



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0472NC-1 for Greene County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 2 |
| (A)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district's reform vision as presented in this application is not comprehensive or coherent. It is written at a very general level with lots of "buzzwords" and a lack of focus. There is virtually no discussion of the district's demographics and context. The discussion lacks specificity and focus. Clear links to the four assurance areas and the absolute priority are lacking. | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 6 |
| (A)(2) Reviewer Comments: The school district's approach to implementation is consistent with the requirements of the application. Narrative discussion and analysis of participating schools and students are not presented in the application. <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. • There is little discussion of the district's implementation plan development. • Only needs assessments surveys and processes were described in the narrative. • There is no mention of participant or school selection processes in the narrative. | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 2 |
| (A)(3) Reviewer Comments: The district does not present a high quality plan. There is no discernable logic model or theory of change. Four key objectives and strategies are presented, but there is not a clear plan for moving forward. Furthermore, the strategies are not clearly defined or discussed. It appears as though the district intends build on its loosely defined current school reform efforts rather than offer a distinctive plan in this application. A blank school improvement planning documents is included in the appendix. | | |
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| (A)(4) Reviewer Comments: The application presents goals for improved student learning in the areas of reading proficiency (math is not included), decreasing achievement gaps, and increasing graduation rates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no narrative discussion or analysis to help the reviewer understand and interpret the goals as presented. • There is no narrative discussion of how the learning goals promote equity. | | |

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 | 7 |
| <p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>There is not a clear track record of success during the past four years. Two programs, a middle college (with no data) and a multicultural program (limited data) are briefly highlighted. High school graduation rates, however, have steadily risen for all sub groups. Also school proficiency rates on end of course tests have risen in at least four schools, but were not discussed or interpreted in the application. It is challenging for the reviewer to assess overall success because the application does not provide demographic, contextual, or even basic information on the number of students or schools in the district.</p> | | |
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>For personnel salary schedule information the reviewer is referred to Appendix A to access the NCDPI website and view its salary manual. There is little narrative discussion and no reflection about how the district ensures a high level of transparency in its processes. practices, and investments.</p> | | |
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| <p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>This section briefly describes and then presents verbatim North Carolina legislation focused on <i>The Reform of Continually Low Performing Schools ACT</i>. Also presented is the state's <i>Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools</i> initiative. There is little discussion or reflection about how state context has influenced the district's school reform agenda or its plan to implement personalized learning environments.</p> | | |
| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points) | 10 | 5 |
| <p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The narrative discussion on stakeholder engagement and support needs greater focus. However, a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted for each school and the central office. Discussions ensued with parents, staff, the school board, and community members. Needs were identified that appear to be consistent with this application. Moreover, a teacher survey indicated unanimous support for this RtT – District application. Further input on student needs will be gathered from the <i>North Carolina Student Survey</i>. Letters of support indicate a commitment to this application, however there were no letters of support from the Teacher's Association or any district teacher or principal.</p> | | |
| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 0 |
| <p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has not developed a high quality plan. District strengths and challenges have not been clearly articulated making it difficult to identify clear gaps between its current situation and its vision. The reviewer is referenced to Appendix C for a description of its planning process. Appendix C, however, is the district's teacher evaluation process/manual.</p> | | |

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

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

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application identifies promising district curricular and instructional practices and offers a thoughtful section on the personalization of student learning. However, the discussion lacks focus, rambles, is laden with buzzwords and acronyms, and does not clarify for the reviewer the district's implementation plan for realizing its goals and values. Much of the discussion loosely highlights current district goals and reform initiatives and then points out that the RttT – District grant will extend and support further work in these areas. It's difficult to assess what is distinctive or innovative about the plan.

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

20

7

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application acknowledges and values the importance of professional development at a very general level. The discussion lacks specificity and is not tightly linked to its RttT grant application. Lots of external providers and instructional improvement programs are identified and viewed as solutions. Professional development is portrayed as external rather than internal or coming from within the school. For example there is little discussion of the work of school based professional learning teams. Much of the narrative discussion actually moves away from professional development for staff rather than to programs for students.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

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

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Overall, district policy and infrastructure appear to be supportive of school reform.

- Governance and leadership structures and practices are nicely discussed and very clear. Assessment practices and learning resources are not as well described or developed in this section of the application narrative.
- The district reorganized its instructional support team to support district schools in a more consistent fashion. With numerous reform initiatives developing the district is requesting additional support personnel.
- 4 literacy coaches, 2 STEM facilitators, 2 technology facilitators, and a K -12 Instructional Supervisor will be hired if this grant proposal is successful.
- Each school has a school improvement team that is granted flexibility and autonomy by the district for improving student achievement, making personnel decisions and developing budgets.
- The Twilight Program is based on content mastery rather than seat time.
- The district has developed guiding principles for the implementation of the Common Core Standards for ELL students.
- The district needs to work on developing and refining its project implementation plan. Ingredients such as goals, activities and rationales for the proposed activities are loosely defined in the proposal as a whole. Project timelines, deliverables and parties responsible for implementation need to be clearly specified and developed.

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

10

0

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The topic of district and school infrastructure to support school reform in terms of stakeholder access, technical support, and technology systems is not addressed in this section. Rather what appears to be the district's overall school reform agenda is reported verbatim with no explanation or reference to the selection criterion.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 8 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district follows its states school improvement planning process – Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA). By repeating this cycle, a continuous improvement process is ensured. As school improvement teams follow this process professional learning communities are developed. Additionally, district data teams visit with school improvement teams quarterly and follow a list of guiding questions to promote inquiry and reflection on the school improvement process. This response could be strengthened with further discussion and elaboration. Activities and structures are simply listed without any reflection or discussion about lessons learned or how well the continuous improvement process has worked.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district uses a web-based program called Indistar to track and share its improvement activities with internal stakeholders (teachers, principals, and central office) There is no indication how this system informs communication and engagement with external stakeholders (families and community groups). No plan is presented in this section for ensuring ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No discussion or rationale for performance measures is included. Furthermore, the accompanying tables do not clearly present 12 -14 performance measures or make much sense. For example, one of the tables sets a 1% increase in the number of highly effective teachers/principals for each year of the project. Another table indicates that 100% of students will be on track for college and career readiness each year (from baseline to post grant). Furthermore, tables that set performance measures for raising the number of student applications for FAFSA indicate the same target for each year of the project rather than targets that indicate steady progress. Many of the targets presented either do not make sense or are unrealistic.</p> | | |
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 1 |
| <p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application offers a standard research design to evaluate the effectiveness of its improvement efforts. However, the language is entirely inconsistent with rest of the application and appears to be a forced fit that makes little sense. The discussion lacks perspective and analysis, which is clearly linked to the selection criterion.</p> | | |

