



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0464NC-1 for Guilford County Schools

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>Guilford County Schools (GCS) offers a comprehensive and coherent vision for school reform and change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCS proposes to build on and refine its vision by transitioning all of its middle schools into Personalized Achievement, Curriculum and Environment (PACE) Schools PACE will ultimately transform traditional teacher led learning into student driven learning. The GCS vision clearly builds on the four core assurances areas and the absolute priority of personalized learning environments by organizing its vision narrative around standards and assessment, data systems, and turning around their lowest achieving schools. The GCS vision reflects its active participation in North Carolina's original RtT- State grant and the district's \$9.9 million grant award. The GCS vision builds on the district's strengths and successes in technology and data management. GCS is the first district in the State to build its own data warehouse, which provides teachers with personalized learning tools. 		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS approach to implementation is well conceived, clearly outlined and very consistent with the requirements of the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating schools, students, educators and percentages of students from low-income families are clearly presented in the accompanying tables. The district clearly articulates its rationale for the project. Focusing on grades 6 - 8 is viewed as an early intervention to decrease high school dropout rates. Proficiency rates have remained relatively flat at the middle school level over the past four years. There is strong community and staff support for reform at the middle school level. 		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS has developed an outstanding high quality plan for initiating and implementing its PACE Schools Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Its theory of action or logic model, goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes are very well developed and presented in the application's appendix. The plan is inspiring to read especially its vision of transforming traditional teacher-led learning into student driven learning. The PACE Schools theory of action or logic model is clear and nicely aligned to the selection criteria of the this application in that it tracks project change at the formative, benchmark, and 		

summative levels.

- The district has created a wonderful rubric allowing it to closely track and assess the implementation of the PACE Schools Project.
- The implementation plan is very thoughtful and has built in formative, benchmark, and summative assessments in its rubric.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application fully addresses required goals for improved student learning in the areas of reading and math proficiency and growth, decreasing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates, and encouraging college enrollment.

- Goals in these areas are ambitious yet achievable.
- District commitment to student achievement is strong.
- The narrative discussion and tables are clearly presented and reflective of the four assurance areas and the absolute priority.

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GCS demonstrates a track record of improvement over the past four years. A great deal of academic and social data was referenced in the application with little actual interpretation or sense making for the reader. This made the reviewer's job more challenging. However, indicators of a track record of success include:

- National leadership in magnet/school choice programs offering students lots of educational pathways and options.
- A steady rise in high school graduation rate up to 84.5% in 2012.
- A steady rise in end-of-grade/course composite scores and percentages of students classified as proficient and above
- A steady rise in schools meeting expected or high academic growth rates.
- Although the district places more emphasis on the states ABCs designation and newly developed AMOs, its record of having only 26% of its schools meet AYP in 2011 indicates lots of room for improvement.
- Steady rise in schools being recognized for student performance and growth in the State's ABCs program with a dip in 2012.
- 88.4% of high school graduates enrolled in a public or private college or university in 2012.
- GCS has a successful teacher incentive fund that has greatly helped teacher recruitment and retention.
- Exceptional resources for data management and interpretation.

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

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

District practices such as the development and presentation of the annual budget report, media

communication, and the posting of salary schedules on the district’s website are mentioned. However, there is minimum discussion of building transparency and trust. Moreover, an audit report found in the appendix and conducted by RMC Research Corporation in 2011 indicates that staff rated their satisfaction with pay and benefits at the lowest level. Essentially, many reported they felt underpaid and overworked and that they could not give honest feedback because the survey itself was not anonymous. Such feedback indicates possible issues with trust and transparency at least as they relate to personnel salaries and benefits.

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

The State context for implementation appears to be supportive for school reform and change.

- Legal statute assures autonomy to school districts in decision-making regarding the personalization of student learning. The professional judgment of educators is valued.
- The district should also be able to build on its involvement in the State’s original RttT grant.

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

GCS went through a comprehensive, inclusive, and thoughtful process to gain input and commitment from principals, teachers, students and families.

- 98.5% of the teachers voted in favor of the PACE Schools Project.
- Letters of support from the State and county teachers associations are extremely supportive.
- Letters of support from mayors, the business community, the PTA, community organizations, and numerous school principals demonstrate strong and widespread support for PACE.

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

GCS has developed a high-quality plan for its PACE Schools Project. As part of the plan’s development, it was noted that academic and technology resources are inequitably distributed across its schools.

Specifically, the PACE project will address the need to make gatekeeper or Algebra 1 classes available to all middle school students. Secondly, PACE will address the disparity in student achievement in literacy through its balanced literacy curriculum. Currently student proficiency across schools ranges from 44 – 100 % and PACE will help to close this significant achievement gap.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The district has developed an outstanding high-quality plan for the implementation of personalized student learning in all of its middle schools.

- Professional development activities for students, parents, teachers and school leaders are thoughtful, creative, clear and targeted.
- Students will attend a PACE kickoff academy for three days in the summer in which they will

become familiar with their technology devices, create an individualized learning plan, and do an initial assignment with their parents.

- Teachers will participate in a technology institute in order to work in classrooms where student work is differentiated, interdisciplinary, theme-based, collaborative and individualized. Classrooms will look very different from traditional structures.
- Learning will be extended outside of the traditional school day and environment.
- Learning will become student-directed to better meet student ability and interest.
- Students will become active participants in the learning process.
- Curriculum will be based on career-and college-ready Common Core Standards.
- The use of technology will ensure that learning will expand access and exposure to diverse cultural perspectives.
- Critical thinking will be improved by having students set and monitor their own learning goals.

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

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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has an extremely well-developed high-quality plan for personalizing student learning experiences.

- The district provides a great deal of opportunities and structures for capacity-building and professional development through course work, conferences, and professional learning communities (PLCs).
- PLCs meet regularly in the schools and the district itself. PLC inquiry in GCS is grounded in the work of Richard Dufour and Michael Fullan, leading national and international school reform experts.
- There has been extensive teacher and principal training in Common Core and Essential Standards. Staff is more than ready to take on a new challenge and explore personalized learning.
- Standards for rigorous and regular teacher evaluation are higher in GCS than actual State requirements.
- The PACE Director and Personalized Learning Environment Facilitators (one for every two schools) will provide ongoing support and coaching at the school level.
- School principals and leadership teams meet regularly to review and monitor school improvement plan. Goals related to PACE will be incorporated into school improvement plans and become part of the regular data review process.
- The district has a successful alternative certification program that has allowed it to train, develop, nurture, and place new teachers in its neediest schools and programs.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

District policies, practices, and rules reflect the development of a high-quality plan to support personalized learning environments.

- With over 72,000 students and 124 schools, the district has decentralized into five regions attempting to decrease bureaucracy, create community, and solve problems at a level closest to the school.
- Central administration support and instructional services are consolidated within each region.
- Each school has a school leadership committee, which writes its own instructional improvement

plan.

- GCS has a philosophy of classroom implementation of mastery learning, which necessitates differentiated instruction and leads nicely to the personalization of learning.
- GCS is a leader in the creation of magnet schools and other schools of choice, which give students numerous options leading to student-directed and personalized learning.
- The district's PACE Schools Project has strong stakeholder buy-in and is focused on the personalization of student learning.

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

District and school infrastructure reflect a high-quality plan that supports the personalization of learning by ensuring involvement of all stakeholder groups ranging from parents and community members to teachers and students.

- Numerous parent and community organizations work to support the personal needs of students and parents.
- The Guilford Parent Academy has served more 16,290 people in the past year through digital learning resources and parenting classes.
- GCS provides rich online resources for parents, students, and teachers.
- GCS is the first district in the State to build its own data warehouse. It provides teachers and parents with personalized learning tools, attendance and achievement information, and helps staff to differentiate instruction and share ideas and lessons that have worked well, thus bringing effective teacher practice to scale.
- GCS is well positioned to leverage, extend and build on its pioneering digital work through its PACE Schools Project RtT – D application.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district has developed an extremely thoughtful and research based continuous improvement plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A district and external national evaluator will work together to ensure full understanding and objectivity throughout the project. • The district is commended for developing and evaluation framework to work with as the PACE Schools Project is developed. Often evaluation is an afterthought rather than integral part of an overall school reform plan. Both formative and summative evaluation practices are stressed. • The district has a memorable and simple, yet sophisticated continuous improvement cycle. "Plan, Do, Check, Act." 		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strategies for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders groups are well described and thoughtful.

- A national evaluator will work with the Project Team, Strategic Monitoring and Accountability Committee, and the Department of Education to facilitate meetings, conference calls and webinars.
- The Project Team will review relevant district or project staff meeting minutes.
- The district is strongly committed to fostering open, collaborative, and trusting relationships among stakeholders.
- Project evaluation staff will routinely be in schools collecting data and communicating with staff on site.

