



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0404FL-1 for Gadsden County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides assessment results to justify the need for improved learning at all grade levels. The four identified areas include: creating a more comprehensive learning environment for early childhood at elementary schools, extending the school year by two weeks for all students, redesigning an elementary or middle school to become a magnet school for PreK - Grade 8, and redesigning the alternative high school into an advanced learning center. A more thorough description of these programs would enhance this section. While descriptions are provided later, the one sentence descriptions on each goal are limited.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The description of the Extended School Year section is unclear and therefore received a low score. The need for extended school year time is supported by research that is 25 years old or more. The application states that the current year provides two and one-half months of summer vacation, but then describes current summer enrichment programs of four to six weeks for students with special needs and enrichment, which appears to contradict the need for an extended school year.</p> <p>The proposal for the PreK- Grade 8 magnet school is fairly high but is missing a few important details. The application describes an extension to a current school that will house up to 700 students. It does not describe what entrance requirements might be used or how the district will cope if the potential student enrollment is significantly lower or higher than expected. The school will be built into an existing school and states that the most qualified staff will be utilized, but does not describe how teachers who do not meet these standards will be assisted or relocated. The requirements for teachers specify reading endorsements, but does not list any math or science background requirements which would be expected at a STEAM magnet school. The idea to integrate arts into the traditional STEM program is innovative and promising, and deserves recognition.</p> <p>The Alternative Learning Center is also high but leaves a few unanswered questions. It currently serves 250 students, and with the robust changes to the facility with three wings and thirty thousand square feet, the anticipated enrollment is still 250 students. While many needs have been addressed to aid students' social-emotional needs, it states that "several" classrooms will be provided for traditional instruction. The definition of traditional instruction is not included, and it is not clear how several classrooms will serve the needs of these students, if they intend to graduate from high school. The concept is thoughtfully created, by providing services to higher achieving students as well to counteract the traditional reputation that are given to alternative high schools.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application does not delineate how current Race-to-the-Top and School Improvement grants are being utilized, and new funding would further its provision for early learning classes. The inclusion of college readiness data in the early learning section is unnecessary and out of place. The early learning proposal is an ambitious plan with impactful and measurable results. This plan will result in improved student learning across the district for all students. This section is given a medium rating because of its lack of clarity in describing the current programs in place and the reform that is to continue.</p> <p>The section entitled "Extended School Year" does not address this goal, but instead describes the third goal, the STEAM school. Because this portion of the proposal was not included in this section it received a low rating.</p> <p>The STEAM school plan would provide courses and activities that would increase the interest in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. While art is not traditionally included with these subjects, its inclusion has been validated by</p>		

several studies. This goal states that students will be more able to meet the high school fine arts requirement, without demonstrating that this need exists. This school will serve its students in increasing STEAM interest, but does not apply to the other students in the district. A greater collaboration between the STEAM school teachers and other district teachers to improve STEAM learning for all students would better ensure district-wide improvements. For these reasons this section received a medium rating.

The Alternative Learning Center goal states that it will be expanded to meet the needs of all students, including high achieving, but does not state what needs these high achieving students might have and how they will be addressed. The concept of including high-achieving students with the traditional students in alternative learning is an interesting way to remove the stereotypes usually given to these students. This section received a high rating because it serves the needs of all students in the district, including any students who do not thrive in a traditional school setting.

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

The section about the Early Learning goal states the low test scores for high school students, but does not explain how the early learning center will specifically address the needs of the young students it will serve. It states it will redefine the definition of early learning, but does not provide that definition. This section received a low score because it did not address the early learning goals specifically. The early learning center is an important piece of this proposal as it addresses the need for decreasing achievement gaps in a meaningful way.

The Extended School Year goal provides research that states the loss students face after the summer months, but it is not clear how filling these two weeks will successfully address this problem. Research into the effectiveness of two weeks' additional instruction would be appropriate. If this concept has proven results, it could create an excellent opportunity for all students to succeed, thereby decreasing achievement gaps. For this reason the section was given a medium rating.

The Magnet School goal summarizes research that states that the need for STEM foundations begin in middle school and that all students should have a strong foundation in these subjects. The magnet school goal will provide this enhanced learning for students in this school, but does not provide any enhanced learning opportunities for all students in the district. The application states that the high school currently provides four STEM courses, including some unique agricultural and medical interests, but neglects to mention any traditional courses in science, mathematics, engineering, or technology, and what basic needs those teachers find from their students. The STEAM school plans to improve performance on mathematics and science summative assessments, and increase graduation rates and college enrollment. This section was given a high rating.

The section on the alternative learning centers was limited to two sentences and did not appropriately address the extent that the center would improve student learning. This goal addresses the needs for improved graduation rates and college enrollment in a strong way, so it was given a medium rating.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The improvement in school ratings is described as improving over the last four years, with six elementary schools earning a grade of A and one middle school earning a B grade. The appendix lists only four schools that earned these grades last year, and the growth occurred in 2008, which is four years ago. The grades do not support the described growth in the last four years as requested. Because the narrative is not consistent with the facts stated in the appendix the described improvements are in question. The score for this section was low.

The Improving Student Learning Outcomes section describes a teacher evaluation system that the district plans to implement, but these goals are not stated earlier in the proposal. Since they have not yet been implemented, they cannot serve as evidence of improved student learning in this section.

The Ambitious and Significant Reforms section includes a checklist of the four goals and how which of the four targets will be met, including increase in summative assessment performance, decrease in the achievement gap, increase of graduation rates, and increase of college enrollment rates. These four areas are checked for most areas, but the areas that are not checked do not appear consistent. While this table demonstrates how the district's goals could be met, it does not answer the question of providing evidence of current improvements. This section received a low score for not addressing the question asked.

The district has purchased a program to allow teachers to assess and evaluate students to adjust instructional practices. There is no mention of whether this student achievement data would be available to anyone other than teachers. Another program has been purchased to improve parent communication and access to attendance, assignments, and notifications, but does not demonstrate how it specifically makes students' performance data available to parents. No mention is made as to how students are informed about their performance data. These programs are also in development and do not provide evidence of a clear record of success in promoting communication.

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

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

This district actively provides salary schedules on its website, for both instructional and administrative staff, which demonstrates a transparency of school level expenditures in staffing. The school board also provides staffing and finance workshops throughout the school year which are advertised and open to the public. The meeting notes are then published on the district website. The narrative does not describe the specifics of what information is included in these workshops, so it can not be ascertained what information is presented to the public. The score was reduced because of this lack of clarification.