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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| (F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points) | 10 | 2 |
| (F)(1) Reviewer Comments: There is a brief narrative discussion or explanation of budgetary requests. They primarily involve additional staff to support and expand current and reform efforts. The budget itself does not break down expenditures line by line. It is not clear how resources will be spent and what they will cost. Furthermore, the narrative reads more like an improvement plan than a reasonable analysis of costs and expenses. | | |
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 1 |
| (F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district describes this section of its application as "needs work." The hope is that through the capacity building of its teachers and principals, the reform work proposed will be sustained. | | |

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 0 |
| Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: No discussion, information or analysis was provided in this section of the application. | | |

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|--|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |
| Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Although this application lacks clarity and does not present a high quality plan, district values and hopes to create personalized learning experiences for its students are apparent. Its roadmap needs further development and refinement. | | |

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| Total | 210 | 73 |
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Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0472NC-2 for Greene County Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
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|--|----|----|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 10 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant clearly described a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. The Applicant's vision is to ensure all LEA students are college and career ready upon graduation through cooperative and collaborative efforts of schools and central staff, parents, students, and partners. The Applicant's mission provides a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity through personalized student support through implementing reforms to enable all students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become avid readers and writers 2. Become self-regulated learners who think critically and creatively 3. Communicate effectively, and work collaboratively with peers. <p>The Applicant's goals for reform include four interconnected objectives that define their work. Each objective targets improving teaching and learning in every classroom in the district, eliminating the achievement gap, and ensuring all students graduate ready for lifelong success. The four objectives are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Build Teaching and Leadership Capacity 2) Provide 21st Century Personalized Learning 3) Transform our Low-performing Schools 4) Deepen Partnerships with Parents, Students and the Community <p>The Applicant plans to meet these four objectives by providing additional instructional coaches to accelerate literacy instruction, support the implementation of STEM in kindergarten through eighth grade, and provide additional leadership coaching for administrators. The RtT District grant would provide additional Instructional Coaches for elementary and secondary along with two additional STEM facilitators for the K-5 and 6-8 grade spans. This will result in a stronger instructional support system that will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards 2. Support the literacy changes as a result of the partnership with Teachers College Reading & Writing project 3. Fully implement Skillful Teacher, (Research for Better Teaching) in kindergarten through eighth grade 4. Ensure the integration of STEM K-12. <p>The Applicant provides a chart clearly depicting the instructional coaching activities and stem facilitator activities classroom-based activities with individual teachers classroom-focused activities with groups of educators. The Applicant's vision is grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests as evidenced by their plans to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-centered classrooms where students are engaged in problem and project-based learning that provides all students with authentic and meaningful experiences. • The implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that allows deeper learning experiences infused with 21st Century skills and leadership applications in each classroom • An extension of the Applicant's District and School Transformation model through 2016. • Increase the number of instructional coaches and STEM facilitator • Fund a partnership with the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project for extensive professional development and site-based coaching • The necessary resources to continue working collaboratively with district and building level administration, teachers, students, and parents. establishing a healthy ecosystem for learning • Focus on the learning needs of students • Gain access to multiple sources of instruction and use assessment and diagnostic tools to help personalize learning. • Train teachers to tailor their instruction and guidance to ensure progress and mastery learning for all students, particularly the historically underserved students <p>The LEA has already realized benefits from the current District and School Transformation Model at the high school level that began two years ago. The Applicant reports that the LEA has increased test scores at all levels and continue to decrease dropouts and increase the graduation rate. Through collaboration and innovation, the Applicant plans to scale up their Transformation Model to include K-8. The RtT District grant funding will allow the Applicant to maintain this momentum.</p> | | |

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| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal clearly supports high-quality LEA-level and school-level implementation of their proposal. The Applicant provided a detailed description of the process used to select participating schools. This process for selecting participating schools began with a district-wide and comprehensive needs assessment that included data collection from parents, teachers, students, school board members, and staff. A second process was a needs assessment survey conducted by Empower ED LLC as part of the School Improvement Grant process. A third data source was gathered from the 72 member K-12 Literacy Committee comprised of teachers and administrators from each school. Finally, principals and teachers at each school met to discuss the potential of the RttT District grant. The superintendent and School Board held meetings to discuss the RttT District grant application as well. As a result, each of the six LEA schools is participating in the RttT District grant.

All participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The Applicant provided a list of the schools that will participate in grant activities that included the total number of participating students, participating students from low-income families, participating students who are high-need students and participating educators.

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

Although the application includes some of the components of a high-quality plan including key goals; activities to be undertaken and deliverables, the Applicant did not provide all of the components of a high quality plan including specific timelines and persons responsible for implementing the activities. The Applicant listed four key objectives designed to close achievement gaps and help the LEA schools achieve proficiency for all students. These objectives are:

1. Build Teacher and Leader Capacity
2. Provide 21st Century Personalized Learning-
3. Transform our Low-performing Schools
4. Deepen Partnerships with Parents, Students, and the Community.

The Applicant provided a chart for each goal that included the goal and strategies for achieving the goal; however, the Applicant did not provide timelines nor did the Applicant identify persons responsible. Although not apparent in this criterion, overall the credibility of the Applicant's plan as described in other sections of this application appears to adequately describe how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change in the participating schools will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

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

It is probable that the Applicant's vision may very likely result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitions yet achievable annual goals. As required by this criteria, the Applicant provided appropriate data in charts that clearly depict performance on summative assessments including proficiency status and growth, decreasing achievement gaps, graduation rates and college enrollment rates.