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

Ambitious yet achievable performance goals, measures, and annual targets are developed and tightly linked to the district's implementation and evaluation plans.

- Performance measure tables are clearly developed and presented.
- The recommended number of performance measures are presented.
- Both academic and social or behavioral measures are presented.
- Goals and targets appear reasonable and achievable.

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

The district's evaluation plan is outstanding. It's comprehensive, well conceived, research-based, and clearly presented.

- All key project activities, services, and trainings will be evaluated.
- There will be a variety of qualitative and quantitative data collection strategies.
- Fidelity to the implementation plan of the project will be evaluated.
- Impact on student learning and behavior will be assessed throughout the project.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: Funds to support the PACE Schools Project are clearly specified and tightly linked to the district's high-quality plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds appear to be reasonable and appropriate. • Funds support the four assurance areas and the absolute priority. 		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	6
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district's plan for sustaining project goals is not sufficiently developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no specific goals, performance measures, or annual targets. • Plans for sustaining project costs are generally described as simply redirecting some existing district funding and capitalizing on savings and efficiencies. • It is assumed that transitioning to more of a virtual environment will save resources normally associated with writing, printing, copying, and textbooks. • Partnerships with business, industry, universities, and government are not explicitly mentioned in this section. 		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The district has a track record of successfully integrating private and public resources to transform its educational system. Several aspects stand out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCS has developed an exciting Character Development/Service Learning Initiative that involves partnering with community-based organizations and mentors. • GCS partners with the National Conference for Community and Justice to address issues facing many of its students such as bullying, bias, and discrimination. • GCS partners with Win-Win Resolutions to promote violence prevention and conflict resolution in its schools. • Eight population-level results linked to social, behavioral, academic, and family/community goals are clearly identified. • GCS Student services department works with academic services to support and meet both the academic and social needs of its students. • The district is to be commended for actively studying, tracking, and improving the social and economic conditions under which its diverse student population and their families live. • The district is part of North Carolina's RttT program. 		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: The district is clearly committed to transforming its educational system and moving into the 21 st century. Through the development of the PACE Schools Project, Middle School Education in GCS will transcend current brick and mortar approaches and student learning will become truly personalized. The use of mobile learning devices to create individualized learning plans will lead to greater student success, responsibility and involvement in their own learning process.		

Total	210	200
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	10

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Virtual Middle School

The district's plan to create a virtual middle school nicely supplements its primary PACE Schools Project application. The proposed project's rationale is sound. However the actual plan is not of high quality, sufficiently developed or comprehensive. The budget is very comprehensive and reasonable. There are many virtual schools around the nation and replicating the GCS model across districts or at the national level may not meet a significant need.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	14
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

African American Male Achievement Initiative

This is an incredibly important project that addresses well the absolute priority of personalization of learning for African American males. The project is focused on improving the literacy rates of low-achieving African American male students at the K-3 levels. It will involve training 220 teachers in six pilot schools focusing on strategies for teaching reading to ethnic males of color utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy and texts to engage students in literacy development during the early years. Senate Bill 795 was recently passed and it requires proficiency by the end of third grade or students will be retained. The rationale is compelling, but the plan needs further development. The budget request is well detailed and reasonable. With development, the project could definitely serve as a model for replication across districts and the nation.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Guilford Parent Academy

This project intends to build on the successful work of the Guilford Parent Academy (GPA) by extending special programming to the 24 middle schools in the PACE Schools Project to help families partner fully in their students' education, particularly in the new personalized learning environments (PLEs) setting. The project rationale is reasonable and creates a greater safety net for families, but appears somewhat duplicative of the primary PACE School's Project application and the work of the GPA itself. The plan is not comprehensive and needs further development. The budget supplement is reasonable.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	14
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Character Development/Service Learning

This project is very exciting and fits the absolute priority extremely well. The project is targeted at middle school students and proposes to help teachers and students make connections between the classroom and the real world through character development and service-learning experiences. The professional development of teachers is stressed through the development of 9 PD modules to guide teachers in using the National Service-Learning Indicators for quality practice. Teachers and students will also learn

how to document student field experiences in an electronic portfolio. Afterschool clubs and summer learning experiences will also be stressed. The rationale for the project is compelling, but its plan needs further development. The budget is well developed and appears reasonable for the proposed activities. This is an innovative and worthy project to pursue.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Infrastructure Upgrade, High School Wireless Expansion

The purpose of this project is to upgrade the district's high school technology infrastructure by expanding its wireless capabilities. This project will accommodate the growing use of tablets, smart phones, and eReaders by students in personalizing their learning. The project will allow students from district middle schools to build on the skills and strategies learned through the PACE Schools Project. The rationale for the project is reasonable and the plan is simple and straightforward. Budget expenditures are entirely focused on the purchase of equipment and indirectly linked to optimizing personal learning environments. Although this is a needed and worthy project, it is not particularly innovative or a model for replication across the nation.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0464NC-2 for Guilford County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provided a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. The Applicant provides clear and comprehensive descriptions of the assurances including 1) Standards and Assessments; 2) Data Systems to Improve Instruction; 3) Teachers and Leaders; 4) Turnaround of Lowest-Achieving Schools; and, 5) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Each strand is align with strategies and initiatives in the Applicant's strategic plan, which seeks to transition its middle schools into Personalized Achievement, Curriculum and Environment

(PACE) Schools through the support of a Race to the Top District grant. The Applicant provides a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement as evidenced by their description of common core standards and assessments designed to deepen student learning. The Common Core standards and a robust assessment program have contributed to the Applicant's increased graduation rate and have increased student achievement K-12. Recruiting, developing, rewarding and retaining highly effective teachers and principals is an LEA priority as evidenced by the Applicant's Mission Possible Schools where teachers receive recruitment incentives for teaching in hard-to-staff positions and for performance incentives at the school-wide and individual level for achieving above average student results. The Applicant's aggressive approach to turning around their lowest performing schools has resulted in two schools receiving State School Improvement Grants (SIG). These additional resources, along with focus on responding to individual student needs and use of data and assessments, have moved the two elementary schools' percent proficiency rating from below 40% to above 70% and the SIG high school moved from 44% to 65% proficient and is on track to be above 70% this school year.

The Applicant is clearly focused on increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

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

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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal is to launch the proposed Personalized Achievement, Curriculum and Environment (PACE) Schools project in all district middle schools to support high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation . The PACE model is research-based and clearly links early interventions to decreased dropout rates and increased college and career ready graduates.

The Applicant clearly described the randomized control trial process, which identified 16 schools to participate in project year 1 and 8 remaining schools beginning participation in year 2. The Applicant provided a list of the participating schools, which collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements; and provides the total number of participating students who are high-need students from low-income families, as well as participating educators.

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

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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Application includes a comprehensive and clearly articulated high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools, and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals. The Applicant includes a logic model and a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal translates into meaningful reform to support district-wide change including:

1. Clearly defined goals including short and long term goals;
2. Activities to be undertaken and rationale for the activities;
3. Detailed Timelines;
4. Deliverables;
5. Parties responsible for implementing the activities; and

Evidence:

1. In the Appendix the Applicant provided a copy of their high quality plan for PACE schools project that includes a table that delineates the major activities to be undertaken by LEA to fully implement the PACE Schools Project. Organized by date, project activities are described and their alignment to project objectives is identified in the columns on the right. Activities correspond to objectives. The project goals and objectives are also listed as well as the timeline, responsible party responsible, deliverables, and activities.

2. In the Appendix the Applicant provided their plan for personalized achievement curriculum and environment schools logic model. This model includes specific goals and objectives, activities, outputs. short-term outcomes, mid-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes.

Overall, the Applicant’s plan is credible and includes a Theory of Action Model that comprehensively describes how their plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students to be served.

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

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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's vision has a strong probability of resulting in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitions yet achievable annual goals. The Applicant's summative assessments include the Reading End-of-Grade Tests for grades 6-8 and Math End-of-Grade Tests for grades 6-8. Supporting data is provided for each detailing performance, proficiency status and growth. The Applicant clearly described data by participating LEA using following methodologies:

1. Methodology for determining status (e.g., percent proficient and above): Percent Proficient and Above (Proficient defined as scoring a level III or IV)
2. Methodology for determining growth (e.g., value-added, mean growth percentile, change in achievement levels): Reduction of percentage of non-proficient students by half within six years, 2011-12 to 2017-18. Specific

3. Methodology for determining achievement gap (as defined in this notice): Reduction of achievement gap by half within six years, 2011-12 to 2017-18.
4. Graduation rates (as defined in this notice): 4 Year Graduation Rate
5. College enrollment (as defined in this notice)

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

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

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant described a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. The Applicant described how they improved student learning outcomes and decreased achievement gaps, by raising student achievement, high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates as evidenced by an overview of all improved student learning outcomes found in the Appendix. The Applicant included a description, raw student data, and other evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to--

- a. Improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps - As part of the Applicant's district strategic plan goal of improving academic achievement, the LEA launched two pilot programs designed to address these issues. These pilot programs plan to make substantial reductions in the number of African American male students suspended, while increasing the literacy rates for African American male students. One of the ways that the district will achieve these goals is by providing teachers with training grounded in culturally relevant education.
- b. Increased Student Achievement- The Applicant provided raw data to document in 2012, the LEA saw a rise in its End-of-Grade and End-of-Course composite scores to 75.9 percent proficient, an increase of 1.4 percentage points from last year's rate of 74.5 percent
- c. Increased High School Graduation Rates- The district's middle and early college programs have been in place since 2006 and have led to increases in high school graduation rates and decreases in student dropout rates as evidenced by data provided in the Appendix.

