Consortium of Cuyahoga County has crafted a plan to revolutionize teaching and learning and has met the USDE absolute priority 1 of establishing a personalized learning environment. Changing the teaching / learning nexus

is not easy and the Consortium has proposed an aggressive plan that will reduce achievement gaps and increase the rate at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers

Total	210	117
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1029OH-3 for Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga county

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In the Vision section of the report, the applicant has presented a comprehensive and coherent reform vision with commitment to meeting four core educational assurance areas. The plan that the consortium districts have presented articulates a clear and credible approach to the goals of student achievement through creating personalized learning environment, transforming practices, and implementing shared accountability systems to support reform vision. In addition, the applicant has presented a clear vision of delivery chain model which will result in personalized learning environments including ensuring that expectations are raised for students and educators, the schools have the autonomy to in building capacity to support the reform, and developing a framework for sustained professional learning community.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant has presented a framework to create personalized learning for their students through Collaborative Leadership, Personalized Learning Environments and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment concepts thus leading to "improved student performance."</p> <p>The applicant has presented a comprehensive and coherent reform vision and articulated a clear and credible approach to the goals for this project. For that depth and clarity, the applicant receives 10 out of 10 points.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	4
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not describe the process that the consortium districts underwent to identify participating schools even though the report lists the names of districts that have participated in this project including providing total number of participating students including subgroups: low-income families and high-need students. The matrix also includes information on how many educators are participating this project. Due to absence of description of process for identifying schools to participate the project, the applicant will receive 4 out of 10 points for this section.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	0
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not include any narrative on high-quality plan therefore the applicant will receive 0 out of 10 points.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not present any narrative on how the applicant plans to achieve the vision of improved student learning and performance and increased equity however they did include goals including target numbers for improved student outcomes. In</p>		

the box under (A)(4) section, the applicant did not include name of ESEA assessment, methodology for determining status or methodology for determining growth. Even though the applicant describes in another section that they did not establish baselines for SY 2011-12, they were able to project target scores for the following school years based on baseline for SY 2010-11. Because there isn't any baseline for SY 2011-12, it becomes difficult to gauge whether the proposal includes ambitious, yet achievable goals. However, the target goal scores established by the consortium districts do not appear to be ambitious. For instance, it is assumed that 80.3% of 3rd grade black students at Bedford School District passed reading assessment in SY 2010-11 and the goal scores for SY 2012-13 for the same subgroup is 82% meaning the districts has raised the bar by only 1.7% and for the following school years, the bar is raised by only 2% in SY 2013-14 and another 2% for SY 2015-16. The target scores are hardly ambitious even if they are largely achievable. Similarly, Garfield Heights School District has indicated that 61.3% of their economically disadvantaged students have passed 4th grade reading assessment in SY 2010-11 and they have raised the bar to 69.3% meaning there is only 8% of improvement over 2 years and the following school year (SY 2014-15, the target scores actually drops to 65.3% (even though the report explains that a new, more difficult state assessment will be in place thus it is expected that scores will drop) so it is debatable whether the consortium districts have set ambitious goal scores.

Due to lack of narrative and descriptions of summative assessments and methodologies and somewhat unambitious goal scores, the applicant will receive 2 out of 10 points.

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	0
(B)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided figures on readiness of the districts to implement and develop project but the criteria specifically asks the applicant to report on clear record of success in the past four years, to which the applicant did not answer suitably. For that reason, the applicant receives 0 out of 15 points.		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
(B)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant claims that they do have processes in place that will demonstrate transparency including posting personnel salaries but the applicant does not explain where the information can be found therefore the applicant will receive 1 out of 5 points.		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	5
(B)(3) Reviewer Comments: In the proposal, the applicant has outlined how they have demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to carry out their project but there's not any discussion on whether their efforts will result in conflict with legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. They have outlined some of what the districts have done to increase student performance through different ways: implementing Ohio Improvement Process, replacement of AYP, replacing existing rating of school system, giving greater flexibility to schools to make use of their federal funds, embracing implementation of new federal and state content standards, assessments and evaluations & utilizing research-based instructional and assessment practices. Due to limited narrative, the applicant will receive 5 out of 10 points.		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	2
(B)(4) Reviewer Comments: The applicant describes broadly how the community including parents provide input to the principals and superintendents to strengthen, inform, influence and create policies, practices and programs but the applicant does not detail how the community provided input specifically for this project. However through another project called ODE Family and Community Engagement project, the consortium districts were able to gather support for this project design. The report indicates that the applicant has discussed with teacher unions and have gathered their signatures for the Memorandum of Agreement but again, it does not outline whether any input from teacher unions were gathered for this project or not.		