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 clearly described a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching including a description, charts and raw student data

Track Record of Success- The Applicant provides convincing evidence of a clear track record of success including the following:

- a. Greene Early College High School (GECHS) - housed on the campus of a two-year community college, the Learn and

Earn early college high schools provide an academically rigorous course of study that ensures all students graduate with a high school diploma and two years of transferable credit or an associate degree. It serves a student population representative of the district, with an emphasis on recruiting and serving students first generation college-going students, underachieving students and low-income and minority students. This initiative improves student learning outcomes by enhancing student high school graduation and college enrollment.

- b. A focus on increasing the graduation rate and decreasing the dropout rate- The Applicant reported that their *“four-year graduation cohort rate in 2008-09 was 62.1%. Over the past four years, the graduation rate increased to 84.3%. As the overall rate increased, so has the graduation rate of student subgroups.”* As evidence , the Applicant provided tables with raw data that depict the district graduation rates by subgroup and school proficiency composite gains.
- c. Los Puentes- The Applicant clearly described how their district Dual Language Immersion and Multicultural Education Program, established through a university partnership, serves kindergarten through sixth grade students. Program benefits include:
 - o Students learning a second language at an early age
 - o Improved problem-solving skills

The Dual Language Immersion Program enhances cross-cultural competency which also enhance student college and career preparation. As evidence of this project’s benefits, the Applicant provides a table that clearly supports the Applicant’s descriptions of this program.

Improve Student Learning Outcomes-

The Applicant provided copies of the following 2 data sets that clearly depict their ability to achieve ambitious and significant reforms in low-performing schools:

- a. A copy of the report of State End of Grade Summative tests for grades 6-8 which shows that in 2011-2012 school year, Greene County Middle School met High growth
- b. A copy of the report of State End of Course Summative tests for grades 9-12, which show that Greene Central High School made High Grow

The Applicant noted that while achievement gaps exist in grades 3-10, subgroup graduation rate indicates a significant close in their subgroup gaps based upon high school graduation rate.

Availability of Student Performance Data to Stakeholders

The Applicant provided convincing details to describe opportunities for students, parents, administrators and community members to access district and school data as well as rich resources to support student learning including :

- Quarterly parent/teacher conferences with parents and guardians.
- State School Report Cards are available to students, parents, and community members on each school’s website as well as online at State Department of Public Instruction.
- The State Instructional Improvement System (IIS) portals give district students, teachers, parents, and school and district administrators to access data and resources to inform decision-making related to instruction, assessment, and career and college goals.

Students may also use the State Instructional Improvement System (IIS to:

- Engage in interactive, rich educational resources that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards
- Take local and statewide assessments with immediate performance feedback
- Store exemplars of personal academic and/or artistic work
- Collaborate with other students on various projects

Teachers may also use the State Instructional Improvement System (IIS to:

- Supplement their teaching with individualized educational materials
- Access a detailed diagnostic breakdown of each child’s performance including knowledge and skill areas that require remediation
- Engage in professional development modules according to personal interests, district goals, and state standards

Parents may use the State Instructional Improvement System (IIS to:

- Track their child’s performance according to instructional goals set by the teacher, district, and state

- Access enrichment activities recommended by the teacher and/or system according to the student's performance and aptitude
- Communicate questions and feedback to teachers and/or administrators

Administrators may use the State Instructional Improvement System IIS systems to:

- View aggregate and individual student performance reports
- View aggregate and individual teacher effectiveness reports
- Make placement decisions based upon the historical interaction of student performance and teacher effectiveness

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

The Applicant stated that the LEA follows guidelines for providing transparency in LEA processes, practices and investments as outlined in the State Salary Manual that is posted on the State Department of education website and is included in the Appendix A. The Applicant further stated that this manual cites clear expectations that all salary information be provided to all employees in State schools.

However, upon examination of Appendix A, the referenced document was not included, nor was it included in the appendix table of contents listing (i.e. Appendix A Letters of Support Appendix B PDSA SIP Document Appendix C Teacher Evaluation Process Appendix Principal Evaluation Appendix E College and Career Ready Appendix F Future for Kids Appendix G Global Schools Network).

The Applicant did not adequately demonstrate evidence of A high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments, including by making public, by school, actual school-level expenditures for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration.

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| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant comprehensively described successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the Applicant's proposal as evidenced by the following:

1. State approved *The Reform of Continually Low-Performing Schools Act* which provides for the identification of low-performing schools and authorization for the State Board to approve requests from local boards of education to reform continually low-performing schools by using any of the transformation, restart, turnaround, or school closure models.
2. School Transformation division which provides management and oversight to "*Ensure that all schools and all districts that meet the lowest-achieving criterion receive appropriate support services designed to increase student performance to a level significantly above the lowest-achieving criterion.*"
3. Required district agreements which address the improvement of the lowest-achieving schools.
4. Increased strategies and options available in school and district turnaround plans.

The Applicant provided specific examples to support each statutory and regulatory requirement, clearly demonstrating evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environments described in the Applicant's proposal.

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

The Applicant demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal, including :

1. Signature from the local union president, documenting evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposals from teachers in participating schools
2. Letters of support provided in the Appendix from key stakeholders include:
 - Central State Regional Services Alliance

- Chamber of Commerce
- State University Department of Academic Affairs
- Community College
- State Public School Forum
- State Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Center
- VIF International Education
- Board of County Commissioners
- State Department of Public Instruction
- State University College of Education

The Applicant provided a clear description of how students, families, teachers, and principals participating schools were engaged in the development of the proposal and, as appropriate, how the proposal was revised based on their engagement and feedback, including the following:

1. The State Department of Public Instruction conducted a comprehensive needs assessment for each school and central office and shared data with all faculties and staff, the School Board and community that helped provide a framework for discussing district and school improvement needs.
2. Parent Advisor Committees attended collaborative meetings with LEA staff, the School Board, and community members to discuss school transformation plans.
3. A teacher survey was conducted which provided feedback and input was for the Strategic Planning Committee and K-12 Graduation Task Force.
4. The school feedback data was triangulated with the State Teacher Working Conditions survey results for the school district
5. The LEAs student survey data, the State Teacher Working Conditions Survey, and school feedback data were triangulated to provide input on improving teaching conditions such as collaborative instructional planning and professional development.