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

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

This application features four different plans that all allow for personalized learning environments for preschool through high school grades. The early learning center will assess each child's school readiness and formulate action plans to improve each student's abilities. The extended school year will provide an additional two weeks of instruction for all students, and will include special projects and activities, rather than a continuation of the regular school year. While this goal does not directly affect personalized learning, it does meet the district's goal of reducing the loss of skills over the summer period. The STEAM school will work to cultivate interest in its students in the STEAM courses, thereby creating a learning environment that is suitable to meet the needs of these pre-identified students. The alternative learning center will provide services to assist each student in a personalized learning environment by providing the courses, assistance, and guidance needed to complete high school.

The application includes an appendix of the comments provided by the Florida Department of Education's Race to the Top Coordinator. She states that the proposal connects to the some of the state's reform efforts, including common core lesson study and STEM, however it suggests that other areas such as teacher evaluation, data systems, and use of lesson study might be included to align better with these goals. However, the application has met these requirements. The application does not address the area of autonomy and therefore has received a medium-high rating.

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

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

This section of the application does not meet the requested stakeholder engagement. While the mayors of the different cities served were sent an email with a copy of the application, the application does not provide any evidence that stakeholders were involved in the development of these goals. Only one of the six mayors responded, and that included a one sentence acknowledgement of receipt. The existence of collective bargaining representation, if any, is not addressed.

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

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application includes a list of sub-goals for each goal in the proposal. It also identifies which year each of these sub-goals is expected to be addressed. The needs are very inclusive, although some of the sub-goals are large projects that might need more definition and further breakdown in order to be achieved. For example, some of the sub-goals include developing a child care center in the first year and offering evening classes for adults without high school credentials in all four years. These are sub-goals which have not been included in the original goal, and do not include any details on how they could be implemented, therefore they create further needs for staffing, housing, and equipment.

Each goal lists the many positions that will be responsible for some portion of the sub goals within that goal, with no direct assignment of responsibilities. This list of involved parties did not provide evidence of a thoughtful planning of specific tasks and assignments, which reduced the section's overall score.

There are numerous activities and deliverables described in this list, which includes many details which were not earlier described in the application. These activities and deliverables demonstrate a plan that has included many of the required tasks

and projected needs for success of the goals.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application includes four goals which are designed to improve learning and support college and career-ready objectives, which were developed after reflection by district leaders on the students' needs.</p> <p>The early learning centers will train each of their teachers to understand the objectives and goals of the Common Core State Standards, and work together to develop effective instructional practices for language and literacy acquisition. The narrative describes the goal of improving classrooms by providing centers for learning, but it is unclear what these centers encompass and why they are not currently possible. The district also plans to conduct research in the early learning centers to measure the effectiveness of the updated instructional practices to measure the progress of this goal. The application mentions that lessons will be developed using the lesson study process, but does not explain what is meant by the district with this term. The plan also includes incentives for parents who complete an early learning parenting program, but lacks the details of which parents will be invited, what goals will be addressed, how this program will be developed, and what the overall goals are for this program. This section does address the use of personalized learning environments as students will be continuously assessed to determine the skills which require remediation and the effectiveness of that remediation.</p> <p>The extended school year plan describes a personalized learning plan that will be implemented during the extra two weeks of school before the summer vacation begins. The focus is on individual student deficiencies and remedial instruction. No mention is made as to the plans for students who do not provide evidence of needing this remediation, or of an enrichment program for these students. The second of two paragraphs of this section is devoted to additional learning opportunities that students currently or will have during the summer months. These experiences, while engaging, are not part of the two week extended school year and are not a part of this district's proposal. No mention is made of how this data and remediation of skills will empower students to manage their own learning, which is an important component. No skills other than academic are included in this proposal.</p> <p>The STEAM magnet school section discusses a variety of skills which students will learn in the art courses, such as inquiry, logical reasoning, collaboration, and investigation. The application does not specify why these skills would only be addressed in art courses, when they are equally if not more important in courses in the sciences. A description of the learning environments is provided, as well as additional staff being planned who will train the instructors to differentiate their instruction. The application states that biology and ninth grade physical science will be taught in sixth through eighth grades, without explaining its justification, adherence to the Common Core State Standards, or its place in the overall science curriculum plan through high school.</p> <p>The alternative learning center section is focused on increasing the graduation rate of students in the district by meeting the needs of students who do not succeed in traditional learning centers. This plan includes a large technology component which will deliver much of the coursework virtually, allowing the funds to be removed from teacher salaries and reinvested in support services, such as health care and guidance. The goals of the program are to ensure college and career readiness for all of its students.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	10

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district has begun adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and states that it provides a description of educators and parents of what students are expected to learn. This is deficient in two ways: 1) the CCSS only includes goals for language arts and mathematics, excluding all other subjects, and 2) the CCSS is addressed to educators and includes language that parents may have difficulty understanding without guidance. There is mention of communication to parents and students about the rationale and process of the CCSS, but no explanation of the standards' meaning and implications, or rewording of the standards to make them accessible and understandable by students and parents.

Each school in the district have created CCSS implementation teams and these teams have participated in state and district trainings to understand the standards and which instructional skills are needed to teach the standards. The teams then presented their plans at the school level and are beginning to provide site-level trainings. An implementation table is included which lists the sub goals, strategies, and resources to provide instructor training, although it does not include assigned

responsibilities and timelines. Teachers also have access to off-site professional development, district-wide meetings, and school in-services.

All of the expectations of instructional practice and assessment results with the CCSS will become a part of the teacher evaluation system. This system will score fifty percent of the points on instructional practices related to the CCSS, and the other fifty percent will be based upon student assessments and growth. To meet these expectations, the district is providing instructional focus calendars and district developed formative assessments to be used in the classroom. The district recently purchased a software package to develop these assessments, analyze data, and create reports to inform instruction.