The Applicant's School Improvement Model was implemented at 3 low performing schools with positive results. The SIG model was so successful that the district has put into place similar interventions at other schools with the plan of achieving similar results. District-wide reform efforts have included the "Priority One Schools Program," which, on an annual basis, identifies the district's 10 lowest-performing schools. Priority One Schools are provided with wraparound services, which involve every district department supplying additional resources and support to these schools. Additionally, all faculty at Priority One Schools are evaluated on a full cycle. This district effort has led to a decrease in the number of state identified low-performing schools from 11 in the 2007-08 school years to zero in the 2010-11 school year.

The Teacher Incentive Fund- The district has had a federal Teacher Incentive Fund supported Performance Based Compensation System in place since 2007. This Mission Possible program is available in 50 schools and has contributed to the goal of recruiting and retaining of highly qualified teachers and administrators, which in turn resulted in increased achievement, as evidenced by data provided in the appendix.

The Applicant clearly described how they make student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. Student data is available to teachers through the Educator Value Added Assessment System created by SAS, Inc. Parents of students in GCS have open access to data related to their student's achievement and growth through the Parent Assist Online Tool. Using this tool, parents can view students' Personalized Education Plans (PEPs), assignments, homework, grades, report cards, attendance, etc.

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

The Applicant described how the LEA has demonstrated evidence of a high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments including the following:

1. The LEA's Department of Finance publically presents an annual budget report and PowerPoint overview that is inclusive of all personnel and non-personnel expenditures.
2. The LEA provides budget presentations before a public audience that are televised and aired live, streamed on the web and posted online for future viewing.

3. The LEA works with two local newspapers to post all personnel salaries online in a searchable database and in-print.
4. The LEA makes all salary schedules available on the LEA district webpage for viewing.
5. The LEA provides information on public records when requested

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

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provided a copy of their current strategic plan in the appendix and described plans for expanding the strategic plan as evidence of the successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal. The second strategic plan will launch with personalized learning as one of its four focus areas. The LEA sought the opportunity to participate in the Broad diagnostic reporting process to gain an objective review of its progress in Guilford County Schools / PACE Schools Project meeting strategic plan goals and related challenges. The district's participation was paid for through matching grants from the Broad Foundation and Businesses for Excellence in Education, a local corporate philanthropy organization.

Currently, the State does not restrict school districts' ability to customize students' learning. The State General Statute 115C-105.41 states that local administrative units shall identify students at risk of academic failure beginning at Kindergarten and must include focused interventions. This general statute gives districts the statutory authority and obligation to customize learning for students. There is no legislation that prevents districts from taking this action.

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

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

LEA seeks feedback from students, parents, teachers and staff in an annual climate survey that is reviewed and used by senior staff as one means to recalibrate their work on an inclusive and regular basis. The LEA gathered input from more than 4,000 parents, teachers, principals, students, and community members as it developed its 2012 strategic plan. As a result of this process, transformative technology was included as one of eight major focus areas for the district, and new advisory councils comprised of students, teachers, and principals joined existing district councils for parents to provide ongoing input to the superintendent and other district administrators. The LEA also conducts regular phone and online surveys of students, employees, parents, and community members to seek input and identify areas of concern.

The LEA contracted with the Broad Foundation to conduct an audit of the school system's progress. This audit included interviews with 212 individuals and more than 30 focus groups with internal and external stakeholders. As part of its commitment to stakeholder engagement and transparency, GCS has also hosted more than 20 input sessions. Stakeholder groups such as teachers, students, parents, business and community members, shared the vision in support of more individualized and personalized education in order to achieve GCS's strategic vision of ensuring educational excellence for all students.

Principals met with teachers at their respective schools to discuss personalized learning environments and the district's interest in applying for the Race to the Top-District grant. Teachers, instructional support staff and school administrators were also asked to complete a survey, which sought input as to whether students would benefit from being able to access instruction on the Common Core standards outside of the classroom; should be able to engage in collaborative learning through technology; and would benefit from 24/7 access to digital textbooks, leveled instructional activities, approved collaboration sites, and multi-media learning materials. Further, the survey provided an open-ended question about what type of tools should be available in classrooms to fully implement personalized learning for all students. Teachers at proposed participating schools supported the PACE Schools Project overwhelmingly.

The Applicant signatures from the State and Mayor. Full points are awarded because the Applicant provided clear and convincing evidence of meaningful stakeholder support including letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, the business community, advocacy groups, local civic and community based organizations. The Applicant also provided a signed letter of support by the teacher's union.

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

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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant clearly described how each LEA described a high-quality plan for the analysis of the identified needs and gaps that the plan will address. The Applicant identified two gaps for middle school students: an availability gap of Algebra I classes and an achievement gap in literacy that are two key issues that they seek to address through the PACE Schools Project.

The Applicant provided a chart in the Appendix that details Algebra I class availability in the LEA and highlights why the LEA seeks to implement the multi-faceted approach with curriculum in a personalized learning environment for students. In the

area of literacy the Applicant currently uses a diagnostic and intervention tool at the middle school level to assist with the number of non-proficient students in literacy at each grade level. This tool was intended to help close the gaps in reading performance in literacy and all other content areas.

The Applicant provided a chart in the appendix that shows reading achievement in the district, and details how the LEA continues to have a wide reading achievement gap in middle schools as noted by the number of proficient students in one middle school compared with the next. The Applicant's plan calls for the implementation of teaching and learning of the literacy Common Core standards which includes balanced literacy components as well as informational, media, technology, visual, civic, financial, economic, and entrepreneurial and health literacy.

The Applicant's plan to close the achievement gap in middle schools, includes using a personalized learning path for each student and technological innovation as they scale up personal learning to large groups of students, address adaptive learning, and integrate Common Core content. The Applicant clearly and comprehensively explained their current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform, including convincing evidence of solutions for identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant has provided several components of a high-quality plan (i.e. goals, supporting activities, deliverables) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. The Applicant's plan is based on their vision for student-driven learning where the students and teachers work cooperatively to help students reach their goals. The Applicant's plan will provide students with self-guided technology enhanced learning that includes:

1. Mobile, handheld devices with access to digital content, online learning platforms, instructional software, subscriptions and open education resources will be provided to students in grades 6-8 in identified middle schools.
2. Teacher-guided, problem-based, real-world scenarios,
3. Core classes based on interdisciplinary themes
4. Individual assessments and remediation activities
5. 24-7 access to learning opportunities
6. Personalized learning plans, using data that already exists about individual learner achievement as well as information collected from summer camp sessions for the student profile.
7. Personalized Learning Environment Facilitators (PLEFs) who coordinate training with staff at each site
8. Training and support for parents and guardians

The Applicant clearly described their approach to implementing instructional strategies for all participating students that enable participating students to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college and career-ready standards. Examples include the 1:1 platform initiative which:

1. Is based on career and college ready standards approved by the North Carolina State Board of Education
2. Reflective of the coursework required by the LEA, state and institutions of higher education.
3. Is mastery-oriented and allows progress through standards either in teacher-created experiences or student choice.
4. Provides students with the capacity to experience curriculum using a variety of resources including peers, teachers or world-wide experts
5. Expand access and exposure to diverse cultural perspectives reflective of the LEA students representing 174 countries and speaking 144 languages or dialects

The Applicant also plans to use research-based mastery learning concepts to ensure that students will achieve mastery of certain skills prior to moving forward to more advanced, complicated ones. As the LEA implements Common Core standards requiring students to apply high-order thinking skills, mastery learning will provide teachers with ways to increase student achievement, engagement and retention through pre-assessment, personalized learning with support and corrective instruction through resources and experiences the student chooses. Students are involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest. The Mastery learning platform also provides an opportunity for parent engagement and for students to set and monitor goals, develop critical thinking skills, and problem-solve which are crucial to success in college and the workplace.