Each of the aforementioned steps clearly demonstrates that the Applicant provided opportunities for meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal.

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

The Applicant did not adequately describe a high-quality plan for an analysis of their current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind the reform proposal contained within their proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address. A high quality plan must include key goals, supporting activities, persons who are responsible, deliverables and timelines. Although the Applicant provided a discussion of some activities and deliverables including a chart illustrating goals, the Applicant’s chart only listed one goal, and did not include specific timelines, supporting activities nor persons responsible for achieving the goal. Some of the activities and deliverables mentioned include:

- Refining instructional delivery for literacy to ensure a personalized, literacy-rich learning environment
- Hiring four literacy coaches, two Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) coaches / facilitators, two instructional technology coaches, and one K-12 Instructional Supervisor
- Professional development to support professional learning communities
- Charts listing plans for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) coaches

Although these activities appear to be achievable, they do not meet the criteria for a high-quality plan.

The Applicant did not adequately describe its current status in meeting the criteria nor provide its high-quality plan for meeting the criteria. The narrative was brief and lacked clarifying details and the referenced attachment (Appendix C) was a copy of State Teacher Evaluation Process, which did not provide clear supporting evidence for this criterion. The State Teacher Evaluation Process is a comprehensive document; however, the Applicant did not adequately explain in the narrative how this document would be helpful to peer- reviewers, and how this piece of evidence demonstrates the Applicant's success in meeting the criterion.

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

| | | |
|--|-----------|-------|
| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|

(C)(1) Learning (20 points)

20

15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant provides a plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment, giving students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. However, the plan presented does not meet the requirements of a high quality plan because the Applicant did not provide key goals, specific timelines, and persons responsible.

The Applicant's plan does include activities and deliverables that describe their approach to implementing instructional strategies for participating students, enabling them to pursue a rigorous course of study aligned to college- and career ready standards. As a rural district with unique challenges of high need students, the Applicant's plan for reform in the areas of college readiness, teaching and learning, personalized learning, professionalism, leadership, and school reform includes a design that is replicable and scalable for rural districts with unique challenges of high need students. Planned activities and deliverables include:

1. Extensive literacy instruction improvements, including:

- Extending Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) classrooms and curriculum into the K-2 classrooms and 6-8 as the i3 STEM grants continues.
- Expand the high school Second Life initiative with the State University
- Expand the Blended Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) courses with the State Virtual High School.

2. Use of technology to "flip" classrooms

3. Expand online courses and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) course and classroom experiences for students.

4. Provide teachers and administrators increased use of online tools for school improvement and professional development.

5. Increase locally sustainable professional development capacity

6. Student flexibility and freedom to pursue an education based on their interests and aptitudes

7. Technology as the lever to personalized learning

Together these activities and deliverables compose the Applicant's vision for expanding the district's 1:1 learning initiative (i.e. using technology to personalize learning) at the middle and high schools to include pre-K-5 classrooms, which will provide all learners with a personalized learning experience enabled by universal access to education through technology.

The Applicant's ambitious plan will provide access to technology resources beyond the classrooms. For example, the Applicant described how *"schools' social areas and the external environments will utilize technology through interactive displays, challenges, streaming information and celebrations of achievement that enhance the academic culture of the district"* The Applicant's plan includes the use of technology across all subjects to seamlessly integrate the student's learning experience and will:

- Provide deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest
- Promote independent work and creativity
- Provide access to rich resources that provide exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning
- Allow for individualized plans and personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the students to achieve their individual learning goals and ensure they graduate on time and college- and career-ready
- Provide communication tools that produce reports for parents on student progression and reports to students which help students understand the connectedness of their learning.
- Monitor student achievements and provides feedback for students, parents, and teachers
- Provide online access to curriculum which allows for differentiated instruction and for student mastery of critical academic content
- Allow secondary learners to engage and collaborate with a wide variety of mentors from global industry and education (i.e.. Student Success Fellows and State Charter member of Global Schools Network enterprise)
- Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers including a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments;

The Applicant failed to provide a high quality plan (i.e. Lacks specific timelines, persons responsible). However, through the aforementioned activities and deliverables, the Applicant described achievable strategies that engage and empowers learners and educators to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment.

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

20

14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's clearly described activities for improving learning and teaching; however, the plan does not include key goals, specific timelines, persons responsible and therefore cannot be consider a high-quality plan as described in the RTT application. The plan presented has well described activities and deliverables that are based on creating schools where:

- Students, teachers, and parents feel welcome;
- There are high expectations for students and staff performance
- Students actively participate in rigorous and relevant classroom instruction
- Teachers personalize the learning environment.

In order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready, the Applicant plans to ensure that teachers are highly qualified by providing focused professional development that includes multiple approaches for implementing instructional strategies that enable participating students to understand the importance of pursuing a rigorous course of study aligned to college and career-ready standards. The Applicant plans to utilize professional learning teams and transformation coaches to implement their process of continuous improvement with the goal of transforming teacher and administrator practices to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits that will help to increase student achievement. The Applicant's clearly articulated transformational model emphasizes teacher professional development that will prepare teachers to:

- Align classroom instruction with school improvement priorities and goals
- Adapt instruction to meet the needs of each learner, including struggling students in need of additional support and advanced students in need of additional challenge.
- Become culturally competent and have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning
- Utilize additional strategies to address the needs of English language learners and students with individualized education plans.
- Identify skillful teaching practices that provide multiple opportunities for deep learning which prepares students for the rigor of college work and or the work place
- Measure student progress and use data for improving instruction

For example, the Applicant plans to utilize "*Research for Better Teaching and the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project*" as the two primary initiatives to train teachers. These two programs offer three training courses that clearly reflect the Applicant's for improving instruction including "*The Skillful Teacher, Data Coach, and Observing and Analyzing Teaching*" which the Applicant states "*align with their District Transformation Plan and the new NC Teacher Standards and Evaluation System.*". These activities are ambitious and achievable.