There are letters of support in the appendix.

Despite evidence of broad participation of the community, the applicant did not provide any details on how input was gathered specifically for this project. For that reason, the applicant receives 2 out of 10 points.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	0
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not provided any narrative in regard to this criterion. For that reason, the applicant will receive 0 out of 5 points.

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

	Available	Score
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(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	5
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(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide much details on how they will support students in understanding what they need to learn in order to be successful. The report does not include much discussion on how they can attain goals that they have set for themselves.

The report does include discussion on what they intend to do to establish personalized learning plans to help provide regular feedback to the students in regard to their progress. The applicant has also indicated that they will establish data systems to support this effort including training teachers to locate data, comprehend data, interpret data, make instructional decisions and pose questions to be able to actively engage in instructional inquiry focused on instructional improvement and student achievement.

The proposal states that they will develop early warning systems to keep track and provide ongoing and regular feedback to ensure that the students do not fall behind in their personalized learning but it will not be available to the schools until 2014-15.

The applicant does not discuss in great depth about mechanisms they intend to implement to provide training and support to students to ensure they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them especially as they track and manage their education.

Generally, the applicant has not presented much details about their plans to engage and empower their students to learn about more their own education and what they can do to achieve their personal goals. For that reason, the applicant receives 5 out of 20 points.

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

The applicant has presented a plan that will incorporate principles from Ohio Continuum of Teacher Development and establish a variety of professional development activities to support "positive school transformation" and ensure that teachers are qualified to implement personalized instruction. The participant has also secured commitment from local universities to provide additional training for teachers.

The proposal explains that the consortium districts will adopt best practices and model curriculum to ensure that instructional shifts will result in improved student outcomes and the shifts are: (1) build a deep understanding of content and effectively apply learning across disciplines, (2) craft responses based on evidence & (3) use technology appropriately, strategically and ethically. More importantly, the applicant has presented a plan that will ensure that their teachers are trained to perform those shifts. Also, the proposal explains that the districts will implement effective assessments to guide instruction in classrooms.

However, the application does not provide in-depth discussion on types of training teachers will have to take in order to learn how to better assess their students using multiple methods.

The applicant has provided specifically a clear plan for improving teachers and principals through Ohio Teacher Evaluation System framework which places emphasis on evaluating teachers with a richer, more detailed view of their performance and focusing on strengths. The new evaluation system will provide teachers with timely and meaningful feedback for improvement.

Ohio Principal Evaluation System framework will measure and evaluate administrators' effectiveness focusing on goal-setting and professional development plans, communication and professionalism, skills and knowledge & measurement of student

academic growth.

The applicant has proposed to create Ohio's Instructional Improvement System (OIS), which was developed for Race to the Top Requirements (but OIS will be ready in 2014-15), to help teachers and administrators manage data and utilize data to support instructional planning, information gathering, and interim assessments.

The plan lists specifically different resources that teachers will have access to manage "smart" classrooms and the resources include ebooks, video conferencing, blended learning and streaming video, to name a few, to aid instruction and assessment.

The state also has standards that require instruction in new skills and methods. The teachers will also have access to digital resources such as DropBox and GoogleDocs to allow for collaborative learning. Another digital resource, INFOhio will be available for teachers to use to support personalized learning experience for the students.

The applicant explains that they do have a system that will enable them to utilize teacher evaluation system to help guide school leaders as they assess and take steps to improve both individual and collective school effectiveness. The process also enables them to create interventions and provide support suitable to improve effectiveness of the schools and programs.

The applicant has a plan that will develop professional development based on their needs to ensure that they prepare teachers to become highly effective teachers. The plan also calls for providing refinement and improvement of instructional and leadership skills in order to improve student achievement. The applicant also participates in another state program called TeachOhio to help identify short- and long-term needs and fill those areas of need through collaboration with local universities.