These learning strategies give all students, high needs students in particular access to core curriculum engages students in

21st century technology and allows them to set personal learning goals in an age appropriate manner. Through these strategies the Applicant clearly described how they plan to provide a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable students to achieve their individual learning goals and ensure on-time college–and career-ready graduation. The Applicant’s learning platform is clearly focused on establishing college and career ready curriculum and allows teachers to accelerate learning and expand and compile resources to support instruction that is personalized and focused on skills needed in today’s global society. Both students and parents are actively engaged and supported in learning how to structure and measure student goals and students understand that what they are learning is critical to their success.

Teachers are using a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments, high-quality content, including appropriate, digital learning content aligned with college- and career-ready standards. Through mastery learning strategies teachers provide ongoing and regular feedback, including frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of college- and career-ready standards. Mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students, parents, and educators that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

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

The Applicant has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment that is grounded in the State and school district standards of professional evaluation of educators which clearly state that “*the primary purpose of professional evaluation is to improve the instructional program for all students by assisting teachers and other licensed personnel to improve and to gain even greater competence in their profession.*” This emphasis on improving instruction for all students makes clear the Applicant’s primary purpose in standards and evaluation of teachers and leaders to improve student learning.

The Applicant’s commitment to improving teaching and learning through professional development of educators is evidenced by the more than 740 courses and the 2,000 outside events, including conferences, workshops or classes attended by teachers and leaders designed to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards and to implement personalized learning and teaching for all students.

All middle school educators participate in the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) which are set up by departments, teams, grade-level, content, etc. They have a flexible meeting schedule that include meeting during weekly planning periods, grade level meetings, team meetings, and before or after school to make collective commitments. These meetings clarify what each member will do to adapt content and instruction. The goal is to provide opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches. The Applicant proposes using results-oriented goals to mark their progress.

The Applicant reported that many teachers have already engaged in extensive training in Common Core and Essential Standards focused on adapting instruction and providing multiple opportunities for students to engage in a variety of tasks in response to their academic needs, interest and learning approaches. For example, lead teachers and principals participated in 10 months of training using a LEA / PACE Schools Project train the trainer model that then allowed teachers in all schools to be trained in these methods. These activities clearly support the Applicant’s goal of creating learning environments that improve learning and teaching.

The Applicant reports that the school district has been aggressively promoting and participating in the use of data to drive instruction and differentiation of instruction. Differentiated instruction has provided strategies to help explore personalized learning as a tool to respond to students’ individual needs, academic interests and learning approaches which are optimal. Professional development and the structured use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in these particular areas will build on the work already done over the past year and a half. These activities clearly support the Applicant’s goal helping educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests.

The Applicant reports that schools have used a benchmarking model for the last 10 years and has progressed in the development of new assessments to match current college and career ready curriculum. Teachers actively use student data to consistently track progress to inform instructional decisions regarding acceleration or additional support with regard to student learning. Many teachers have also engaged a student-created data tracking process that allows students to see where they are and where they need to go.

The Applicant’s plan uses a platform that will create this data “real-time” and make it available to teachers, students and parents so that interventions regarding achievement are immediate. The Applicant also will be collecting data through the State Educator Evaluation System, which allows for school, regional and district trends in instruction and leadership to be compiled, evaluated and addressed via individual or collective feedback, support and professional development offerings. The Applicant reports that schools use this tool to collect data throughout the year to initiate conversations regarding performance and offer opportunities for improvement. All participating educators will have access to and know how to use tools, data and resources.

School-based leadership teams are familiar with data review through their school improvement planning process. School improvement teams evaluate data (qualitative and quantitative) to identify areas of improvement and root causes of problem areas. Teacher working condition survey data, student achievement data and discipline referral data are just a few examples of sources used. The Applicant's use of benchmarking and real time data resources clearly enable them to structure effective learning environments that meet individual student academic needs.

The State requires school improvement plans every two years and the school district also requires schools to revisit their plans on a quarterly basis to monitor progress and modify strategies and action steps, as needed, to attain the goals set forth in the plan, making school improvement planning is a continuous process. The Applicant's plan will require school improvement teams to meet quarterly to review and analyze available data to determine progress toward meeting the priority goals outlined in the school improvement plan. Based upon their findings, teams will revise strategies and action steps. To ensure continuous monitoring of progress, principals will meet quarterly with regional superintendents and/or executive directors to review and monitor progress.

The Applicant's proposal to ensure a high-quality plan for increasing effective teachers in hard to staff schools includes the Mission Possible comprehensive teacher incentive program. Mission Possible combines multiple components to recruit, retain and reward highly effective teachers for the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement in schools with critical needs. The Mission Possible program enables the school district to help create better teachers and better schools. Secondly, the Applicant's plan to recruit highly qualified teachers and leaders includes its Alternative Certification Track (ACT) program, which provides an in-house, cost effective alternative for licensure to teach in the State.

The Applicant reports that the school district received a Transition to Teaching Grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education, to expand its alternative licensure program with the district Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) Alternative Licensure Academy. The primary goal of the Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) Academy is to increase the number of minority candidates with Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) majors, or science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and help them transition to education and teach their Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) subject in high-need schools.

The Applicant stated that the school district actively recruits high-quality candidates in the areas of Exceptional Student Education and is also strategically involved in a grant-funded program called Project ENRICH to recruit in those areas as well. Project ENRICH is a Department of Education Teacher Quality Partnership grant received by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). The university is partnering with the Applicant and another district to deliver Project Enrich, which seeks to simultaneously improve teacher education and PreK-12 education.

The success of the aforementioned initiatives provide clear evidence of the Applicant's 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 science, and specialty areas such as special education. The Applicant's approach to teaching and leading is comprehensive and clearly describes how the Applicant plans to help educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards by enabling the full implementation of personalized learning and teaching for all students.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant clearly described their high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. To ensure a supportive infrastructure the LEA central office was reorganized by adopting regionalization as the model to increase responsiveness to teachers, students, parents and community. This model decreases bureaucracy, creates a sense of community within each region and allows problems to be solved at the level closest to the school. The LEA has five regions; each region has a regional superintendent who is actively involved in developing the learning environment of the assigned region. This modified infrastructure enables the leader to become more personally involved with school leaders and better able to provide students and educators with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed. These smaller school communities place resources closer to the schools, improve central administration services and enhance responsiveness to stakeholders. Regions are equally equipped to work with the context of personalized learning. The LEA has consolidated school support services and instructional improvement to provide better service to schools, parents and community.

The State requires public schools to elect a School Leadership Team, made up of administrators, staff members and parent representatives, to meet regularly and provide leadership on school climate, curriculum and instruction, school improvement and other issues. The LEA Board of Education policy and procedure outlines the group's responsibility, which includes sufficient flexibility and autonomy over creating a School Improvement Plan that will govern school schedules, staffing models, roles and responsibilities, budgets and other areas of the school's essential functions.

The Applicant implemented their Mastery Learning initiative which gives students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The major components of the Mastery Learning initiative include the following:

1. Identifying learning objectives to be taught
2. Selecting or creating an appropriate tool or assessment that will measure student progress toward the identified objectives
3. Designing instructional activities that teach the objectives and deliver the instruction to the students
4. Assessing students using the measurement tool from step 2 and analyzing the results
5. Using a variety of instructional strategies to provide corrective instruction for students who need another opportunity to learn the material and providing enrichment activities for students who are ready to extend their learning
6. Continuing the cycle until each student has learned the designated objectives.

In essence, mastery learning is a process where student performance toward the curricular standards is constantly measured; and because students learn at different rates, mastery learning necessitates the delivery of differentiated instruction, where lessons are designed to meet the learning needs of every student, not just the average learner.

The Applicant will give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways through a variety of factors. For example, by differentiating instruction, strategies such as cooperative learning, peer-tutoring, small group instruction, individual contracts, self-paced independent work, and teacher-led instruction will be used to ensure that students have multiple ways to demonstrate mastery. Basically, students within the same classroom may be working at different paces and on different curricular objectives. Mastery learning dismisses the idea that "one size fits all."

The Applicant's plan clearly describes how the LEA will provide a variety of learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners. The LEA also has Board policies that address student accountability standards. These policies address instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible for all learners. Student promotion and accountability standards within the LEA are guided by both state and local standards. A variety of factors are considered and carefully evaluated before promotion and retention decisions are made including: academic progress, social maturity, age, and emotional, psychological and physical needs. Students will be assigned by the principal to the grade level which provides the student the best opportunity to progress and develop educationally. These standards recognize the statutory authority of the principal to make promotion decisions by taking these and other factors into consideration in assigning students to the grade level which provides the best opportunity for the student to progress and develop educationally. Alternatives to retention at the elementary and middle level shall include interventions, such as extended learning opportunities, remediation/acceleration, individualized instruction, and parent-help programs. Each academic year, students in grades 9-12 must meet the minimum culmination of units to be eligible for promotion. All students with disabilities in grades 3-12 shall participate in the Student Accountability Standards to the extent possible. Students with disabilities may take an alternative assessment as outlined by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team in accordance with established state procedures.