To monitor student progress and personalize instruction based on student needs, the Applicant's plan includes the web-based software, "Assessment Pro", which schools use to record and track student performance data. Teachers use the software to create charts that depict patterns which allow a school to track students' progress, and generate parent letters that describe student progress and needs. These mechanisms are in place to provide training and support to students that will ensure that they understand how to use the tools and resources provided to them in order to track and manage their learning.

To further address evaluation, the Applicant provided a logic model of the district's school improvement progress monitoring cycle. The model depicts the flow of analysis beginning at the school level where teachers analyze formative assessment data during weekly Professional Learning Team meetings. After analyzing student data, teacher teams identify effective instructional practices and develop enrichment and remediation lessons for students who are performing above and below expectations. Teachers also collaborate on curriculum revisions and cooperative grading of student performance assessments. Teachers are then able to progress monitor student achievement at the individual student level as well as the grade/department level student subgroup level.

The Applicant also plans scale up the Career Cruiser software program, which is an electronic system of course scheduling and monitoring, that is currently used in high school so that middle schools have access. The Career Cruiser software program will allow 8th graders access to course scheduling and monitoring as well as academic transcripts online for students, teachers, and parents to monitor.

The Applicant's clearly described activities to increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals is based on Research for Better Teaching (RBT) courses including *Studying the Skillful Teacher Course* for all teachers and principals, *Observing and Analyzing Teaching (OAT) Course* for all principals, and the Data Teams Course for school based teams. Not only will teachers and administrators participate in these courses, but the instructional coaches and leadership coaches will provide the follow up and support to reinforce application of skills at the classroom level. This four year RttT District grant provides the opportunity to fund these

Also, the Applicant plans to partner with the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project (RWP), which will provide K-8 teachers and

principals with strategies to improve literacy instruction. This partnership will be a key component to personalizing learning and for helping students master their academic content.

With the support of parents and educators, the Applicant provides a comprehensive strategy to ensure that each student has access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable students to achieve their individual learning goals and ensure they can graduate college- and career-ready.

The Applicant provides a number of ambitious and achievable activities; however these activities were not framed by specific key goals, did not include specific timelines for implementation, and did not include persons responsible.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 10 |
| <p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Applicant described many activities 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, when and where they are needed. However, the Applicant did not provide a high-quality plan because the Applicant did not provide key goals, specific timelines for implementation, and did not identify persons responsible for carrying out goals and activities. The Applicant's plan included the following achievable activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Applicant clearly described changing practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning, and provided details explaining why and how these changes occurred within the LEA. The LEA central office reorganized its instructional support team to provide greater flexibility in delivery of services to participating schools. Prior to the reorganization, the Instructional Support Team (IST) members were school-based employees, but are now considered district-level employees, which allow the Instructional Support Team (IST) members to advance the district mission and vision through the continuity of services to schools. The Applicant plans to utilize RttT District grant funds to expand the Instructional Support Team (IST) to support teachers and administrators in facilitating personalized learning. 2. The Applicant described how LEA school leadership teams in participating schools have sufficient flexibility and autonomy to control school operations. LEA School Leadership/Improvement Teams have the sufficient flexibility and autonomy necessary to analyze their data, set goals, and determine the school schedule. The Applicant also states that the LEA extends flexibility and autonomy to <i>“making and defining school personnel decisions and staffing models; the roles and responsibilities of educators and non-educators; and school-level budgets.”</i> 3. The LEA is transitioning to a mastery learning model, which would give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. Although the State is developing policy for content mastery versus amount of time spent in a course, the LEAs Twilight Program is based on content mastery rather than seat time, in accordance with the State Board of Education policy governing credit recovery programming. 4. The Applicant described how students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times and in multiple comparable ways as enabled by the development and implementation of the LEA Essential Standards curriculum maps with embedded performance tasks/events. The LEA will provide on-going professional development for educators focusing on using learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners, revising progress reports and report cards, as well as increasing parent education to help them understand these policy changes. <p>Although the activities described by the applicant appear achievable, they do not collectively represent a high quality plan. The Applicant failed to provide key goals, specific timelines, and persons responsible.</p> | | |
| (D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points) | 10 | 7 |

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant clearly described four reform strategies that detail their 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, when and where they are needed. However, the Applicant's plan is not a high-quality plan

because the Applicant did not identify key goals, specific timelines, and persons responsible for carrying out goals and activities.

Although Applicant's plan does not include key goals, timelines, and persons responsible, it does include five reform strategies that are adequately supported by details depicted in tables and narrative. The reform strategies adequately address how the LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning. The following are descriptions of the Applicant's reform strategies for building teaching and leadership capacity to support personalized learning:

1. Reform Strategy 1: Build Teaching and Leadership Capacity - This strategy focuses on creating a system that will recruit, retain, and continue to support the strongest educators while replacing those who are ineffective. Educator Evaluations will be tied to student achievement.
2. **Strategy 2: Provide 21st Century Personalized Learning-** This strategy focuses on providing students with rigorous and relevant instruction, based on integrating the common core standards, implementing instruction and college to career-ready opportunities through Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) initiatives, requiring dual enrollment and advanced placement courses for high school students, implementing balanced literacy in elementary, offering online credit courses in high schools and computer assisted instruction on middle school.
3. Strategy 3: Transform our Low-performing Schools- This strategy focuses on building teacher capacity to improve classroom instruction through professional learning as well as coaching. In addition, Principal and Central Office administrator capacity building began through coaching and professional learning. Building teacher capacity as both instructor and leaders is achieved through focused professional development, instructional coaching, and accountability for continuous improvement.
4. Strategy 4: Deepen Partnerships with Parents, Students and the Community- This strategy focuses on improving home- school connections with ongoing communication among parents, teachers, principals, other adults, and students that are focused on student academic improvement. Also, the strategy will focus on enhancing partnerships with the state university system which would allow project schools students to earn college credit, dual enrollment, Learn and Earn Virtual course taking, and AP courses.