Overall, the applicant has presented a solid plan for meeting this criteria and will accordingly receive 18 out of 20 points.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has provided scant details on how they intend to organize consortium governance structure except to list how they will make decisions but they do not provide details on how they intend to process those types of decisions. The proposal provides some details on how they will provide school leadership teams with flexibility and autonomy to make decisions for their schools in areas of school schedules, calendars and personnel decisions. The applicant has developed a plan to provide high school students with opportunity to earn credits based on demonstrated mastery rather than seat time through Ohio Credit Flex Plan but does not provide much details on how it works but that may be due to the fact that this project focuses primarily on 4th to 9th graders, which would mean that only 8th and 9th graders will benefit from Credit Flex Plan. There are not any details on providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students. In certain areas, the applicant has presented a working plan while lacking details in other areas such as providing accessible learning resources, for that reason, the applicant receives 7 out of 15 points.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	0
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has not offered any details on this section. For that reason, the applicant will receive 0 out of 10 points.		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has established a clear process for continuous improvement to ensure that they continue towards their project goals. The cyclical process includes gathering and analyzing data to determine priorities, exploring possible solutions,		

assessing readiness & building capacity, creating and communicating improvement plan, implementing the plan and monitoring and adjusting. The cycle allows the consortium districts to implement a process that can be performed on an ongoing basis while maintaining focus on three cornerstones: Collaborative Leadership, Personalizing the School Environment & Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The cornerstones also serve as progress measures for each recommendation and enable the educators to perform formative assessments and summative assessments to ensure that the project continues to positively impact academic, college, and career readiness of the 4th - 9th graders participating in the project.

The performance measurements will be utilized on district level as well with support from third party evaluator to assist consortium districts to monitor their progress on a larger scale involving all districts.

The applicant has presented a clear plan on ensuring that there will be continuous improvement over the life of the project. For that section, the applicant will receive 15 out of 15 points.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:
The applicant has provided no details in regard to this section. For that reason, the applicant receives 0 out of 5 points.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:
The applicant has proposed performance measurements for two population groups: all & 4th to 8th graders and partial measurements for 9th graders as a part of the project goals. However because the first part of the performance measurements focusing on teacher and principal evaluation systems (for performance measurements (a & b)) is not mandated under current Ohio legislation, it becomes somewhat difficult to establish baselines and projections. The applicant has presented some projections but do not offer explanations on how they were able to project or what criteria guided their projections.

For performance measurements for 4th to 8th graders, the applicant has presented an ambitious, yet achievable plan to reach their project goals by the end of the project cycle. The target goal scores as outlined in the graph are ambitious, but achievable.

For the 9th graders, there's no baseline to guide the projections within that specific subgroup but the applicant has presented projections based on a conservative estimate that the percentage of 9th graders who are on track in SY 2012-13 to be 60%. Using that as a baseline, the applicant was able to provide projections for following years within the project.

The applicant was able to provide some performance measurements even though they lacked details for couple of performance measurements and earns 4 out of 5 points.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:
The applicant has not offered any details for this section. For that reason, the applicant will receive 0 out of 5 points.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	5

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:
The proposal presented a project budget but did not provide details regarding funding streams or where they will receive funding from. The applicant indicated descriptions for the fiscal activities, but did not offer thoughtful rational and/or details via budget narrative in terms of how and what will be used. The applicant will receive 5 out of 10 points for this section.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	0
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:
The applicant did not offer thorough details in the area of sustainability of the proposal. For that reason, the applicant

receives 0 out of 10 points.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

In the proposal, the applicant has identified a group of partners that will allow the project to carry out the vision that the consortium districts have established for the project. The list of partners include local universities, mental health systems and child serving agencies. Collaboratively, they will provide the necessary structure to integrate existing education and other services to better serve participating districts.

The applicant also identified population-level results with four of five types of results focusing on community involvement. Additionally, the performance measurements are generally ambitious, yet achievable.

However, the applicant did not offer details on how the partnership will carry out the activities such as tracking students and data collection for better outcomes. Also, there is insufficient evidence of strategy development for scale the model beyond the proposal. For that reason, the applicant receives 7 out of 10 points.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Overall, the applicant has met Absolute Priority #1 but there are some areas of weakness in the proposal that may yield limited success for the applicant. For instance, the applicant hasn't provided in-depth discussion on setting up data systems to help educators better track student progress over a period of time.