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

10

10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant clearly described how the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by ensuring that all participating students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal.

Examples include:

1. Frequent town hall meetings within the five regions to share important information on such topics as Common Core, leadership or administrative changes, the budget process, and communications about district initiatives such as service

learning with local communities

2. Partners that help facilitate and communicate the efforts of the district with parents, students and stakeholders. Guilford Education Alliance (GEA), for example, is a nonprofit organization that reaches parents and students in the community with important school information.
3. Communities in Schools (CIS), an organization used both in and out of school, provides content and support for personalized learning.
4. The District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) appoints a parent to serve as its school representative to attend several meetings throughout the year where Title I staff, DPAC members and community members come together to share information about Federal guidelines and requirements, activities occurring in each Title I school and ways to increase parent involvement in our schools.
5. Parents Supporting Parents (PSP) is a grassroots effort that advocates for parents specifically around student needs and concerns.

These organizations are currently part of the LEA setting, along with local efforts with the Guilford Parent Academy, Parent Assistant and current Virtual Learning options. Through the LEA community and family partnerships such as these and the LEA infrastructure, the Applicant provides evidence of how they strive to be responsive to parents and families of all economic backgrounds and to support the development of personalized learning for all students.

The Applicant provides a clear and comprehensive description of how they ensure that students, parents, and other community stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support provided through multiple forms of communication. For example, the Guilford Parent Academy program is an around the clock multi-modal outreach to parents and families that offers digital learning resources, televised resources and free workshops with information and training on a variety of topics for LEA parents, grandparents and family members caring for children and adolescents. Planned by parents and a diverse team of educators and community members, the Guilford Parent Academy is designed to assist parents in helping their children succeed at school and in life. The LEA Parent Academy has partnered with local social service agencies to offer free workshops, classes and family learning events at schools and accessible community locations. Another online resource, the Registration Tool Box, allows students and parents to locate all content pertaining to courses, registration, and career paths through high school. This is an important repository because it also contains information on graduation requirements, and entrance requirements for colleges and universities. This site also provides information about College Night, hosted with one of the local Kiwanis chapters. The LEA Counseling Department works with colleges and universities to have representatives at the event to share information with parents and students.

The Applicant clearly describes how the LEA uses information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. The Applicant reports that they built their on their data warehouse which allows parents to use a customized tool called Parent Assistant. Parent Assistant is an online data system that allows parents to access their children's school information. A web browser allows parents to view:

- Detailed attendance information
- Detailed grade information from each teacher's grade book
- Summary grade information (Report Card view)
- Credits Earned to Date (High School)
- Standardized Testing Information
- Personal Demographic Information
- Emergency Contact Information

A secure password system allows only authorized individuals to access the information. The information can be printed, converted to a PDF or exported into Excel.

The Applicant explained how LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems through a partnership with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC) to implement the State IIS data system. The Applicant is the only LEA in the state to be part of this initiative as a pilot site for the development of:

- a) tools for personalized learning
- b) assessing student success
- c) enabling efficiencies for teachers
- d) collaborating beyond the classroom

e) leveraging innovative tools

The Applicant provided detailed descriptions of these functions as evidence of their Shared Learning Infrastructure (SLI)'s robust platform in effective operation with DPI's IIS, which creates interoperability that allows all data sources to "talk" with each other. Previously disconnected data about student accountability, benchmarks and other information can be easily accessed in one streamlined process to allow for faster, more coherent and comprehensive reviews of students in real time – and greater opportunities for swifter interventions.

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 Applicant clearly described their strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant. The strategy comprehensively addresses how the applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly shares information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District. Using their current Continuous Improvement Process Model the Applicant proposes to continually improve services to provide educational excellence for every child in every school.</p> <p>The district process consists of a four-phase cycle: (1) Plan, (2) Do, (3) Check, and (4) Act. The district first sets goals, then develops and implements strategies for meeting those goals, followed by monitoring progress in goal attainment and then adjusting plans as necessary. A Strategic Plan Monitoring and Accountability Committee, including a cross-section of district staff, provides oversight and manages the cycle of continuous improvement to ensure resources and budgets are aligned to support goals, strategies are executed as planned, and barriers or challenges are identified and resolved.</p> <p>The Applicant's plan includes a proposed evaluation that is an experimental study via a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) involving all 24 LEA middle schools. This rigorous and research-based study, a longitudinal pre/post control group design, is comprehensively described by the Applicant and includes three primary foci: formative, process, and summative. The Applicant includes a clear and high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan including a formative component to ensure that data and findings will be provided in a real-time basis to project and district staff, the Department, the national evaluator, and others as authorized. The Applicant also plans to include a summative component for determining overall project impact and outcomes, as well as to provide an accountability mechanism for determining whether project goals and objectives were fully attained by the end of the project period. The evaluation plan includes a process component so that ongoing, continual monitoring through the four-year period will help determine if the project is on target for meeting established goals, objectives, milestones, and/or performance measures.</p> <p>The Applicant provides detailed tables illustrating components of their high quality plan including stratified random sampling, power analysis, parameters for MDES estimation, evaluation questions, impact/outcomes/sustainability, methods, and data collection methods by project objectives, analyses, and dissemination. Together these components comprehensively address how the Applicant will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top – District</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant provides clear strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The evaluator will work closely with the project team, Strategic Plan Monitoring and Accountability Committee, Department of Education staff, the national evaluator and other key stakeholder groups through participating in meetings, conference calls, webinars, or other means of convening; reviewing relevant district or project staff meeting minutes; or through informal conversations as needed.</p> <p>The Applicant will communicate often with both internal and external stakeholders to help ensure a thorough and comprehensive understanding of how the PACE Schools Project treatment services are being implemented throughout the district and will promote an open, collaborative, trusting relationship among stakeholders.</p> <p>The Applicant will also engage in monthly meetings with project staff and the evaluator, data collection activities or other evaluation tasks, participate in any Department-sponsored Race to the Top-District meetings, as well as any meetings or conference calls hosted by the national evaluator, and routinely have staff in the schools — collecting data through</p>		

observations and interviews — so that school staff and students become accustomed to and comfortable with data collectors onsite.

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

5

5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant clearly described ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for performance measures. For each applicant-proposed measure, the Applicant clearly described their rationale for selecting that measure; how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed how it will review and improve the measure over time.

The Applicant's Race to the Top-District application includes a total of 13 ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for both Department required and application-proposed performance measures. (The application also includes a supplement set of performance measures related to the Competitive Preference Priority.)

These primary and supplemental performance measures are clearly depicted in Tables, along with the rationale for selecting those measures; how the measures will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information tailored to the proposed plan and theory of action; and how the measures will be reviewed and improved over time if needed to better gauge implementation.

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

5

5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provided a clearly described plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top – District funded activities. In order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the Race to the Top-District project and related activities, the Applicant plans to appoint a project evaluator to coordinate project activities, services and trainings. First, to ensure project effectiveness, the project evaluator will monitor fidelity and compliance across participating schools. The Applicant plans to further strengthen their plan for evaluating effectiveness through the use of case studies to investigate and document results. Also, the project evaluator will work collaboratively with project teams and the national evaluator to determine areas of need and will provide focused support. The planned evaluation process will include an analysis of existing and collected data from the Applicant's primary areas of focus which include:

- *Technology training for students and teachers*
- *use of new technology by teachers and students*
- *changes in student outcomes (achievement, social, emotional, behavioral)*
- *Proficiency of teachers in personalizing learning environments for students*
- *Principal support for project services; district and school-level changes in policies and procedures*
- *Modifications to school schedules; changes in school and district decision-making structures; and involvement of community partners*

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables clearly identifies all funds that will support the project and is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the Applicant's proposal. The Applicant provided a comprehensive description of all of the funds that will be used to support the implementation of the proposal, including total revenue. The Applicant identified funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period, as described in the proposed budget and budget narrative. The focus is on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments. Evidence of support is provided in the Budget pages and appendix. The PACE Schools Project seeks to use federal funds to support five major inputs that will work together to create a comprehensive Personalized Learning Environment (PLE) model for all GCS middle school students. These inputs include:

- a) Equitable and expanded access to effective teachers
- b) A career and college ready curriculum

- c) 21st century technologies, learning environments and data systems
- d) LEA policies, systems and culture that support achievement
- e) Partnerships with educators, families and community that address the social, emotional and behavioral needs of all students

As an outcome of this Personalized Learning Environment (PLE), the PACE Schools Project seeks to:

- a) Increase student achievement
- b) Decrease gaps among subgroups
- c) Increase high school graduation rates

As a result, the Applicant states that they "*expect for all of students to be college and career ready learners*". The expenses are summarized and detailed in Table 4-1 and represent the financial support plan the Applicant proposes in order to accomplish this outcome.