Current Race-to-the-Top funding is used for development and implementation of reading and behavior management strategies, but does not mention any mathematical training designed to enhance the other half of the CCSS standards.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Organized Central Office section includes an appendix with an outdated flow chart of job titles, which resulted in a questioning of its use in this application. The narrative continues to list many other positions which have recently or will be filled, but no description is included to specify how these positions will support the participating schools and the district goals, either directly or indirectly. More information is needed to describe how district personnel will provide the support and services needed by the district's schools while implementing these goals.</p> <p>Principals have autonomy to make their own hiring decisions, implement schedules, use Title I monies, and make staffing assignments. This current flexibility could enhance this application by stating how this autonomy will specifically support the objectives and goals of the application.</p> <p>The Student Progression statement includes three sentences and offers a web site address for the student progression plan, but the details are not included in the application. Resources other than the application are not used judging.</p> <p>Student mastery of standards is measured in both formal and informal settings and through varied assessment techniques. The district administers baseline, mid-year, and spring assessments, and reteaching strategies are based upon this data. Teachers maintain student portfolios for all FCAT assessed areas, which include language arts and mathematics. Portfolio mastery data may be used for promotion and retention decisions. Students who score poorly on the summative reading assessment are given summer school and retesting opportunities to demonstrate mastery.</p> <p>Students with special needs are mainstreamed into core curriculum classes and para-educators are provided for instructional support. The brief statement in the Access to Learning section does not provide further details into accommodations, resources, tools, and other assistance that is provided for special needs students.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>All students and their parents are provided with textbooks and e-textbooks, workbooks, and other supplemental material as assigned for each course. Classrooms have enhanced technology systems, including interactive white boards, LCD projectors, and document cameras. All schools are equipped with media centers with books and computer centers.</p> <p>The technical support section is unclear as to what specific supports are in place for students and parents. A web site is provided, but no further details are given as to how problems are solved that are not addressed on the web site.</p> <p>The Information Technology Systems do not provide performance data to students, parents, and other stakeholders. The district is implementing a new system, but it does not provide testing data to parents and students. No mention is made how parents and students can access and use testing data. The new data systems will provide attendance, discipline, and grades only. FCAT Explorer is provided for students and teachers to practice the skills assessed on the state's standardized testing, but is not individualized to provide remediation on specific questions and topics missed on earlier assessments.</p> <p>The district currently uses many different software pieces to store data, including human resource, student information, budget, and instructional improvement databases. The district plans to transition to a single system which will make all data available to appropriate parties.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district is implementing a comprehensive data processing system which will provide detailed and important data to all appropriate parties. Teachers, principals, and administrators will have data to inform and improve instruction and overall effectiveness. The plan is to combine curriculum, assessments, and reporting to provide tools for teachers to measure their instructional effectiveness, principals to monitor continuous improvement, district administrators to plan and monitor, and parents to stay involved and informed about their children's progress. Teachers will be offered professional development to learn how to improve instructional practices based upon student data. Other district funding resources are in place to provide continuous support of these projects.</p> <p>It is not evident how improving teachers' access to data and professional development on this data could be used to improve all of the four stated goals. The Alternative Learning Center focuses most of its staff in addressing social, emotional, and health issues, which are not addressed in this statement.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>A brief paragraph is provided which describes ongoing communication and engagement plans. This describes the district's goals to establish community stakeholder focus groups to discuss the plans and current needs. It could be extrapolated from this paragraph that administrators will also be seeking input from these community stakeholder focus groups and that this input will be considered as part of the continuous improvement plan. There are plans to hire a District program organizer who will coordinate these communication and feedback links. This is a credible plan that could be made stronger by including a timeline of when this program organizer will be hired and what specific goals this position will address.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application lists 18 performance goals, their rationales, value of measure, and review improvement timeline. Several of the performance measures are duplicated and not modified to represent the needs of various age groups of students.</p> <p>Performance Measures #5, 7, 13, and 18 all state that students' socio-emotional readiness for school will be measured by absences from school, but no explanation or research is provided which links school attendance with socio-emotional readiness. These four measures are identical and do not acknowledge the different needs of students at different ages.</p> <p>Performance Measures #10 and 11 both explain the rationale of proficiency in mathematics and science as being needed as a prerequisite for high school courses, with no mention of how these skills might be needed for purposes other than school.</p> <p>The value of measure category is vague and does not include details as to the importance of each measure. Each of the values states major objectives for each measure but does not link how these objectives are important to the specific measure or to the overall success of the projects. The timeline lists only months for most measures, without specifying which year or ongoing years these measures are planned.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has provided a list of fifteen different areas in which the measurement of progress of the area will give important information and feedback as to the effectiveness of the modifications. Five categories of input will be measured and considered, including student, family, teacher and school characteristics. The district plans frequent and extensive site visits to monitor implementation and quality instruction. These visits will be followed by discussions and recommendations for improvement. The district plans to employ evaluative systems that provide frequent results, so that small and frequent fine tuning can take place to improve the process and monitor the overall goal's effectiveness.</p> <p>Measures of school connectedness will include parent participation and satisfaction measures, and evaluation of engagement and effectiveness as viewed by philanthropy and community members.</p> <p>Teacher and student leader engagement and effectiveness will be measured by standards such as parent satisfaction, teacher attendance and retention, participation in collaborative decision making and planning, implementation of professional</p>		

development strategies, and use of data to drive and improve instruction. Student progress will be assessed by rates of credits earned, grade-level advancement, attendance, and dropout rates. Student rigor and academic optimism will be measured by enrollment in and completion of advanced coursework and passing grades on college level entrance examinations. Student outcome assessments will include rates of students performing at grade level by subject area, proficiency on state assessments, and graduation and college attendance records.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The budget identifies all funds and how they will be appropriated in broad categories without specific details. More detail is needed as to how these budget numbers were generated and which items were included in each category for its calculation. Funds that are for one-time investments are separated from ongoing expenses and clearly labeled, while not being specifically identified. The budget is reasonable in its estimation of expenses in each category and would provide sufficient funding for successful completion of the four goals in the proposal. Some general categories need more explanation and justification. It is not apparent why the art and music program at the STEAM school would need \$90,000 each year, or why new materials must be purchased each year for the two-week extended school year at a cost of \$300,000. Project years 2, 3, and 4 have identical budgets, within any consideration for monies in reserve for potential adjustments that would likely be made based on evaluative systems in place.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The sustainability statement is limited and lacking detail. While various funds are described for the initial and ongoing costs, specific details including budget and associated costs are not included. The narrative states that the majority of the costs of the Early Learning Program and the PreK-8 Magnet School are one-time expenses, but many of these costs appear in years 2 through 4 of the budget.</p> <p>The application includes a table of goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. The activities support the goals, but are lacking in definition and detail that would make them ready to implement at the beginning of the program. The deliverables are direct results of implementation and achievement of the goals, but are not aligned with the activities listed and are too vague to be meaningful. For example, the first deliverable of the early learning center is that children at all grade levels will be proficient based on state assessments. This statement is too general to have any true meaning and needs modification. It is hoped that students in the early learning center will be better prepared for their later elementary experiences, but the early learning center alone cannot ensure that children at all grade levels will be proficient.</p> <p>The responsible parties are listed for each of the four major goals, but this is a list of all staff involved in any capacity. This list does not provide a meaningful task list that could be implemented as written. Each of the activities will need to be further analyzed and then assignments will need to be made with the appropriate parties before any activity could be begun.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has partnered with the Gadsden County Health Department to provide a full array of health services to students, families, and schools. The district relies on the Health Department to provide school nurses on a rotating basis to the schools. The Health Department also provides comprehensive health care to schools including basic health services, immunizations, health screenings, interventions and reduction in risk-taking behaviors, and services for teen mothers. Full service health care is provided for students at East Gadsden, in an effort to serve the most needy families, including medical and specialized services, job counseling, parenting classes, counseling, and adult education. These extensive health services support students and their families in establishing healthy lifestyles that result in better attendance and attention rates. There is no description how this partnership will measure its effectiveness, scale the model beyond the participating students, or improve results over</p>		

time.