Total	210	85
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #1029OH-4 for Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga county

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(A) (1)

The applicant articulated many elements of a reform vision for the school districts in the consortium. The applicant articulated

how the consortium will further implement a teacher and principal evaluation system. The new evaluations are part of the State education reforms. The evaluation includes many level of support for teachers. The applicant schools have adapted the evaluations because the results have proven effective. The State has adopted college-and career-ready standards. Consequently, the applicant will follow these standards in the Consortium school districts, because the standards meet the purpose of the Consortium. The standards are rigorous and raises the bar for the target schools to improve instruction; prepare students to accelarate in academic achievement and deepen student learning. Examples of strategies that will or could be used to reach the project goals are presented in the application. The strategies can be implemented. The applicant stated and presented data from the target schools, which indicate a high capability to receive or match student level preschool through 12th grade and higher education data. The applicant indicated a high level of knowledge about current reform strategies and the research behind the current education strategies, trends and best practices. There is clear evidence that the applicant is committed to the four core educational assurance areas because each was addressed in the application.

This section was scored in the medium range because it addressed and showed commitment to the four core educational assurance areas. However, one key aspect of the application needs more information.

Weakness

A weakness in the vision is that the applicant failed to sufficiently describe the implementation of the personalized learning community. It was addressed in generalities. Much reference was made about the individualized learning for students but it was not descibed at a level of clearly understanding what it will look like for each student.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant stated that the applicant chose eight of the lowest achieving schools to participate in the project. Profiles on the selected schools were presented. The applicant gave further insight about the eight schools through the data charts on student academic achievement. The schools were identified as urban schools, with high-need students. A list of participating schools were listed in the application. One rationale for selecting schools was that the schools had made some academic progress in the past.

Weakness

The applicant failed to describe a systematic way in which schools were selected to participate in the project. The applicant failed to adequately describe the total number of participating educators who will participate in the project. The teacher to student ratio in each school would be helpful, to know especially as the project implements one-on-one teaching. The applicant recognized that there are a lot of similarities across the eight schools, but little was stated about the differences among the target schools. Since the schools are in separate school districts, it is necessary to identify some of the differences and tailor educational services accordingly, before implementing the project. Generally, the applicant descibed the target schools as if the schools are a monolith.

This section was scored in the low range because of the lack of sufficient information on the individual target schools.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(3) The applicant is adapting several statewide or state initiated reform measures. Some examples are the state standards on college and career readiness. and the teacher evaluation process. This is a positive move because these initiatives will already be translated into meaningful reform in the county schools. Also, these initiatives will be state mandated. In addition the applicant references the fact that this project will serve as an incubator for new initiatives that will have the possibility of replication. Several outstanding strategies, using technology, were presented. Web-based courses, on-line learning platforms,

and mobile devices are some examples, which are promising tools that will be used. The applicant will use a research based framework for designing the NASSP 's Breaking Ranks model for personalized learning. This is a respected model and will be useful in assisting the applicant to reach project goals. The local school and state teams will be involved in designing and translating reform initiatives to schools beyond the target.

Weakness

The applicant failed to describe a believable, comprehensive plan for scaling up and translating successful strategies into meaningful school reform, beyond the target schools. The applicant failed to present a convincing narrative as to how the project will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served in each and all of the target schools. There is a disconnect between the diverse, rich reform strategies and how, when and the mode in which these will be applied at each of the eight target schools.

This section was scored in the medium range because the applicant failed to provide persuasive information about the ability to scale up on the proposed project

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

(A)(4)

Some baseline data (2010-2011 school year) on student academic status were presented on target school students. It was clear. The chart presented in the application include student proficiency status, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. Targets were also included. The targets are realistic and reasonable. These data were presented for the eight schools in the target schools. Data were available in real numbers and percentages in most categories. Data on subgroups were useful in determining a fuller description of academic achievement of students in the eight target schools. The applicant included a statement in the narrative which indicated a move toward closing the achievement gap between African American and white students.

Weakness

The applicant failed to conduct a deep analysis of the data, which were presented on the chart. The applicant failed to provide sufficient information on the academic achievement of the various subgroups listed on the charts and how the subgroups will be assisted in closing the academic achievement gap.

This section was scored at the medium range because the applicant failed to present sufficient analysis of data and an accompanying narrative.