Although the reform strategies were clearly explained and supported by activities, the Applicant failed to include timelines, persons responsible and key goals.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

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

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's description of their continuous improvement process includes descriptions of activities; however it does not include a high-quality plan because the Applicant did not provide key goals, timelines, persons responsible and deliverables. The Applicant's stated that their strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process is based on their LEA **Continuous improvement process** that is a part of the District two year Transformation model. This research-based model (i.e Applicant states model based on Dr. W. Edwards Deming model to "Plan, Do, Study, Act" (PDSA). The LEA School Improvement Plan process models the Deming PDSA beginning with a collaborative review of school data by Professional Learning teams and the School Improvement Team (SIT)with the goal of developing School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals. These goals are reviewed by grade levels and or department levels and applied to targeted areas which are aligned to the school's goals. finally the goals are aligned to the classroom level and to

teachers. The Applicant reports that this continuous improvement cycle is evident at each school where goals are reviewed and monitored.

Although the Applicant discusses a variety of activities that schools engage in to for continuous improve, the Applicant did not adequately explain how they plan to provide 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 Applicant did not address strategies for how they will monitor, measure and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Rtt-District, such as investments in professional development, technology and staff.

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

5

2

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's plan for providing ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders will be initiated through Indistar, a web-based system implemented by the State for Title I Priority Schools. Indistar maybe used by district and/or school improvement teams to *"inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities."*

The Applicant described Indistar as being similar to a global positioning system, which identifies location (i.e where students are academically) and redirects users to desired locations (i.e. where students need to be academically). Indistar allows for customization and accommodates rubrics for assessment of the indicators. The Applicant's plan is to use this system if funded to implement differentiated design to accommodate the RttT District grant in each school and monitor at the district level on a regular basis. However, the Applicant does not provide a high-quality plan that describes how they will monitor and how this process will improve its plan.

Although the Applicant states that "the Indistar tool will help support our progress through a systemic monitoring and measuring, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments funded by Race to the Top District, such as investments in professional development, technology, and staff", the Applicant does not adequately provide clear strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with both internal and external stakeholders.

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

5

2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant completed multiple charts populated with data for a variety of performance measures. However, the Applicant did not adequately describe ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant did not adequately describe its rationale for selecting that measure, how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the Applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; and how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.

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

5

2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's plan for evaluating effectiveness of investments includes utilizing formative and summative evaluation techniques and an LEA created feedback loop to:

- "(1) identify proximal outcomes aligned with the theory of action to assess progress toward desired outcomes
- (2) use multi-level modeling strategies to ascertain the effect of program components on desired outcomes and monitor growth over time
- (3) study the implementation of district initiatives to inform program refinement. "

The Applicant provided tables of Evaluation Activities to Support Continuous Program Improvement that include district goals, activity type and examples. However, the information presented in the tables and in the narrative do not adequately describe how the Applicant plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Rtt-D funded activities such as : professional development and activities that employ technology, and to more productively use time, staff and money to improve results, through improved use of technology, working with community partners, compensation reform and modification of school schedules and structures.

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 appears to have identified all funds that will support the project and they appear reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal. The Applicant adequately provides a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities. The Applicant includes a project level budget which includes the sums of project-level itemized costs described in the Project-Level Budget Narrative. The funds appear to be adequate for the categories proposed and appear reasonable. The rationale for funds support the Applicant's intended outcomes.

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| (F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points) | 10 | 1 |
|--|----|---|

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant did not provide a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The Applicant did not provide a plan that includes support from State and local government leaders and financial support, nor was there a plan which included a budget for the three years after the term of the grant that includes budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 0 |

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant did not address the Competitive Preference Priority.

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant adequately addressed how the LEA will 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; achievement gaps across student groups; and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers. The Applicant sets forth an ambitious and achievable vision, grounded in activities that build on the LEA's work in the four core educational assurances as reflected in the Applicant's transformation reform strategies. Throughout the proposal, the Applicant focuses on the personalization of learning enhanced by technology, professional development of educators and accountability to ensure high quality instruction, parent engagement in student learning and community support of student achievement, rigorous and relevant instruction utilizing rich resources and computer assisted instruction.

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Total | 210 | 140 |
|--------------|------------|------------|

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0472NC-3 for Greene County Schools



A. Vision (40 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Greene County Schools comprehensive and coherent reform vision of this proposal is focusing on literacy. Through the focus area of literacy, the GCS is very clear and credible with preparing students for successful outcomes by enhancing critical thinking and creativity, communicating effectively and engaging peers through collaboration. The deep learning experiences will be provided through student centered, problem and project-based learning to provide authentic and meaningful experiences. With the awarding of this grant, the GCS will provide extensions of the current Transformation Model to increase equity among instructional coaches and facilitators at all sites, fund partnerships and provide the necessary resources to support the district, schools, parents and students.</p> | | |
| (A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points) | 10 | 9 |
| <p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS conducted a Comprehensive Needs Assessment to gather information concerning the needs of this application. The data was collected from stakeholders, excluding community members. Needs Assessment Surveys of the School Improvement Grant was utilized for data, a 72 member team of teachers and administrators of each school, Superintendent and School Board Members met as well. As a result, each of the six schools are participants of the proposal.</p> <p>The list of schools are noted in the proposal as well as in the appendix. The total number of participating students are 3,179, students from low-income families are 2,469, students participating from high-needs are 2,248 and the total number of educators for this application is 263.</p> <p>The GCS has presented a sound and meaningful approach to implementation.</p> | | |
| (A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS has presented a descriptive and supporting plan for district-wide change.</p> <p>The reform proposal for the participating schools reaching their goals and improve student learning and reaching their goal by; acknowledging that customized learning plans should be based upon specific needs of the schools and specific needs of the student, establishing high standards for all and also identifying and providing 4 key objectives to close the gaps and reach proficiency for all.</p> <p>The objectives are; Build Teacher and Leader Capacity, Provide 21st Century Personalized Learning, Transforming Low-Performing Schools and Deepening Partnerships with Parents, Students and Community.</p> | | |
| (A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The wide-range of goals that GCS has presented in the proposal are convincing and comprehensible for improving student outcomes. According to the data provided, presented is achievable goals for overall student body as well as the subgroups. It is reasonable to assume that data presented shows noticeable gains in the goals area for each group on summative assessments. The achievement gaps in GCS are showing the White Group are performing more proficient than the economically disadvantaged groups. The 28.1% difference is very observable. Graduation rates are significantly sound among the groups. The greatest increase for the last 2 years documented the Hispanics. They acquired a 25.8% gain from</p> | | |

2010-2011 and the 2011-2012 school year. College enrollment data was not available at the time of submission.