The district also partners with the Tallahassee Community College to provide services according to the Dual Enrollment Articulation Agreement. This partnership allows students to enroll in post-secondary courses that can be credited toward high school completion while fulfilling requirements for college degrees and career certification. Students in the program have the advantage of access to both high school and college counselors to plan for both college and career. This partnership also does not include a description of how its effectiveness is measured, how they plan to scale the model beyond the participating students, or improve results over time.

There is no description for either partner of how they would build the capacity of staff in supporting schools to meet any of the goals in section 5. Neither partnership has any described performance measures or system of annual improvement.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The application reaches many students from preschool through high school graduation. It includes extensive professional development for teachers to help them teach the new Common Core State Standards and provide differentiated instruction.

The first goal is to create an early learning center that will educate students at younger ages and ensure that each child has the readiness skills to succeed in elementary school and beyond. Each child's needs are assessed and a plan is developed to assist that child in meeting these readiness goals.

Another goal is to modify an existing school building to become a new STEAM (Science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics) magnet school for grades PreK through 8. This school's goals include providing opportunities and incentives to interest students in the STEAM subjects, with a goal of having more students prepared for high school science and mathematics courses. This school is designed to accelerate student achievement in these subjects and deepen learning by enabling students to specialize in subjects of interest to them.

A third goal is to modify an Alternative Learning Center to provide extended services to alternative high school students while eliminating the social stereotype of failing students who attend these schools. The new learning center will provide virtual courses, extensive counseling services, and the ability to meet the varied needs of this population. Each student will receive individualized instruction and counseling to enable the student to work through personal difficulties and graduate from high school. This school will serve some of the neediest population because it will assist students who almost always drop out of school before graduation.

Total	210	133
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0404FL-2 for Gadsden County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not set forth either a comprehensive or a coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas.

Although the applicant does indicate that the vision for the Gadsden County School Districts includes a set of four restructuring goals, the applicant does not clearly develop a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in the four core educational assurance areas. The four areas that were not addressed by the applicant in the development of the vision include: adopting standards and assessments, building data systems, recruiting, developing, and rewarding teachers and principals.

The applicant does not clearly identify how the vision addresses increasing equity through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests.

The applicant does indicate a somewhat effective approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement through the goals to develop rigorous early learning environments, to extend the school year by two weeks, to redesign the Pre-Kindergarten-8 STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) magnet school, and to redesign the alternative school infrastructure.

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

10

6

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a clear description of the process that was used to select the programs that will be participating in this project. For example, the applicant provided a clear description of how and why early childhood intervention was selected to be addressed by the project.

The data in Table 1, Summary of Participating Schools Enrollment Data, provides details on the list of the schools that will participate in the grant activities and the total number of students. On Chart A (2), the applicant clearly identifies the number of participants and those numbers and percentages for the low income students.

Although the applicant provides a clear description of the process that was used to select the programs that will be part of this project, the applicant does not clearly indicate how each school site was or will be selected.

The applicant does not clarify the number and percentage of students who are identified as high-need who will be served by the grant project. On Chart A (2) the applicant identifies 100% at high-need but does not qualify how that was determined.

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

10

3

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant indicates in its plan that the rigorous early learning instructional environments will improve students' readiness-for-learning and capacity for academic achievement in all academic areas. This supports how this reform proposal may positively affect district-wide change.

It is difficult to determine how the Pre-Kindergarten Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) Magnet School and the Extended School year will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change. The applicant does not include information on how its plan will improve student learning outcomes for all students who would be served.

The applicant did not provide a comprehensive high quality plan. The applicant does not include how each of the proposals would help the applicant to reach its outcome goals and improve student learning outcomes for all students. For example, the applicant indicates that one of the proposals is to provide a state-of-the Art Learning Center, yet the applicant does not provide data as to how this effort is proposed to improve student learning outcomes for all students.

Although the applicant includes key goals for the district's plan, the applicant did not include specific activities, a timeline, deliverables, or parties responsible for implementing the activities.

Although the plan does include meaningful goals for projects that may support district-wide change, the lack of support for the plan with who will be accomplishing the plan and when, does not provide support for the overall credibility of the plan.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not clearly identify the sub groups that are addressed in identifying the achievement gaps. For example, the applicant states, "The expected outcome of extending the school year for all students enrolled in the District is diminished regression of learning and decreased achievement gaps as demonstrated by a decrease in disparity between end-of-the-year summative assessment and beginning-of-the-year baseline assessments in reading." This type of statement does not indicate what achievement gaps are being addressed.</p> <p>The applicant does identify each of the sub groups in Chart A 4 a-d by number and percentage.</p> <p>The applicant does indicate that the vision regarding the state-of-the-art Alternative Learning Center is likely to result in improved student learning and performance.</p> <p>The applicant does not connect the goals for the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) magnet program to performance or summative assessments, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates, or college enrollment rates.</p>		

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Although the applicant does make a clear record of success during the past four years in some areas such as the improvement of students' proficiency rates in math and reading, the applicant does not address the closing of achievement gaps or increasing equity in teaching and learning.</p> <p>Although the applicant does identify how the district's restructuring goals align with the State Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Targets including improving student outcomes, the applicant does not address specifically how these reforms will be different in its persistently lowest-achieving and low-performing schools.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that the four restructuring goals are the basis for the ambitious and significant reforms. It is not clear how the two week extended year, the Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Magnet Program and the building of a new Alternative Learning Center will provide significant reforms.</p> <p>The applicant does indicate that the Skyward Student Data System has been purchased to provide access for students and parents to inform and improve participation, instruction and services.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates that to increase transparency, the salary schedules are posted on the District website and the Florida Department of Education website. The applicant also indicates that all board meetings are advertised to the public and agenda and minutes are available to the public. This effort demonstrates some level of transparency.</p> <p>The applicant does not include actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff. The applicant does not include the actual personnel salaries for instructional staff only or for teachers only.</p> <p>The applicant does not include actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level. Due to these omissions the applicant does not provide a high level of transparency.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In Appendix J the letter from the state is indicating that there is no conflict with state statues and regulatory requirements and that the applicant has met with successful conditions to implement the project defined.</p>		

Although the applicant does indicate that school leadership autonomy exists, the applicant does not provide information about how the LEA has demonstrated sufficient autonomy to complete the project.