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	6

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(1)

The applicant stated that there is "across the board evidence of closing the gap in reading scores between African American students and white students " in the target schools. The applicant presented a chart that illustrated modest increase in student learning by increasing high school and college enrollment rates. The data show an increase in proficiency levels and a trending decrease in the achievement gap between African American students and white students in reading. This seems like a low level of achievement. Other subgroups were not mentioned. The applicant will implement numerous reform strategies and support in some low-achieving target schools. Many elements of reform exist across the Consortium engaging all students in rigorous, relevant, 21st Century skills; using data to identify and accelerate best practice; improving STEM access; enhancing teacher resources and other initiatives. These will provide a foundation on which to continue and intensify education reform. The applicant will make available project progress and reports through board meetings and the web site. These are adequate ways to formally inform and improve participation, instruction and services.

Weakness

There is little or no assessments of the success of the existing reform initiatives, especially of the impact the reforms have had on the target schools. Documentation and data are missing. The applicant failed to present sufficient information to document that the project will improve student learning outcomes of students in the target schools. The applicant failed to present sufficient information to document that the applicant will achieve ambitious and significant reforms. in the low-achieving schools.

This section was scored in the medium range because the applicant failed to present sufficient data and information regarding the existing education reforms in each of the target schools.

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

5

5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(2)

The applicant presented credible evidence that the target schools in the Consortium have an open and transparent policy in making public actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional salaries and personnel salaries at the school level for teachers. The applicant's personnel salaries are disseminated at public meetings and are on the school district web site. All are available on request. Other salaries are available by the same process. This is a high level of transparency and will serve to inform stakeholders of project finances and expenditures. This transparency can serve as a vehicle to get students, staff, teachers, parents and the community to buy in to the project and support the project at a level that they might otherwise not .

This section is scored in the high range because of a high level of transparency in the school district.

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(3)

The applicant demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and some autonomy under state legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. to implement the personalized learning environments. In one example, the applicant stated the state and school districts have been relieved of a provision of an AYP measure. It is the requirement of 100% proficiency for reading and math to cutting the achievement gap in reading and math by half over six years. Another example is being able to eliminate the State's supplemental educational services and tutoring program to program money to the third grade initiative or other intervention strategies. The applicant listed several similar examples. However it is not readily clear how all of those listed, translate to substantive changes that will impact the academic achievement outcomes for students at the eight target schools. There is no apparent link.

Weakness

The applicant failed to sufficiently address the extent to which all eight target schools have sufficient autonomy under state legal, statutory and regulatory requirements. The applicant failed to address this sufficiently.

This section was scored in the medium range because the applicant failed to provide sufficient information about the status of autonomy of the target schools.

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

10

7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4)

The applicant stated that "all of the stakeholders were engaged in the development of the application". The applicant stated that many school districts have a Family and Community Engagement Team, that will solicit broad engagement for the proposed project. One Engagement Team was the impetus for the design of this project. The concept of a Team is a plus. The applicant presented numerous, strong letters of support for the proposed project. Letters were submitted from the NASSP, Middle Level Education, Cleveland State University and other sources. There is clear evidence that there is huge support for the project.

Weakness

There is little or no evidence that at least 70% of teachers from participating schools support the project. The applicant failed to address the issue of collective bargaining and union involvement with the target schools, other than stating that the administrative representative have had meaningful and forthright discussions with union leaders. It is unclear what the conversations were about and whether the conversations were related to supporting the proposed eight schools. More information and data are needed to clarify the level of measurable teacher support for the eight target schools. More information is needed to substantiate that there was timely feedback and adjustment in designing the application.

This section was scored at the medium range of

This section is scored in the low range because the applicant failed to provide sufficient information on teacher support for the project or information on the extent to which various stakeholders were involved in developing the proposal.

(a) The applicant

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

(B)(5) The applicant presented graphs that highlight some of the disparities in student academic achievement in the county. These disparities are clearly displayed and represent the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments. Comparative data identified the achievement gaps. Gaps and needs, as displayed in the chart, will be addressed in the proposed project.

Weakness

The applicant failed to present a comprehensive plan for an analysis of the applicant's status in implementing personalized learning environments in each of the eight target schools.