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

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points) | 15 | 13 |
| <p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Track record of success for the GCS are describe by schools. The evidence presented are high school enrollment of the Greene Early College HS. program is a 30.1% increase among blacks, Economically disadvantaged is 28.5%, among Hispanics 21.3%, among SWD 22.0% and 14.4% among White in the last 4 years of the graduation rate. In the last 4 years, (2008-2012) the district has shown significant growth of schools. In 2008-2009, 2 of the 4 elementary meet/exceeded growth, 2 of 4 in 2009-2012 and in the years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 4 of 4 meet and exceeded growth. Parents, educators and students are afforded the opportunity to review district and school data through, parent-teacher conferences, School Report Cards are available on each school's web-site and the portal system of the Instructional Improvement System, that allows access to data and resources to in-form decision making relating to instruction, assessment and college/career goals.</p> | | |
| (B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant stated in the proposal that all salary information are public documents and is posted on the state's website and the GCS follow the guidelines of Legislation, State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction. The applicant also stated the salaries for all personnel of instructional staff, teachers only and non-personnel expenditures are included in the Appendix A and available to the general public from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website, http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/finance/salary.</p> <p>However, upon review of Appendix A, the document was not included in the proposal. Therefore evidence of a high level of transparency for the applicant is not clear for this criteria.</p> | | |
| (B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The transformation model will provide GCS sufficient autonomy to implement the personalized learning environment in the proposal.</p> <p>The GCS has been identified as a low-performing school through the approval of the NC General Assembly, signed by the Governor which became effectively immediately. Through this act, it provides for the State Board to approve requests from local boards to reform continually low-performing schools by using the Transformation Model. This School Transformation Model will provide the management and oversight for the initiative of Turning Around Lowest Achieving Schools,(TALAS).</p> | | |
| (B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points) | 10 | 8 |
| <p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>GCS has partnered with the NCDPI for 2 years for the district and school transformation. Through this partnership, stakeholders joined together and formed a collaboration to plan for the reform. After the team completed a comprehensive needs assessment for each school and central office, results was shared with faculties, staff school board and community. The data provided the framework for discussion of strengths and challenges and with immediate feedback the process for reform was greatly accepted and a Strategic Planning Committee was in place. Each school has a School Improvement Team consisting of teachers, administrators and parents. This team communicates regularly with central office and community to provide updates and seek input about school improvement needs. Support for this proposal has been unanimous from all constituents and recognizing the early success of the partnership with NCDPI and the SIG for the high school. The applicant provided 10 letters of support for the reform in the proposal</p> | | |
| (B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points) | 5 | 2 |

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal contains a reasonable analysis of needs and gaps.

GCS has provided an analysis for the school data which is embedded in the school improvement planning process that utilizes the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) protocol for goal setting at each grade level and for each subgroup. GCS will provide a foundation that extends and refine instructional delivery for literacy to ensure a personalized-rich learning environment. The need for personnel of well-trained individuals strategically placed throughout the system will serve teachers and administrators with professional development. These individuals will also provide classroom teachers with side-by-side coaching, effective practices in rigorous lesson design, formative assessment, problem/project based learning development and meaningful professional content discourse.

The identified needs and gaps are included in the proposal. However, the applicant does provide a clear description of the responsible parties for achieving the goals, a specific timeline for the activities, nor its current status for implementation of the proposal or the rationale.

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

| | Available | Score |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Learning (20 points) | 20 | 17 |

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants are emphasizing in this proposal that literacy is the key to success and accomplishing the goal of student improvement in order for the students of GCS to be college and career ready. In order for these goals to be accomplished, GCS has established that updating the PK-12 Standard Course of Study and school accountability system that will reflect benchmark standards and assessments expectations through new standards and adoption of Common Core, new assessments for students for all subjects with a strong focus on graduation and an updated model for school that focus on career and college readiness preparation.

The implementation process that will provide for deep learning experiences will be guided by 3 structures;1. The GCS District Literacy Framework. 2. Understanding by Design Framework and School-Based Professional Learning Teams.

The application lacks information addressing subparts iv & v.

Achievement of learning goals by intermediate school students are achieved through the Leader in Me, whole school Transformation model. This transformational results in higher academic achievement, fewer discipline problems and increased engagement of teachers and students. In grades 9-12, the Career Software program will be implemented to conduct course scheduling electronically, monitor progress as well as provide online academic transcripts for students, teachers and parents to monitor.

The high-quality instructional approaches includes; combining career exploration with classroom activities, curriculum, career mentors and first-person exposure to the world of work; expanding of on-line courses and STEM course and classroom experiences and allow learners the flexibility and freedom to pursue an education centered around their interest and aptitudes.

The application provides for appropriate digital learning experiences with focus on learning environments beyond the school buildings and traditional hours. Digital learning in the GCS grants access to resources, individualized plans, targets, communication tools and allow for the secondary learners to engage and collaborate with a wide variety of mentors from a global industry and education. Since there are no single mode of learning in GCS, this approach will serve all learners and meet the needs of all the varied learning styles and types.

GCS has provided fixed and mobile technologies to support and train while providing access at home and other locations in terms of connectivity.

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

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

GCS recognizes that the Transformation Plan begins and end with outstanding classroom teaching. Through the continuous use of professional learning teams and the coaches, GCS has created a process for continuous improvement for teachers and principals to transform practice and increase student achievement. This process is very intensive and on-going. GCS prepare teachers and staff to be culturally competent, address the needs of ELL and students with IEP's. The adoptive instruction for the GCS Literacy reform is the Research for Better Teaching and the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project.

Students progress are measured by the assessment tool that allows the teachers to track students' progress reading increasingly complex texts, and allow a teacher or school leaders to track progress of subgroups within the school. NC evaluation process for teachers and principals are linked to the 21st Century Learning and the NCPTS. This feed back is not only vital for the progression of students but, the feedback of them as well.