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

The Applicant clearly described a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. To secure ongoing funding sources once the Race to the Top District grant expires, the Applicant states that they will plan to utilize both existing funding and capitalize on saving and efficiencies, such as printing and purchasing of material. The electronic device environment will help the Applicant realize further savings by reducing the amount of paper used, purchased and printed, lowering the cost for ink and toner cartridges. The Applicant also plans to benefit from other areas of savings including spending less on acquiring printed textbook material so that savings could be used to support the ongoing cost of sustaining the middle school PACE model.

The Applicant plans to use other sources of funding to sustain the integrity of the PACE middle school initiative including the district Title I funds, e-Rate funds to sustain the Infrastructure/connectivity and funding for the computer replacement cycle. The Applicant also plans to explore additional local funding options.

These steps to implement an efficiency process that reflects savings from both the use of electronic media and a managed print environment, as well as the strategy to seek and utilize additional funding sources clearly support the Applicant's plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

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

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant clearly described partnerships that are supporting examples of how the Applicant integrates education and other services that address educational, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of students; build the capacity of staff by providing them with tools and supports to assess the needs and assets of students; and the engagement of parents and families. The following are examples:

1. In 2011-12, GCS introduced a Service Learning Diploma that recognizes exemplary student achievement in service to school and community. Last year, more than 500 students earned at least 175 hours of service learning time and qualified for the diploma. Students with at least 75 hours of service earned the Service-Learning Exemplary Award. This is a promising beginning that the LEA wants to encourage, beginning with middle school. The goal is to help students connect with the skills, activities and learning that lay the foundation for them to become service leaders and encourage them to consider pursuing this degree in high school. These efforts are well supported in the community. Volunteers partner with LEA on service learning projects and mentor students. Local businesses and philanthropies offer support for projects and recognition. For example, Businesses for Excellence in Education, a local corporate philanthropic group, sponsored the district's first Cool to

Serve event in June 2012. Students who participated were recognized for their service leadership in a bright, energized celebration filled with students, LEA staff, administration and community leaders. Participants with at least 75 hours of service learning credit had the opportunity to win technology equipment – and graduates who earned Service Learning Diplomas were eligible to win a new car.

2. In middle schools, the LEA has developed strong web of sustained partnerships with community agencies that help cultivate character education and support service learning projects. One such partnership is with the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), a longtime partner of Guilford County Schools. In the past, the majority of its work with students in Guilford County has been focused in high schools. In 2009, the State legislature passed the Violence Prevention Act, requiring an increase in the support that was provided to schools to ensure that students were able to learn in safe and nurturing learning environments. A major focus in this legislation is requiring measures to ensure that learning environments were free of bullying, harassment and discrimination. Through this partnership, each school had the opportunity to receive “ANYTOWN Anytime” one-day training for a group of 30 middle school students. The goal of the ANYTOWN Anytime program is to affect entire school climates by developing a cadre of student leaders with the potential of reaching exponential numbers of youth. Corresponding programs for adults cultivate educators and parents as allies for creating schools that are safe, respectful and equitable environments. Students who participate in the ANYTOWN Any-day trainings are able to use the information and skills they learn to lead bullying prevention and anti-bias events in their schools. When these middle-grade students transition to high school, they are able to participate in a two-day ANYTOWN camp during the summer and to obtain leadership roles as ANYTOWN ambassadors for their high schools. During the first year of the expanded middle school partnership, 11 middle schools participated in the program. During the 2011-12 school year, the program continued to grow and expand across the county and NCCJ held ANYTOWN Anytime trainings with 15 of the district’s middle schools. For the 2012-13 school year, all district middle schools are expected to hold ANYTOWN trainings for their students.
3. Additional partners include the Win-Win Resolutions, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to violence prevention through conflict resolution using theater education and peer mediation programs. For the past 10 years, Win-Win has sponsored an annual Young Peace Makers Awards program. This program is designed to recognize and celebrate middle-grade students whose words and actions reflect a consistent effort to create peaceful solutions and promote understanding and acceptance of differences between individuals, groups and/or cultures. Staff members at the district’s middle school recommend students for this prestigious award.
4. The Volunteer Center of Guilford County houses the first and only State affiliate of the International Youth Volunteer Corps of America (YVCA). The YVCA is the only national youth service program with the expressed mission of providing team-based volunteer opportunities for youth, ages 11-18.

The Applicant identified its annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe desired results for students. The Applicant provides tables clearly depicting 10 population level results. The named results and goals would be tracked using data measures such as the Student Learning Conditions Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Survey, academic measures (EOG/EOC testing) and student discipline data. The Student Learning Conditions Survey, developed by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, is given for students in middle and high school in seventh, ninth and 11th grades. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey, developed by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, surveys the health behaviors of youth in grades six through 12. Students take End of Course Exams, and student discipline data is gathered district-wide.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant coherently and comprehensively addressed their plan to build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards; accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student; increase the effectiveness of educators; expand student access to the most effective educators; decrease achievement gaps across student

groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The Applicant provided a comprehensive high quality plan that detailed key goals, activities that support the goals, timelines for implementation, persons responsible and deliverables. The plan focused on clearly articulated goals focusing on creating schools that support personalized student learning, attract and retain well trained and highly qualified teachers and include rigorous and relevant instruction that college and career readiness for all students. The Applicant's goal is to create systems of support including technology rich resources and research based strategies to personalize instruction to ensure that all students succeed.

The Applicant clearly described the components of their plans to implement an evaluation system for teachers and administrators that ensure high quality teachers and well qualified leaders guide under performing schools through successful transformations. The Applicant plans to create learning environments that promote student achievement, parent engagement, and community support.

Total	210	207
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Guilford County Schools Virtual Public School Middle School

The Applicant proposes to establish a virtual middle school program that would include a blended model (on-line and face to face) of instruction that would provide individualized and expanded learning opportunities of students, at-risk students in particular. The Applicant cites program advantages such as alignment with State accredited academic program requirements; early identification and intervention for at-risk and low performing students; individualized, differentiated, and personalized instruction; access to real-time data so that student individual growth can be measured and monitored by administration, teachers, and parents; and ongoing monitoring allowing for adjustments as needed for struggling students and reluctant learner to make the program sustainable. These program advantages provide a clear rationale for the specific area and population that the applicant plans to address.

The Applicant's plan for carrying out activities that would be co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs was not adequately described. The Applicant mentioned that they plan to "*share program information with other LEAs to increase the overall quality of computer-based instruction, the sharing of best practices, technological and curricular expertise;*" however, the details of how this would be achieved were not provided.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

African American Male Achievement Initiative

The African American Male Achievement Initiative professional development model will target approximately 220 teachers, staff, and school leadership team members in six pilot elementary schools where K-3 African American males are underperforming based on their reading achievement test scores as measured by DIBELS and the North Carolina End-of-Grade reading test.

The timeline for implementation includes:

Year 1: includes contract work with 4 national experts on Cultural Relevance and pedagogy Includes travel, lodging, and services for 3 days to allow also for sessions with senior staff and district department leaders

Year 2: includes contract work with 4 national experts on Cultural Relevance and pedagogy Includes travel, lodging, and services for 2 days to allow also for sessions with senior staff and district department leaders

Year 3: includes contract work with 2 national experts and 2 local experts on Cultural Relevance and pedagogy Includes travel, lodging, and services for 1 day

Year 4: includes contract work with local experts on Cultural Relevance and pedagogy Includes travel, lodging, and services for 1 day

The budget for this project appears reasonable and the goals align with the over all project goals. However, the Applicant's high quality plan provided sketchy details that did not fully articulate the key goals and needs further development.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Guilford Parent Academy, Supporting PACE Schools Project Families

“Guilford Parent Academy, Supporting PACE Schools Project Families” will extend special programming to the 24 middle schools in The PACE Schools Project to help families partner fully in their students’ education, particularly in the new personalized learning environments (PLEs) setting. Students and families will benefit greatly from tailored presentations/workshops/school-based events to help them better understand the learning changes and opportunities taking place at the school. Topics may include creating personalized learning plans, cyber-ethics, caring for and maximizing features of mobile technology, or accessing teachers and learning communities via mobile devices outside the school day. Offering these added avenues for families to understand PLEs and their potential for children will build confidence and support for the PACE Schools Project and help students succeed. Some services, such as the parent mobile device checkout labs, will be phased in according to the school's participation in the treatment group for the project. Others will begin for all schools in year one and continue for each year. The Applicant clearly defined the project and linked the project to the overall project goals. The funds proposed for this project appear reasonable and adequate in assuring the Applicant would carry out activities that would be implemented across the district.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Character Development/Service Learning

The proposed project seeks to provide job-embedded professional development to classroom teachers and school-based staff at the 24 middle schools in Guilford County as well as experiential and service-learning opportunities for students. For the past three years, Guilford County Schools has used character development/service-learning coaches to train teachers and help build their capacity to use service-learning as an instructional strategy to increase student engagement, build 21st century and citizenship skills and help students develop character. It is believed that providing service-learning/intervention coaches to our middle schools will help obtain similar results as well as support students to navigate their transition from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school which often cause students to become at-risk for dropping out of school. The Applicant provides a clear plan for how the Applicant would carry out activities that would be co-developed and implemented. The proposed budget appears to be adequate to support the development and implementation of activities that meet the requirements of this notice, including the reasonableness of the costs in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the proposed project activities and the number of students to be served. Although the ideas presented in this proposal are innovative and compelling, the Applicant did not provide adequate details to support their plan (i.e key goals, deliverables, timelines, etc.).