This section was scored in the medium range because the applicant failed to present sufficient information to constitute a deep analysis of the current status of implementing a personalized learning community in the eight target schools.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	13

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1) The applicant presented several strategies to design a personalized learning community in schools. Examples are the use of research, technology, portfolios, credit flexibility, out of school time options, and others. The applicant referred to high quality research in the design of the project. This is promising. The applicant will use several respected evaluation and research organizations to assist in the design of the local school programs. The design teams in each district craft individualized approaches that best meet the needs of their own school district, building and students. This sounds good, but it seems like a very loose process, with little built-in quality assurances. The personalized learning model does have some structure, including a portfolio model of out of school time options, credit flexibility, and goal setting. The latter will set up a plan toward graduation for each student entering middle school. The use of instructional technology; a robust data system and professional development for principals and teachers will be implemented. Blended learning is described and research cited in support of it. These are all hallmarks of best practices of current education reform initiatives. The strategies in the application seem to be designed to fit every school, across the board and not school specific to the eight target schools. The implementation plan is not very convincing. The plan seems over-reaching and overly ambitious.

Weakness

The applicant failed to provide sufficient information about the quality and kind of training and support that students will receive to ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources, which will be made available to them.

This section was scored in the medium range because it has some interesting and promising strategies but not enough focus on implementation specifically in the eight target schools.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(C)(2)</p> <p>The applicant will provide relevant professional development for teachers. Currently educators are being trained to incorporate Common Core Standards (College and Career Standards and Assessments) into the curriculum. This is necessary training in order for the proposed project to be successfully implemented. The importance of changing instruction from curriculum focused to a learning centered environment is correctly highlighted in the application. National, state and local partners are committed to helping the project reach its goals. College Now of Greater Cleveland will support the school districts to improve student career and college preparedness. The applicant will use the state teacher evaluation format to ensure that students have instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>The applicant failed to present the necessary specificity in several criteria, including ongoing professional development and processes to ensure continuous monitoring, intervention and feedback to students. so that they remain on track to meet short term and long term goals.</p> <p>This section was scored in the medium range because the applicant failed to adequately address several criteria in this section.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D)(1)</p> <p>There is clearly a close relationship between the the Consortium, schools in the Consortium and the State offices. Many of the State reform efforts have been supported by and adapted by the target schools. In some instances the Consortium has exceeded State education reform regulations. The applicant will provide flex credit for some students in the target schools. This will be an option for target students to demonstrate a new and different format for learning. The project will be a shared governance structure. Professional development will be lead by the University partner. This is appropriate since the University has experience and expertise in urban schools and teacher preparation. Students will benefit by having more flexibility in demonstrating skill mastery at different times and different modes.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>It is unclear what level of autonomy and flexibility the School Leadership Teams has now or will have during the implementation of the proposed project.. For instance the application did not adequately address whether school calendars or school level budgets will be within the purview of the Team in each of the participating schools.</p> <p>This was scored at the medium range because the applicant failed to provide sufficient, relevant information on the level of autonomy the School Leadership Teams will have. The applicant did not adequately describe how project activities are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, especially ELL students and those with special needs.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2).

The applicant addressed the need for adequate access of stakeholders to course content, tools and other learning sources. The emphasis was mostly on staff and student training. The applicant makes reference to technology and how important indisputable role technology plays in education reform and in the proposed project.

Weakness

The applicant failed to adequately discuss appropriate levels of in .technical support The applicant failed to address interoperable computer system at the

This section is scored at the medium range because the applicant failed to provide necessary information and data.on computers and computer capabiliy in the participating schools.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(1)

The applicant stated that there will be "continuous monitoring of the project". This will assist the project to stay on track and to share project, and of course student progress Continuous improvement will be driven and monitored by the District Design Team and another Team. The Consortium will meet monthly to provide updates on plan development. Twice a year the Consortium will meet with national, state and local Advisory Board members. This is desirable and will provide various perspectives on the project from a diverse group of people. This meeting and exchange will likely .strengthen the project. The external evaluaors will participate in the evaluation process. This could bring objectivity to the evaluation.

Weakness

The applicant failed to present a strategy for implementing a reasonable improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback to students, parents and other stakeholders. It is unclear how the applicant will effectively monitor, measure and publicly share information about the project process in each of the participating schools. A formative evaluation plan for the project is missing. More information is needed.

This section is scored at the medium level because the application fails to adequately describe a rigorous formative evaluation plan

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

The applicant will hold meetings with some internal and external stakeholders, with some degree of frequency. There is evidence that numerous meetings will be held, at various levels. For instance, the school based personnel will meet and conduct ongoing communication and engagement.