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

10

1

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Although the applicant indicates in Table 8 that several mayors were contacted, only one e-mail was returned indicating that he had read the proposal. There was no indication of support in that e-mail.

The applicant did not include a description of how students, families, teachers, and principals were engaged in the development of the proposal. It is not clear if the LEA has a collective bargaining unit and if not, if 70 percent of the teachers supported the proposal.

There were no letters of support from key stakeholders. The applicant demonstrates very little meaningful stakeholder engagement.

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

5

2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan for an analysis of the current status and the logic behind the reform proposal.

Although the applicant includes several logical steps in addressing the four goals of the project, it is not clear how these plans improve the implementation of personalized learning environments. For example, in the goal regarding the extended school year, the applicant indicates that the action steps include the development of project-based learning. Although project-based learning may be an effective instructional strategy, the applicant does not identify how that strategy will improve personalized learning environments.

Although the applicant does identify several needs for the district, the applicant does not clearly connect the identified needs and gaps to the plan that has been developed. For example, the applicant indicates that an improved alternative program and infrastructure changes will be a major part of the project, yet the applicant does not indicate that there are needs and gaps for students served in that program.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a comprehensive high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all student the support to graduate college and career-ready.

Although the applicant does provide for incentives for parents completing an early learning parenting program, the applicant does not specifically address how the support of parents will be used in the approaches to learning that engages and empowers all learners.

Although the applicant does provide for academic coaches for the Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology Engineering, Act and Math (STEAM) Magnet School, the plan does not explain how it will provide all students the ability to understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

Although the applicant included strategies for the Alternative Learning Center students to acquire career and college readiness skills that will allow them to be successful enrolling in college or post-secondary industry certification programs, the applicant does not include all students in the participating schools in this effort.

The applicant does not address how all students will have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning.

The applicant does not address how all students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance and problem-solving.

The applicant does not address how each student has access to a variety of high-quality instructional approaches which include digital learning content.

The applicant does identify clearly accommodations for high-need students in the Alternative Learning Center to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college and career-ready standards.

The applicant does not address mechanisms that are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided them in order to track and manage their learning.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	8
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has embraced the Florida Department of Education adoption of the Common Core State Standards. These goals insure expectations are consistent for all students including the low socio-economic students. The district indicates that they are committed to staff development and support for full implementation of those common core state standards. These efforts appear to effectively help educators improve instruction.

Although the applicant clearly supports the Common Core State Standards for all students, the applicant does not indicate that the professional development for teachers will include effective implementation of personalized learning environments for all students. Also the scope of the samples given by the applicant is focused on language arts and reading, therefore it is difficult to determine how the other academic subjects will be addressed.

The applicant does not indicate that participating educators will be given support to adapt content and instruction providing opportunities for students to engage in individual tasks.

The applicant does indicate that the purchase of the Performance Matters will be used to develop assessments to improve the frequency of the measurement of student progress.

The applicant does indicate that Skyward, a student data system, will enhance all stakeholders' capacity to access data and resources to assist in accelerating progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

The applicant does indicate that an improved teacher evaluation process will incorporate students' academic performance into that evaluation.

The applicant did not indicate that an improved principal evaluation had been or would be developed.

The applicant does not indicate that training policies, tools, data, and resources are available specifically to school leaders and school leadership teams to enable them to provide an effective individual learning environment.

The applicant does not indicate a plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals.

The applicant does not provide a fully developed high-quality plan for teaching and learning.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not fully develop a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive polices and infrastructure that provide students and educators with the support and resources they need.

Although the applicant did include an organizational chart for the central office staff, it is not clear how these positions specifically provide support and services to the participating schools.

Although the applicant does indicate that the building principals have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over personnel decisions, there is no indication that that autonomy reaches the area of school-level budgets.

Although the applicant indicates that the Student Progression Plan can be found on the District website, that plan does not appear to give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and multiple comparable ways.

The applicant does include a plan for the demonstration of mastery of standards that uses assessments to guide instruction and monitor student academic progress. This provides clear support for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery not the amount of time spent on a topic.

The applicant does indicate that a concerted effort has been made to ensure that English learners have equal access to learning, but the applicant does not clearly define that effort. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if the applicant has practices that facilitate personalized learning by providing resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not fully develop a high quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need.

Although the applicant does indicate that resources are available to students and teachers in the school setting, the applicant does not indicate that the resources are readily available out-of-school for parents and students.

The applicant indicates that there is appropriate technical support provided to all stakeholders.

The applicant indicates that information technology systems allow parents to access information for electronic learning systems and that the newly purchased Skyward Student Data System will allow additional access.

The applicant indicates that the interoperable data systems are available currently and that the District is transitioning to one system that will provide for more effective interoperable systems. This deliverable is effectively connected to one of the goals of the project.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a clear high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan.

Although the applicant indicates that the data system will be driven by continuous improvement to increase and improve academic instruction, the applicant does not demonstrate how this system relates to the plan which includes the four reconstructive goals.

Although the applicant includes a data system that will be driven by continuous improvement, the applicant does not address a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals .

The applicant did indicate support for the investment in professional development. For example, the applicant states, "Restricted and non-restricted funds normally used to support District programs will continue to be used as designated (e.g.professional development.)"

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not present a fully developed high-quality plan for providing ongoing communication and engagement. The applicant does not indicate the key goals of this plan, the specific activities, or the timeline that will be used in this communication plan.</p> <p>The applicant does indicate that after the district receives an award letter the District will begin the process of engaging stakeholders in a more formal and in-depth discussions.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates with 18 performance measures the general annual targets for each of the 18 measures. The performance measures appear to be ambitious yet achievable. For example, 4: Percentage of Pre-Kindergarten students demonstrating kindergarten readiness, as measured by an age appropriate assessment. In Table 11, the applicant also includes the value of the measure and a review/improvement timeline.</p> <p>The applicant included clear definitions of the rationale for the selection of each of the performance measures.</p> <p>The applicant does not indicate these measures by subgroup. Also, the applicant does not indicate how the measures will be reviewed and improved over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation.</p> <p>The applicant includes somewhat of a high quality plan that includes the performance measures and activities, but does not include the persons responsible for the activities.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does provide a high-quality plan to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top District funded activities.</p> <p>The applicant provided a clear list of 15 elements to be topics for evaluation. Those include evaluation of the transfer of learning of professional development into the classroom. These elements provide for the key goals of the project.</p> <p>The applicant includes activities such as using input and output research on school effectiveness that will be used to identify and measure the in school and out-of-school factors that contribute to schooling outcomes in reading and math. These efforts support the key goals of the project.</p> <p>The applicant indicates that the process of regular classroom walkthroughs will be used to assist in the evaluation of programs. According to the evidence provided, these efforts support effective evaluation processes.</p> <p>The applicant provides a high-quality plan to provide systems to measure and report interim results. For example, the applicant includes a performance measure that states, "a decrease in the percent of students demonstrating regression in learning as measured by a comparison of students' performance on the spring assessment and the subsequent year's baseline assessment."</p> <p>Although annual targets are established for the performance measures, a specific timelines for the evaluation processes are not included.</p>		

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not clearly identify all funds that will support the project. In each Project Year Budget the applicant</p>		

indicates that there are \$0.00 funds available from other sources and does not include in the narrative additional funding sources for all projects.