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Infrastructure Upgrade, High School Wireless Expansion</p> <p>Guilford County Schools Technology Services realizes that mobile devices, both system and personally owned, are becoming an essential tool in classroom and administrative areas. The district must plan for the high wireless demands that will be placed on the GCS network. A comprehensive plan must be in place to assure quality of service for all users as well as security for GCS resources. Wireless coverage is expressed in two ratios. In classroom areas, a ratio of access points to classrooms is used (AP:CLASS). In administrative and common areas (media center, auditorium, gym, etc.) a ratio of access points to users (based on occupancy rating of space) is used (AP:USERS). All high schools will be provided wireless coverage, with the goal of providing an AP:CLASS ratio of 1:1 in classroom areas. This would provide one wireless access point in every classroom. Additional access points will be needed in some corridors to ensure coverage. All schools will be provided with a common area ratio of 1:30 (AP:USERS). Common areas include media center, administrative area, student gathering areas, gym, auditorium, and other spaces used for large gatherings or meetings. The Applicant provided a rationale for the specific area or population that the applicant will address and the proposed budget activities align with overall project goals. The proposed budget focuses on the purchase of equipment rather than on a personalized learning environment.</p>		



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0464NC-3 for Guilford County Schools

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 Guilford County School(PACE) schools' proposal is a reform that seeks to transition all of the middle school students into a personalized learning environment. The proposal presents a very strong and thorough, well organized plan. As the 3rd largest district in the state of North Carolina, home of an overwhelming number of diversified cultures, learners and languages, this plan includes all subgroups learners and embrace all stakeholders collectively. This comprehensive and coherent reform vision offers a variety of options, guidance and solutions to assure the 4 core educational assurance areas are achieved and implemented within the district.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS has presented a convincing approach to the project's implementation.</p> <p>a. The GCS approach to implementation of this high-quality plan was influenced by the researched links of early interventions. The early intervention links deter drop-out and increase college and career readiness. The provided data of middle school grades displayed little gain in the past 4 years and contributed to the increases of free and reduced lunch statistics, and provided very strong support of the community, district, teachers and students.</p> <p>b. All of the middle schools(twenty-four) are documented to participate in this initiative.</p> <p>c. This proposal involves a total of 17,000 students and 1,400 faculty and staff in the PACE Project. Students that will be served are; 16,866 low-income:9,197 high-needs and 1,381 educators.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

GCS has provided a sound plan for reform and change.

The proposer has justified their reform and change plan that will ultimately transform traditional teaching practices to student-driven learning by establishing the PACE Plan on five essential; Equitable and increases access to effective teachers, college and career curriculum, 21st Century Technology Data Systems, LEA policy, system and cultures that support achievement and partnerships with school, family and community.

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

The PACE program for GCS that is designated for middle schools are achievable and appropriate.

However, the ambitious, yet attainable goals for performance on summative assessments are included and shows average gains in all subgroups and areas as well as anticipated data with the awarding of the grant.

The evidence of the plan to reduce substantial achievement gaps are provided in the tables. This reduction is very reasonable and achievable as noted by of the percentage within 6 years. Presently, the rate of reduction is 1.4 per year.

Graduation rates ranges in the upper 60 percentile and above and overall 85% is the average expectant rate and increases by 1.3 each year after.

Overall the baseline for college enrollment is quoted as 35%. It is anticipated to show significant increases of an average of 1.3% each year.

At the time of submission, post secondary information was not provided.

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	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GCS has provided a 4 year proven track record of success in the following areas; closing achievement gaps among African-American males in the 3rd grade reading at a level of proficiency and decreased the high suspension rate, an increase of 1.4 on end-of-year exam for core courses, 19 schools are 90% proficient and 2 are 100% proficient, 7 of the 19 are between 95 and 99. This substantial increase is noted and compared to the 2001 data which contributes to graduation rate increases. Currently that rate is 85% and college enrollment is 89.4%.

Ambitious and significant gains are evident in the 3 low-performing schools. In 2008 all 3 had 40% proficiency and now they are at 70%. The School Improvement Grant for interventions are utilized district wide and the benefits of the Teacher Incentive Fund is a major contributor factor to this criteria. Performance data resources are available to students, parents and teachers. They are presented as informational and improving outcomes. Student recognizes growth over the tested subjects, teachers are able to track, analyze and report effective progression with school-wide data. Parents receive and review achievements, growth and essentials to monitor assignments, grades, attendance and behavior.

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

GCS shows strong and extensive evidence of transparency and establish trust among the district and community. Salaries for all personnel are available through district web-sites and upon request. Expenditures and finances are made public at board meetings and GCS responds to public records request.

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

GCS has presented convincing context of implementation for this proposal.

Evidence of state context for implementation of successful conditions are the quest for continuous improvement, Broad Prize Diagnostic Report, Stakeholder engagement, recipient of the Race to the Top State Grant Program, College and Career Ready Standards, creating options to meet needs and goals of students and increasing graduate rates and decreasing drop-out. Sufficient autonomy is granted through district statutory authority and legislation.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:
 Stakeholder engagement and support are appropriate through the following measures; gathered input from more than 4,000 parents, faculty and staff, also community through the use of on-line surveys, regular phone surveys, interviews and input from more than 30 focus groups. A total of 20 or more meetings were held to inform, review and provide feedback. The CEO of GCS and president of the collective bargaining unit met and received support and full cooperation in relation to purpose, timeline and process. The applicant submitted and presented 33 letters of support.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:
 GCS has identified gaps of the district in the area of Algebra I and Literacy. They also present justifications with logic for the gaps and clearly state the needs of the personalized learning paths to support each student to learn in his/her own way to acquire and maintain proficiency.
 GCS has presented a high-quality plan.