Weakness

The applicant failed to present a set of strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with teachers, staff, students, parents and the local community groups who are affiliated with the eight target schools. Since there is so much community support, as evidenced by the outstanding letters of support, it is imperative to maintain ongoing communications to foster continuous engagement with external and internal stakeholders. A comprehensive communication plan with a timeline is missing.

This section is scored at the medium level because there is little or no evidence that the applicant has a comprehensive communication plan for ongoing engagement of external and internal stakeholders.

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

5

1

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(3)
Some baseline data were presented in the application. The data were presented on a chart. Annual targets are indicated. These targets are attainable.

Weakness

The applicant failed to provide sufficient information to address several parts of this criteria. Some examples of missing data include: no data on students who submit the FAFSA form and no grade appropriate health or social-emotional leading indicator of successful implementation of the project The applicant does not present 12 performance measures.

This section was scored at the low range because the applicant failed to provide sufficient data and information on the performance measures.

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

5

1

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

There will be some staff development for local school personnel. Staff and students Teachers will go through a rigorous, newly designed teacher evaluation process. There will be some use of technology in the instructional program. There are other areas of the project, which the Consortium and representatives from research organizations will undertake.

Weakness

The applicant fails to present an effective plan to evaluate the proposed project. It is a massive project to evaluate. The entire summative and formative evaluation needs clarity. A data collection plan needs to be developed. The current plan lacks evaluation instruments and a timeline about More information is needed.

This section was scored at the low range because the applicant failed to provide the necessary information about a comprehensive evaluation plan that will yield data on the effectiveness of this project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	2

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(F)(1)
The applicant presented a budget. The budget includes a budget summary and cost for personnel, travel, fringe benefits, equipment and supplies.

Weakness

The applicant failed to present a clear vision of the proposed project through the budget. Therefore it is not possible to determine whether the budget is sufficient to support project activities. The applicant failed to present sufficient information on the budget. The budget narrative is weak.

This section was scored at the low range because the applicant did not provide sufficient information. Based on the information that was submitted, it is not possible to determine to what extent the budget request will adequately support the project activities.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant fails to provide a comprehensive plan for sustainability of the project after the term of the proposed project. The level of support for sustaining the project is unsubstantiated and undocumented after the term of the grant. It is unclear if the State or local leaders will provide the level of support that would sustain the project beyond the grant period. There is no evidence of other funding streams that the applicant will have. Some letters of support suggest the possibility of project sustainability. Some project equipment and materials that were purchased for use during the project could partially contribute to short term sustainability of the project.</p> <p>This section was scored at the low range because the applicant failed to provide sufficient data and documentation that there is a plan for project sustainability after the project ends.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Strength</p> <p>The Consortium is comprised of partners that have worked together on previous projects. So they have a history of project sustainability. It is to their individual and collective benefit to support the sustainability of the proposed project. The many community, civic, business and other entities that are committed to supporting the proposed project have the capacity and will to work together to sustain the project. There are plans for an evaluation that goes beyond the current teacher, principal and student evaluation. A needs assessment will be conducted, by the evaluator. This will further identify when the applicant needs to strengthen the program and when there needs to be intervention. There are many who support the project. The project will implement several state initiated reform initiatives, such as an effective and highly effective teacher and principal evaluation.</p> <p>Weakness</p> <p>The applicant fails to present a comprehensive evaluation plan.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant met Absolute Priority 1 because it will build on the core educational areas. The project will create professional learning environments in the target schools. These professional learning communities will institute educational reform initiatives. Research was used to design the project. Many cutting edge research studies were cited to document the appropriateness of the known strategies. The project Consortium leaders are experienced in urban education. They are familiar with the challenges presented by the students in the target schools. The applicant will launch this project on a foundation of prior enacted state education reform legislation and initiatives. The collective mindset for embarking on further education reform in the schools will likely be met with a higher level of receptivity among students, staff and the other stockholders. The priority was met although there were some significant weaknesses in the application, such as the formative evaluation.</p>		

Total	210	115
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

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

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The budget requirement was met. The budget request is for Project Year 1-Project Year 4. The format for the budget is clear and it lays out the project expenditures over the term of the project. The budget costs will likely support the many project activities. The budget cost assumptions are reasonable. Budget categories are clear and appropriate