Budget Table 2-1 provides a clear outline of the Budget Summary Project List for all four major components of the grant restructuring goals.

The applicant provides a clear identification of funds that will be used in Table 1-1. Also the budget is expanded for each project and over a four year period. These budget outlines appear to be somewhat comprehensive.

The applicant does not make it clear why there are no personnel , equipment, or supplies budget for the Redesign of the Alternative Program. In the narrative of the grant the applicant indicates several supports that will be used to enhance the Alternative Program; however, the budget only includes the building project. Therefore, it is not clear if other funds will be used to support the enhancements.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does provide for a quality plan to address the sustainability of the project through district resources, restricted dollars and other grant opportunities for three of the four restructuring goals. Since the major investment from the grant is for infrastructure for the Magnet School and the Alternative Learning Center, the applicant is assured that on-going expenditures will be covered by general funds.

The applicant does not clearly identify how the the extended school year project will be supported by the district after the grant is completed. Also no sustainability plan is in place for the performance incentives. These are two key components of the project. Therefore, there does not exist a high-quality plan for sustainability for the entire project.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does demonstrate that a coherent, sustainable and supportive partnership between the District an the Gadsden County Health Department exists. The applicant also indicates that there is a sustainable partnership with Tallahassee Community College.

The applicant indicates that the partnership with the Gadsden County Health Department impacts directly or indirectly all 18 performance measures with an emphasis on several performance measures including those dealing with improved student school attendance.

The applicant indicates that the annual reports such as the Gadsen Health Care Comparision Report will be used for identifying trends in health care needs. The applicant indicates that this type of reporting will be used to determine what student and parent education is needed.

The applicant does not develop a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students.

The applicant does not delineate how the partnership would have a special emphasis on students facing significant challenges.

The applicant does not describe how the partnership and the LEA would build the capacity of the staff in participating schools by providing them with tools.

The applicant does identify desired results for students regarding the dual enrollment articulation agreement. Those results include increased opportunities for students to take advanced level course work and have the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit simultaneously.

The applicant does identify desired results for students receiving service through the partnership with the Dadsden County Health Department. Those results include attendance performance indicators.

The applicant has developed a somewhat complete plan to address the competitive preference priority.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a comprehensive plan that is built on the core educational assurance areas to create personalized learning environments.

Although the extended year program and the alternative school project may support strategies that support students and educators and the improvement of college and career-ready standards, the projects do not address strategies that meet the academic needs of each student.

The applicant does not provide a high-quality plan to expand student access to the most effective educators and decrease achievement gaps across student groups.

Total	210	99
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0404FL-3 for Gadsden County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

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

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant is receiving a medium score for articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.

The proposal supports broad, district-wide reform of early learning. It proposes an extensive redesign and turn-around of an Alternative Learning Center and the creation of a PK-8 STEAM magnet school. The district proposes to limit summer learning loss by extending the school year by two weeks. It is a solid proposal to improve outcomes for students who have clear needs. In fact, the District's average percent of students qualifying for *Free and Reduced* lunch is 90%

However, the proposal did not adequately specify an approach to developing a personalized learning environment for all students. Also, although the rationale for the reform elements was based on research, it was not supported strongly enough by a track record of successful implementation and internal momentum for these reform programs within the district itself.

Based on the proposed approach, there was insufficient evidence that the district will be able to achieve the ambitious targeted gains. Additionally, the proposal's elements do not appear to be solidly grounded in both common and individual tasks, and there is little incorporation for personalized student support based on academic interests, other than at the Alternative Learning Center, which serves only a small percentage of the district's participating students.

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

A medium score was given because the applicant's approach to implementation did not adequately describe a section process for how to determine which school would participate and how the district would support high quality implementation at all 16 schools simultaneously.

(a) The District has decided to implement rigorous early learning environments for grades PreK-2nd at all 16 elementary schools. All of the schools meet the eligibility requirements, but no selection process was described. The district will extend the school year for all students (all grades, all subjects, all schools). In addition, the District will select one middle or one elementary school schools to convert to PK-8 STEAM school. The selection criteria for this school was not specified, but the criteria for staffing with qualified staff was defined and looks reasonable to achieve success.

(b) The 16 school names were provided.

(c) According to the application, GCPS will serve all 5,731 students (100% of students; 90% F&R) for extended school year, 1807 students (100% of Prek-2; 90% F&R) for Early learning environment, 700 students in PreK-8 STEAM, 250 students in the Alternative Learning Center and 497 Educators (the majority, if not all of the district's educators).

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a medium score for LEA-wide reform & change. Although two (2) of the four (4) projects, Early Learning Environment and Extended School Year, are being implemented district wide from the outset, there is no specific, high-quality plan to extend the reforms beyond the initial grades that will help it reach it's outcome goals for all students in the district. Additionally, not having a scaled approach can create implementation challenges by stretching district leadership and resources across all 16 schools instead of being able to concentrate on a few areas and target them effectively. This could negatively impact rigor and success of execution.

The district makes an argument that addressing early learning will set students up for greater success throughout their education career, which will raise student performance and increase graduation and college enrollment rates. Although research does suggest that students who come to school ready to learn do better as curriculum becomes more challenging, there are no projects aimed at supporting the students after the early learning intervention. It is unrealistic to expect that the early learning work and extended school day alone will do enough to significantly impact performance throughout the upper grades and effect graduation rates. Although extending the school year will hopefully mitigate some of the summer learning loss, there is insufficient articulation in the plan on how the RTT-D projects will improve student outcomes enough to reach the ambitious annual targets.

Also, although the Early Learning Environment and Extended School Year are planned to be district wide from the outset, there is no plan articulated to extend success from the STEAM magnet program or from the Alternative Learning Environment to the

rest of students in the district.