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:
 The GCS describes details of what is to be accomplished by the students. This ranges from technology to interdisciplinary themed units. The plan presented is based solely on college and career ready standards that is also mastery-oriented and allows for progression through experience or choice. Deep learning experiences will be channeled through a variety of resources that expand beyond the school walls and will be determined by a collaboration of vendor and district officials based on student's needs, parents and community input. Diversity is ever so evident with the a population representation of 174 countries and 144 languages and dialects enrolled. This proposal also specifies the mastery learning concept for critical academic content and development skills. Access to core curriculums, technology engagement is evident throughout as well. The daily "Game Plan" is the focus of the high-quality instructional approach.
 Evidence of effective feedback is evident by viewing students learning data. Teachers will allow the results to guide grouping and alignments of learning, Incentives and rewards are choices of students. Substantial accommodations for high need students and parents are presented to include read-aloud programs along with speech and language converters. This will also include adult learning materials. Training and support are provided for parents, teachers and students from the PACE Director and Personalized Learning Environments Facilitators.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	20
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:
 Engagement of educators is supported by the 740 course offerings of Professional Development and attendance of more than 2,000 outside events. PLC's are designed and implemented by departments, teams and content area. Schedules are administrated by school administration. During PLC, the structure to support and enhance educators as they focus on personalized learning for students is very strong. Extensive trainings in Common Core and Essential Standards along with 10 months of train the trainer for differentiated instruction is also described.
 Teaching and leading of this high-quality plan expands the Training , Policy, Tools, Data and Resources through a pre-implementation and implementation phases of training. Through these phases, the teams will meet quarterly to review and analyze collective data to determine the progress of meeting priority goals. The applicant utilizes that plan of "Mission Possible" to recruit, retain and reward high-effective teachers. This was made possible through the Transition to Teaching Grant for alternative licensure program.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	14
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS has presented a high-quality plan to support the implementation of this project.</p> <p>a. The GCS district has adopted regionalization as the model to increase responsiveness to teachers, students, parents and community. This model decreases bureaucracy, creates a sense of community within each region and allows problems to be solved at the level closest to the school.</p> <p>b. GCS has established a School Leadership Team, made up of administrators, staff members and parent representatives, to meet regularly and provide leadership on school climate, curriculum and instruction, school improvement and other issues.</p> <p>c. GCS students are provided opportunities to demonstrate Mastery learning skills by; 1.) identifying the learning objectives to be taught, 2.) select or create appropriate tool that will measure student progress toward the identified objective, 3.) design instructional activities that teach the objectives and deliver the instruction to the students, 4.) assesses the students using the measurement tool from step 2 and analyze the results, 5.) use a variety of instructional strategies to provide corrective instruction for students who need another opportunity to learn the material and provide enrichment activities for students who are ready to extend their learning and 6.) continue the cycle until each student has learned the designated objectives. This is a thorough plan, however, monitoring of such is not clearly stated in the application.</p> <p>d. GCS students are provided with lessons that are designed to meet the learning needs of every student, not just the average learner. In the classrooms, differentiated instruction is implemented through strategies such as cooperative learning, peer-tutoring, small group instruction, individual contracts, self-paced independent work, and teacher-led instruction.</p> <p>e. Learning resources and instructional practices for students with disabilities and English learners are in accordance with the the IEP/LEP and established state procedures.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS currently demonstrates access for vital and necessary content to all parents, student and stakeholders through town meetings, Guilford Education Alliance, Communities in Schools, Advisory Councils and Parent Academy.</p> <p>b. Technical support is provided on a 24/7 multi-model outreach to parents and families. Registration Tool Box contains courses, registration and career paths through high school, Guilford Parent Academy and Counseling Department are featured also.</p> <p>c. Exporting data through a open format is described as a custom built data warehouse. Also featured is the Parent Assistant On-line that offers access to student information for parents and its highly secured.</p> <p>d. GCS comprehensive interoperable data system focus area are tools for personalized learning, assessing student success, enabling efficiencies for teachers and collaborating beyond the classroom.</p> <p>The applicant has proposed a high-quality plan that supports the project implementation.</p>		

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 GCS will monitor, measure and publicly share information through the Continuous Improvement Process Model, that improve services for educational excellence for every child in every school through the Monitoring and Accountability Committee.</p>		

The process consist of a four-phase cycle: 1. Plan, 2. Do, 3. Check, and 4. Act. The district first set goals, then develops and implement strategies for meeting those goals, followed by monitoring progress in goal attainment and then adjusting plans as necessary. A Strategic Plan Monitoring and Accountability Committee, comprising a cross-section of district staff, provides oversight and manages the cycle of continuous improvement to ensure resources and budgets are aligned to support goals, strategies are executed as planned, and barriers or impediments are identified and resolved.

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

The evidence is sufficient for ongoing communication and engagement.

Evidence of on-going communication and engagement includes monthly face-to-face/phone meetings, conference calls, webinars, monthly district and staff meetings as well as scheduled town hall meetings.

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

The applicant's performance measures presented in the proposal are complete and reasonable.

Performance Measures in the application includes 13 comprehensive and thorough, achievable and ambitious goals outlined by the subgroups with annual target requirements.

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

Evidence of appropriate evaluation investments includes technology training and usages for students, teachers and parents, outcome changes, proficiency of teachers in the PLE for students, principal support for project services, district and school level changes in policies and procedures and other exhaustive activities.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

The budget that has been provided is outstanding as well as thoroughly comprehensive.

This proposal provides for all funds through descriptive and establishes expectations for student learning. Based on the applicant's proposal, the cost per student expenditures are very impressive and reasonable. The figures for students were not inflated and the proposal states that mobile devices will be leased and not purchased. All categories are well prepared and presented with rationales, justifications and breaks down the cost for all expenditures.

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

Sustainability of the the project goals is evident of this proposal due to the extensive partnerships of local businesses, utilization of e-Rate and Title 1 funds and other funding sources included. The GCS has provided convincing explanations concerning the uses and applications of current and future funds that will allow the project to continue after the term of the proposal.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has noted in the application that they are not seeking additional funds through the Race-to the Top-District, they have chosen to describe successful partnerships at the middle school level that is in existence.</p> <p>The GCS has developed the following partnerships: Character Development/Service Learning Initiative-it builds character traits as kindness, courage, respect and responsibility. 2. National Conference fro Community and Justice-provide training to middle-school students to build their skills in addressing bullying, bias and discrimination. 3. Win-Win Resolutions, Inc.-conflict resolutions using theater education and peer mediation programs. 4. The Youth Voluteer Corps of America, (YVCA) team based volunteer opportunities for youth. 5. Volunteer Center of Guilford County-project learning focused on environment, diversity and poverty.</p> <p>The Population-Level Desired Results information is provided in a very detailed chart located in the application. It is categorized by specific grades, the specific results according to the grade and population group and well as the desired results.</p> <p>Tracking of the named results and goals will be established through a variety of survey usages. These surveys will measure academics as well as discipline and health behaviors of youth 6 grade thru 12th.</p> <p>The data resources that are targeted for the improvement of participating students for the district is the use of data points. The data points are regularly reviewed to determine how to best allocate resources or for specific student populations</p> <p>The Scaling the model is provided through identifying local business and philanthropic organizations to develop funding support to expand services in a collaborative manner with partners.</p> <p>Awareness internally and externally of the service learning initiative is the caliber to spark the excitement of teachers, schools and community partners.</p> <p>The integration of education and other services are demonstrated through the Students Service Department and the Academic Service and staff collaboration. They will work together with the staff to identify how students are responding to the PLE treatment and where they may need additional support.</p> <p>Building the capacity of staff in participating schools through partnerships is evident by; character education and service learning opportunities, working collaboration to identify strengths and offer work as team members and leaders, involve and promote project opportunities and the introduction of the Service-Learning Exemplary Award and Diploma that offer incentives of electronics and vehicles to recognize and honor student achievement.</p> <p>GCS has identified 3 annual ambitious achievable performance measures. They are Short-term suspensions, electronic bullying offenses and proficiency of reading and math EOG exams.</p> <p>The GCS proposal has provided a very detailed and thorough competitive preference priority.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The GCS has established an achievable and comprehensive application and plan to incorporate the ideal Personalized Learning Environment for the students of the their district. This proposal has met all the needs of students, parents, educators, administrators and investors. Guilford County Schools has demonstrated and established success through out the entire process and has provided the documentation and evidence that satisfies all the required core assurances for the grant that will improve learning and teaching.

Total	210	209
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has provided a thoroughly and complete, separate Optional Budget Supplement.</p> <p>Project 1: Guilford County Schools Virtual Public High School: Offering a wide range of educational opportunities in high school, there is a need in the middle schools to have additional educational opportunities also. Offering an on-line middle school would provide the capabilities to offer unique and individualized programs for students. It has the potential of reaching middle school studnets and provides access to opportunities not available locally, especially for underserved and at risk students. As the GCS technological capacity increase in the school system, curricular offerings and broaden access to key courses in middle school should be available as well.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has provided a thorough and complete optional budget supplement.</p> <p>Project 2: African American Male Achievement Initiative. Based on collected data, evidence shows that AAM and other ethnic male students are not receiving the literacy instruction they need to perform at a proficient level in grades K-3. The high quality plan will allow another district to use this within the SCL model and share data, findings and instructional techniques. The GCS will begin this initiative in 2013 school year. The budget gives a clear and concrete descriptions of all allocations and disbursements.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has provided a thorough and complete, separate Optional Budget Supplement.</p> <p>Project 3: The Guilford Parent Academy, Supporting PACE Schools Project Families: Innovative community and school based parent engagement program that adapts to the needs of diverse families through digital learning resources and partnerships. This high-quality plan will be shared and co-developed with another district for implementation. The budget is clearly defined and supports this proposal effectively.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has provided a thorough and complete Optional Budget Supplement.</p> <p>Project 4: Character Development/Service Learning: provide job-embedded professional development to classroom teachers and school-based staff at the 24 middle schools in GC as well as experiential and service-learning opportunities for students. This high-quality plan provides for electronic professional developments for teachers and electronic resources in which student service-learning,experimental projects are utilized. This project budget is also clearly defined and comprehensive.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has provided a thorough and complete Optional Budget Supplement.</p> <p>Project 5. Infrastructure Upgrade, High School Wireless Expansion: to expand the PLE model to district high schools in order to maximize the investment of the middles school students of the skills and strategies acquired in the middle school grade. The district must be prepared for the high demand of wireless as it becomes an essential tool in classrooms and administrative areas. Therefore a comprehensive plan must be establish to assure quality and security for all district users. This project's budget focus areas are only equipment and contractual, which is accurate for this proposal but, it does not emphasize</p>		

personal learning.