C2b information is not provided in the application.

All principals and teachers of GCS are familiar with the data and the analysis of the PDSA. Teachers have designed and implemented curriculum maps based on performance tasks and events aligned with CCSS. To increase the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly-effective teachers and principals begins with GCS three Research for Better Teaching (RBT) courses: Studying the Skillful Teacher Course for all teachers and principals, Observing and Analyzing Teaching Course for all principals and the Data Team Course for school base teams.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points) | 15 | 13 |
| (D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The GCS has provided an high quality plan to support implementation through policies and infrastructure that facilitate learning by- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. reorganizing its instructional support team to provide greater flexibility in the delivery of services. Instructional Support Team members are now district level employees b. SL/IT flexibility extends to making and defining school personnel decisions and staffing models; roles of educators and non-educators and school budgets c. Greene County Schools Twilight Program is based on content mastery rather than seat time. In accordance with the NCSBE governing recovery programming. d. The development and implementation of CCSS/NC Essential Standards curriculum maps has embedded performance tasks/events to allow students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways and at multiple times. e. The Common Core Implementation Guiding Principles adopted by the GCS District Literacy Framework Team guide adoption of our learning 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 |
| (D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant has demonstrated a high quality plan that supports the project implementation through comprehensive infrastructure & policies. The high quality plan will be provided for all students in the GCS and will prepare the students to meet the challenges and address the changes of the 21st Century. GCS top priority is to provide all students, teachers, principals and staff tools and systems to be successful. Personalized learning was initiated in the GCS in 2002 with the use of laptops being utilized in grades 6-12. It has sustained over the past 10 years as a personalized learning strategy for middle and high school students. The core ingredients of the network and hardware, and professional development were in place prior to the proposal and is ready to continue with the deployment of the devices. Sustaining the 1:1 personalized learning laptop initiative, it has and will remain apart of the GCS culture. Through the technology systems of this proposal, students will be able to utilize online courses and various tools for education to accelerate learning, teachers will be able to receive unique professional development opportunities to deliver globally infused curriculum and the to attract investments to the local community. The data systems will be utilized for information to provide support for students, teachers as well as administration and district offices. | | |

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points) | 15 | 7 |
| <p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has demonstrated a continuous improvement process to support the proposal.</p> <p>Through the implementation of the recommended School Improvement process, PDSA, the process begins with a review of all the schools data to develop goals that are communicated to the grade levels and or department levels where the goals are then applied to specific aligned to the general school goals. Next the classes and teachers must be aligned and then the Professional Learning Community is created. The principal then forms a school team that will monitor the achievable goals and deliver feedback through the process. the process is considered a multi-tier approach focus on district, school and classrooms. The district PLC team quarterly visits schools to meet with the SIT to monitor, review and discuss. The findings will be shared with staff and district through follow-up meetings on all levels.</p> <p>GCS description of continued improvement process includes various descriptions of activities, but it does not include the key components to be declared a high quality plan. The components include: a. responsible parties for the monitoring, measuring and sharing of information.b. the timeline of the feedback from the progression of the reform and the investments of the professional developments, technology and staff.</p> | | |
| (E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points) | 5 | 4 |
| <p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has provided a high quality plan of strategy for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The strategy included in this application is The Indistar. This web-based system implemented by North Carolina for Title 1 Priority Schools and for use with district and/or school improvement teams to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities. Also, Indistar will support progress through a systemic monitoring and measuring, and publicly share information on the quality of its investment funded by Race to the Top District, such as investments in professional development, technology and staff.</p> | | |
| (E)(3) Performance measures (5 points) | 5 | 3 |
| <p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has presented 13 ambitious yet achievable performance measures. Rationals for selection, measurement and review for improvement is sufficient.</p> <p>However, the proposal of at least 1 grade appropriate health or social emotional leading indicator of the plan is lacking from the PK-3, the 4-8 and the 9-12.</p> | | |
| (E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points) | 5 | 2 |
| <p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The GCS has executed a plan that will evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT-District investment.</p> <p>This plan involves continuous collaboration with the district administration to apply rigorous formative and summative evaluation techniques that will enhance the ability of project staff to accept accountability of program implementation and effectiveness. Also the team will create feedback by routinely providing formative, outcome-focused information to project leaders that can be utilized to augment and strengthen those components throughout the life of the project. This will be completed in 3 steps; 1. identify the proximal outcomes aligned with the theory of action to access progress toward desired outcomes, 2. use multi-level modeling strategies to ascertain the effect of program components on desired outcomes and monitor growth over time and 3. study the implementation of district initiatives to inform program refinement.</p> <p>The application plan that will evaluate the effectiveness of the RTTT-D investment does not clearly state an adequate process for evaluating proposed activities in the narrative or through the tables contained in the application.</p> | | |

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

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

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The GCS has demonstrated a budget that is sufficient for the execution of the proposal. All funds are identified for the project with the exception of travel within district and working with local partners. Travel is something that should be considered as well. The budget is reasonable for the development and implementation of the application. GCS has provided a clearly good rationale for fund descriptions with limited detail. The application contains a lot of substance but lacks details. The six pages of bullets provide more of needs. Very vague elaboration within the budget narrative. Also funds are identical for each year in training and stipends. These funds should be varied as the school years progress with the grant.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)

10

1

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The GCS is the recipient of various grants and sustainability has been acquired through the funding of other grants. Evidence of sustainability for this proposal is unclear and insufficient due to more money is needed to continue what is already in place and have been in place. This proposal emphasizes the sustainability of instructional capacity and not financial.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points) | 10 | 0 |

Absolute Priority 1

| | Available | Score |
|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| Absolute Priority 1 | Met/Not Met | Met |

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The GCS has coherently and comprehensively addressed how it can build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching in the area of Literacy for all. Their Transformational Model has been in existence and has proven to be effective for student improvement. The plan that has been presented has so vagueness and discrepancies in some areas but, the evidence presented demonstrates success for all. Parents and community are included and communication between all stakeholders are increasing and effective as well. The GCS has met the Absolute Priority 1 for the RTTT-District.

| | | |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Total | 210 | 143 |
|-------|-----|-----|