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

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The GCPS is receiving a medium score for LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes because the plan's key activities alone are unlikely to produce the ambitious goals for increasing graduation rates and college enrollment. GCPS has set laudable goals to improve student achievement by re-defining early learning and adopting a structured district-wide approach, but it is unclear how the planned activities will be able to result in the ambitious learning goals throughout the grades. The district has set College enrollment goals that are unlikely to be achieved (moving from 5% in 2011/12 to 40% in 2015/16) based on the proposed activities. It is hard to ascertain how focusing on K-2 and extending the school year by 2 weeks will increase college enrollment to the targets stated within a reasonable timeframe. The gains that the students in K-2 would receive will not impact graduation rates until 10 years later. There is little dramatic change happening across the upper grades that would lead to an eight-fold increase in graduation rates in four years. The same is true for proficiency and growth targets. There is insufficient indication that students in upper grades will receive sufficient intervention or personalization to reach the targets set.

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

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GSPS is receiving a medium score for demonstrating a track record of success because they did not provide enough evidence of growth in historical student achievement data nor data showing success closing the achievement gap in the last four years.

(a) Although GSPS did provided evidence that there is a strong need in their community for additional focus on student achievement and improved learning opportunities and that many school have shown improvements, there is insufficient evidence demonstrating a clear record of success in the past 4 years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity. 2011/12 data was provided for reading and math scores overall and by subgroup, but no historical data regarding achievement was provided. The application does state and evidence was provided that many *schools* have received improved grades in the past four years. However, no historical student achievement data was provided, overall, or by subgroup.

(b) Many of the lowest performing schools in the district appear to have made significant gains in the last decade and continue to improve over the last four years as evidenced by dramatically improving School Grades.

(c) The district has purchased a data system for educators to assess and track student achievement and adjust instructional practices. They have also purchased a student data system that will provide access to students and parents. The systems are noted to be interoperable. It was not specified how much specific, real-time academic data will be available to students, parents and educators.

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

5

1

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a low score because they did not demonstrate how they are providing transparency in processes, practices and investments at the site level. GCPS provided the instructional and administrative salary scales, but did not specify the

actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff, teachers only, nor non-personnel expenditures. Further, they did not describe if or how this information is available.

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

10

7

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A medium score was given for State context for implementation. GCPS submitted their application for review at the state level, and the State Department of Education indicated that there are no concerns with alignment of the application with state law or rule. The state commented that the proposal could be more focused in the area of supporting a personalized learning environment. Although there appear to be no legal, statutory or regulatory requirements to inhibit implementation, they did not provide evidence of successful conditions to support successful implementation.

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

10

2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a low score for stakeholder engagement.

(a) There is no description of if or how students, families, teachers or principals were engaged in the development of the proposal. The district did submit the application for review by six (6) city municipalities and received a response from 1 of the 6, acknowledging receipt but with no comment.

(b) There are no letters of support from key stakeholders provided.

GCPS states that school and community leaders were engaged in developing and implementing a strategic vision and plan for the district that allows principals to customize goals and actions for their site and that counselors at the schools help students select relevant courses of study that match their goals and interests. This is not enough indication to know if there is sufficient meaningful stakeholder support for the reforms and targets proposed.

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

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a medium score for the quality of its plan to identify needs and gaps and implement a personalized learning environment. GCPS has described a quality plan to address the general areas of need and gaps they are targeting - early learning across the district, an alternative learning environment at a historically problematic school site, and a focus on STEAM education. The proposal includes deliverables and general responsibilities. The plan lists parties involved, but does not clearly specify who is responsible for completing the deliverables and how they will be accomplished.

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

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	9

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a medium score for development of a learning approach that both engages and empowers all learners. The GCPS plan does a good job of setting high expectations, establishing culture of academic learning and creating a plan to develop a variety of high-quality instructional environments. The proposal did not lay out a comprehensive plan to develop a personalized environment that empowers students in their learning and provides ample opportunities and support to develop and achieve their individual goals.

(a.) It was not specified how students would be taught to understand how what they are learning is key to accomplishing their goals, or how to structure their learning to achieve their goals. The proposal was not specific as to how students would be taught to master skills such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, communication, creativity and problem-solving.

(b) The plan fails to truly develop personalized learning environments that target the specific needs and goals of individual students. The proposal does not adequately outline how the district would teach students to identify and pursue learning goals, structure their own learning to achieve their goals, and measure their own progress towards goals. The proposal supports educator's transition to Common Core State Standards as well as to establish centers for learning, but does not appear to provide adequate training for educators to implement personalized learning environments. The proposal also mentions they have purchased student data systems, but does not go far enough to describe if or how data will be used to tailor the instructional environment to provide a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development to enable individual students to achieve their personal learning goals. Furthermore, it is not clear how the new student data system will actually drive individual outcomes-based and mastery-based approaches to learning.

(c) There was not much emphasis on training and supporting students to help them track and manage their learning. The Alternative Learning Center did provide for quarterly meetings with an academic counselor.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	11
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a Medium score for Teaching and Leading. GCPS has articulated a substantive and thoughtful plan to train educators in standards-based instructional system, including adoption of Common Core State Standards, standards-based instructional practices (including incorporating the state's focus on Lesson Study), and forming Professional Communities of Practice. The District has established CCSS implementation teams at all school sites as well as CCSS implementation plans. Additionally, the district seeks to develop a culture of high expectations. GCPS states that the professional development plan is informed by teachers, school and district leaders.

Additionally, GCPS has purchased a student data system to develop assessments, disaggregate data and create reports to inform the instructional process. It is unclear how this data will be used to continuously evaluate and improve the effectiveness of resources.

The plan does not go into enough depth on how the district will implement personalized learning environments and use data to continuously improve student learning, collectively and individually.

There does not appear to be a substantial enough plan to increase the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective teachers and principals as this is defined in the application selection criteria. The targets laid out in the proposal show increasing the number of students receiving instruction from a highly effective teacher or principal from 25% (baseline) to 90% in year 3 of the grant. This seems unrealistic, and there is not a plan that outlines how they would achieve such an ambitious goal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	6
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCPS is receiving a medium score for LEA practices and policies because they have only very minimally shown sufficient site autonomy and planning for personalized learning. There is very little discussion of how the district would shift to mastery-based learning or to allow and support sites in these efforts.</p> <p>The proposal states that the district office has sufficient organization to provide support, and that the schools have sufficient autonomy. However, the proposal does not describe specific independent choices a site can make with respect to schedules, personnel, staffing models, roles and responsibilities. Additionally, there is no mention of students being able to receive credit for demonstrating mastery instead of for the amount of time spent on a topic, nor does it mention much about multiple times and ways for a student to demonstrate mastery. The proposal did mention that teachers are required to maintain academic portfolios for all Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) assessed areas and that portfolio mastery data may be one of the criteria used to make promotion and retention decisions.</p> <p>The proposal does not mention how they will provide services that are adaptable and fully accessible.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	3
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCPS is receiving a medium score because it appears they have some infrastructure and systems that support personalized learning, but did not submit a high quality plan to improve school infrastructure with activities, deliverables, timeline, and person responsible for the execution. They state that these systems are interoperable, but did not provide enough evidence to show how this data was made available to inform each student's learning.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCPS states that data use at Gadsden is systemic and used routinely to inform organizational, programmatic and instructional improvement. They use data to improve instruction and develop tiered intervention. They also have an Educational Transformation Office (ETO) specifically designed to address improvement of teacher quality. They state that use of data to drive actions is apparent in the district's policies, practices, programs and placement of students. ETO provides core subject instructional coaches and this proposal would add more STEAM specific coaches. It also supports site-based professional development, including the development of Individual Professional development Plans (IPDPs). The ETO facilitates data chats with principals, teachers, students and parents and also provides monthly updates to the district's leadership team. The district is involved in supporting the lowest-achieving schools by conducting audits, providing strategic support, professional development and high quality data that links student achievement to classroom practices.</p> <p>The proposal does not provide a lot of detail on how they will monitor, measure and publically share information on the quality of the specific investments funded by RTT-D. It states that they will build data systems to measure student growth and inform</p>		

instruction. For Early Learning, GCPS will establish cohorts of children and follow their progress longitudinally and ensure proper intervention is applied.

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

5

3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a medium score for ongoing communication and engagement. GCPS states that stakeholder engagement is important and that they will establish community stakeholder focus groups and hire a district program organizer to establish on-going communication. However, they did not adequately specificity the goals, milestones, timeline, and process for how stakeholder input will be cultivated and used to drive improvement.

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

5

3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a Medium score for performance measures. Although the 18 measures focus on increased student proficiency, STEM and CTE course enrollment, College-readiness indicators, and non-cognitive indicators, the measures are predominately summative, so would not provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to the proposed plan. However, the district proposes ongoing evaluation of effectiveness of investments that will enhance the performance measures. The district has set very ambitious goals to have 90% of students, overall and for all subgroups, with a highly effective teacher and principal within 4 years, up from 17%-25% currently.

The proposal is lacking specifics on how these performance measures will be improved over time if insufficient, but does state that they will be improved over time.

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

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a high score for evaluating effectiveness of investments.

The district proposes rigorous, frequent, ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the RTT-D investments, including student, family, peer group, teacher and school characteristics. These results are shared in open meetings to hold site leaders/staff accountable and to focus on problem solving. Monitoring will include effectiveness of core instruction, sampling of Lesson Study meetings, classroom walkthroughs, weekly technology usage reports and lesson plan review.

GCPS has identified at-risk indicators it will be tracking and reviewing, including academic and engagement indicators, retention, mobility and behavioral indicators.

GCPS does not describe in sufficient detail how return on investment will be evaluated or a rigorous evaluation and comparison of dollars spent per outcome achieved.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a Medium score for the Budget proposed for the project.

(a) The applicant's budget appears to identify all funds that will support the project.

(b) Many of the projects look to be reasonable and sufficiently funded. However, the Early Learning Environment project, which is one of the 2 core programs that impacts students district-wide, may not be sufficiently funded. The ELE program supports the hire of one (1) Early Learning Specialist to support the 16 schools. It seems improbable that all K-2 teachers can be sufficiently trained and supported at the level necessary to achieve the annual targets desired. The ELE program has some allocation for professional development (\$60k annually), but very little for release time or travel for teachers to radically improve instruction and reflection. Furthermore, there was little identification of specific budget to support teachers for regular review of student data and development of personalized learning. It is unclear if these funds are available elsewhere, or can be re-allocated from current spending.

(c) GCPS provides a clear rationale for investments and priorities, and the rationale is supported by research. Although focused on student learning, the research provided is not focused on creating personalized learning environments. Further, the district has not implemented pilots and created their own results to verify their theory of action in their own district and context.

The district believes that RTT-D funds would mainly be used for start up costs and that funds are available to continue programs if successful. Two exceptions are funds to extended school year and funds for teacher performance awards. To continue these programs after the project, these funds would need to be sought elsewhere.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a medium score for sustainability of project goals.

The district contends that RTT-D funds would mainly be used for start up costs and that programs are sustainable if successful with the redirection of other district resources including general fund FTE dollars, restricted dollars (Title I and II), and other grant funds. Sustaining the Early Learning Program, PK-8 Magnet School, and the Alternative Learning Center will be a matter of continuing with the academic and support programs established during the implementation of the grant. Two exceptions are funds to extended school year and funds for teacher performance awards. To continue these programs after the project, these funds would need to be sought elsewhere. If the Extended School Year project proves effective, the District may have the option of redirecting the use of annual Title I funding allocations to fund the cost.

A high-quality plan articulating the funding support to sustain the grant programs was not provided.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

GCPS is receiving a medium score for the Competitive Preference Priority.

GCPS describes a coherent, sustainable partnership with Gadsden County Health Department to deliver health care and health education programs to families and youth who are at risk. As part of this partnership, the Health Department provides full service health care to students enrolled at one of GCPS high schools. Full service focuses on underserved students in poor, high-risk communities needing access to medical and social services. Full service schools provide all basic school health services, in addition to the coordination of medical and specialized services, such as nutritional services, job placement services, parenting classes, counseling for abused children, mental health and substance abuse counseling, and adult education for parents.

The first and foremost result is collaboration between the Department, the school, and the family to ensure that students are emotionally and physically able to focus on the learning process. The partnership is aimed at reducing absences, which is the performance measure for demonstrating socio-emotional readiness for school. This is the only population-level desired results specifically mentioned, although they do assert that it enhances all 18 of the proposed performance measures. Decreasing absences is reasonable first step to improving student achievement, but the proposal stops short of tying the program to specific, measurable academic outcomes such as increased graduation rates or increased student achievement.

The proposal does not mention how the program uses data to target it's resources, has a strategy to scale over time, or seeks to improve results over time.

The proposal does not provide detail on how the partnership would build capacity of staff in participating schools.

The partnership has it's own goals (that are aligned to RTT-D, but also supports the 18 performance targets in the broader proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Although the district is proposing solid proposal for improving student outcomes and deepening learning for many students, there lacks a vision and coherent, comprehensive plan for the personalization of learning environments supported by tools, professional development and processes to develop and implement. Although the proposal does incorporate center-based classroom instruction, which can allow for increased differentiation and individualization of teaching and learning, implementing center-based classroom structure is not sufficient to personalize learning based on individual student needs, progress, learning pace and learning style. Additionally, it does not address how to expand student access to the most effective educators.

The Gadsden Alternative Learning Center would be a model for individualized learning. Although this is a very exciting and promising part of the proposal, it only serves 250 students annually of the 5,731 participating students. That is insufficient to meet the criteria for the absolute priority for participating students.

Therefore, the applicant is receiving the score "not met".

Total	210	101
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